

Our Mission

***By God's Grace, West Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,
is committed to Nurturing and Celebrating God's Love in our lives, in the
Church Family, in the Community and in the world***

April 2022 newsletter Steeple View West Parish Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Pastor's Perspective April, 2022

Spring is here...thank God! We have been through a long, difficult winter and the seemingly endless COVID time of the last two years. The Russian assault on Ukraine has brought daily bad news and fears about what comes next. There have been deaths of aging parents and/or grandparents that have brought fresh grief. It's been a tough stretch and we have felt the chill of winter in many ways. Lent puts us in touch with the wilderness and suffering each year as we journey with Jesus towards Jerusalem and the cross. That journey, of course, has an endpoint: the stone rolled away and shouts of "Alleluia! He is risen!"

There is much to anticipate about spring. For me (and I know you've heard this before), there are the joys and anticipation of a new baseball season. For a while it looked like there may not be a season with a work stoppage and lockout. Hope springs eternal for the fans of our favorite teams as, in spring, every team has a legitimate shot (even the Phillies). I'm also looking forward to a trip to the Nashville, Tennessee area in May to visit my parents at their new home and celebrate my father's 90th birthday. Having seen both parents go through major health scares and move to a totally new part of the country, I don't take for granted the opportunity to spend time with them. Finally, I will be celebrating my birthday with Mary and Liam by attending a music festival called Solid Sound featuring my favorite band, Wilco, and many others held at MassMOCA (the UMass modern art complex) in North Adams, MA, from May 27-29. What are some spring events that you are most looking forward to?



Spring is also a time rife with opportunities for us as a church to come together for worship, fellowship, and envisioning the future. Holy Week is a time for us to reflect once again on the events of Jesus' final week and his humility, courage, and sacrifice. It begins on Palm Sunday, April 10th at 10 AM, as we worship waving palms processing together shouting "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

On Maundy Thursday, April 14th, we will share in Communion and Tenebrae at 7 PM, reading the account of Jesus' last meal with his followers and the events that follow, extinguishing candles until the sanctuary is completely dark.

On Good Friday, April 15th, there will be a contemplative ZOOM service at 7:00 PM with music, poetry, and readings. Then, on Easter Sunday, April 17th, we will gather on Paradise Hill at 5:45 AM for our sunrise service followed by the Easter service at church at 10 AM.

The following Sunday, April 24th, there will be an all-church retreat on ZOOM from 2-4 PM. This will be a very important time to reflect on who we are as a church and what God is calling us to do in this new time. We have had to re-learn many things the last two years and the post-pandemic landscape is very different from what it was before. At the retreat, we will talk about what things have worked well for us and what we wish to keep as well as what things we have outgrown and what may need to change. It will be a wide-reaching discussion that will include time for worship, small group discussion, and listening to one another. Please plan to attend so that all voices can be heard!

As we traverse through Lent the promise of spring and Easter beckons. God's grace and peace be with you and your family!

Tim

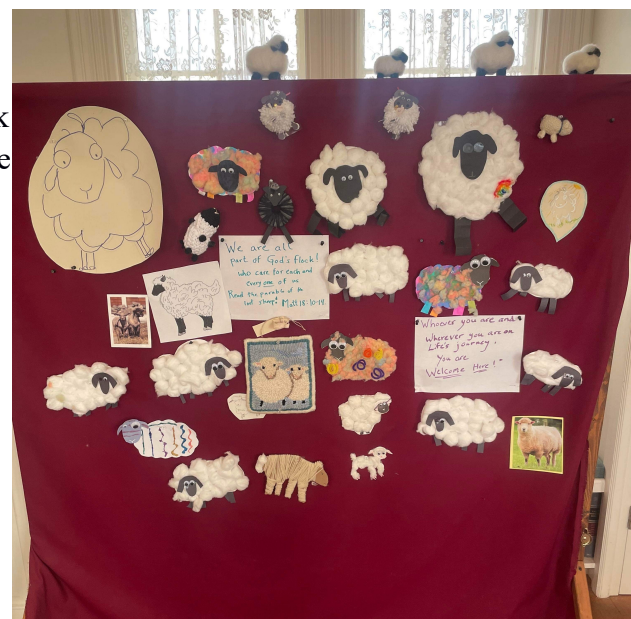
Christian Education News

We are in the middle of the season of Lent, and have been offering opportunities for our families to engage in simple Lenten practices at home. The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. We have been focusing on prayer, with simple prayers that can be used either before bed/dinner or weekly. Contemplation of one "Word a Day" has been one way of doing so. The word each day has been posted on the church Facebook page, as well as emailed to the families. If you'd like us to send you the word of the day, so you can spend time with it, let myself or Jim Chandler and Jenn Doyle (co-Chairs of the CE Committee) know.

We continue using our Sunday school curriculum, called Celebrate Wonder. Our latest stories have been of Jesus' last week with the disciples. Holy Week is full of many central events in the life, teaching, and death of Jesus. We're glad that this curriculum allows us to take the time to learn about these last days, without being rushed into one Sunday School lesson.

We have collected many sheep! It's been so nice to see all these sheep returning to the flock. We have an Easter Egg hunt scheduled for Saturday, April 16th - time TBD. Our Children's Sunday is tentatively scheduled for May 22nd.

We will be working on finding creative ways to experience some other parables as well, and bring them into the community. If you would like to help get involved with exploring the Parables in a hands-on fashion contact Patricia. (pboylewight@gmail.com). We like to work inter-generationally so if you are inspired by the parable, young and old, we would love your participation.



Blessings to you all. And blessings to all the “lost sheep” that have rejoined the flock.

Patricia and the CE Committee



WPCC School

WPCC School follows the Gould Academy schedule and is currently on spring break. The exciting news is the addition of two people to the school. Deb Richmond has been hired as an additional teacher. And they have an additional 5th grade student Ruby. March has been very short for our school, but a lot has happened... We welcomed Ms. Deborah and our student Ruby!

We finished our French classes up for the year. Students learned a lot of vocabulary that will give them a head start for higher level language learning. Did you know a child has a more likely chance of fluency in a second language if they're exposed to foreign language before age 11?

We had a great modern art class using Stockmar beeswax with Ms. Lewis. Students learned to use this lesson to let go of some difficult feelings. Ms. Gretchen started a “Wind in the Willows” study for literature. Students are eager to make watercolor drawing puppets of the characters and act out the story.

Students started a unit of Force and Motion with Mr. Chandler for science. Our lab was “egg-citing.” Students used a cup of water, a pie tin, a cardboard tube, and a raw egg. We stacked these materials and pushed the tin away quickly in hopes the egg would make it in the cup of water... it worked for everyone...

Phew!

Students rang the church bell daily and sent blessings to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.



We made embroidered Lent journals and write daily using our daily words for inspiration. We are eager to get started on our Earth Day celebrations and school Open House. Please let us know if you'd like to be a part of our Earth Day Celebration.

Jenn Doyle

From The Deacons

Sunday Vespers & Fellowship Time

Every Sunday at 5pm there is a gathering on Zoom. This is an opportunity to gather for a short time of meditation/reflection followed by a time of fellowship allowing us to catch up with each other. Many have found that Zoom provides another way of connecting, sharing, and being one in the Spirit. If you need the Zoom link, please contact Tim or Peggy.

Holy Week - Palm Sunday until Easter

During Holy Week we journey with Jesus from entering Jerusalem surrounded by a joyful crowd, to sharing a last meal with his friends, to the dark days of arrest & crucifixion culminating in the glory of Easter morning.

Palm Sunday- April 10 – Please enter through the chapel and pick up your palms. We will process into the sanctuary together singing our Halleluias.

Maundy Thursday – April 14 – At 7 PM there will be a Tennebrae service remembering that last night Jesus spent with his disciples. This will be a hybrid service.

Good Friday – April 15 – 7 PM on Zoom we will gather for a time of remembering Jesus's final hours of trial and crucifixion.

Easter – April 17 – Easter Sunrise Service on Paradise Road at 5:45 AM This is a time of readings, song, & communion as the sun rises.

Easter Flowers

It is always a joy to enter the sanctuary on Easter Sunday and find the altar filled with lilies & spring flowers.

We will not be doing orders through the church this year. If you would like to provide an Easter flower, please have it to the church by NOON on Saturday, April 16. Your Easter flowers may be given in memory or honor of the person(s) you want. There will be a sheet in the chapel to provide that information or email Peggy (peggywright65@gmail.com).

Love Bowl for April

The Love Bowl for April will be dedicated to Ukrainian Relief. Our donations will be given to UCC partners working in the field.

“Gifts to the [UCC Ukraine Emergency Appeal](#) will provide shelter, food and other care to war refugees and internally displaced people. It also will help refugees and asylum seekers from African, Middle Eastern and other countries who had sought refuge in Ukraine and now are twice displaced, as well as other citizens of more than 125 countries living in Ukraine.”

Please put “Ukraine “on the memo line of your check.

Hybrid Sunday Worship

Each Sunday the service is available live on YouTube and later in the day the recording will be uploaded to the page for you to watch at your leisure. Go to www.bethelcongregationalchurch.org

Lenten Coin Collection

Please fill your coin banks with your spare coins. The church's Lenten Coin Collection ends Sunday, April 24. We will be unable to gather for lunch and coin collecting in person this year, like the photo in 2016. So you are asked to roll your own coins and write a check to the church for the amount. You may turn in cash but it would be appreciated if most of it was in bills.

This annual collection is to raise money for our church's mission. It provides each of us time to say we are thankful for all the bounty we have in our lives.



Peggy Wight for the deacons

Pilgrim Lodge

Good news from the conference. The PL Search Committee has called a new Pilgrim Lodge director, Liz Charles McGough. Liz has a long history at Pilgrim Lodge, as camper, counselor, staff member, and dean. She believes in the transformational power of exploring faith in nature and in community with others.

Spring Clean-Up Weekend is two days, April 29 and April 30. Raking leaves, stacking wood, clearing brush, floating docks, sweeping floors, washing windows: there's so much to do to clean up at PL after the winter and get ready for summer! Any helping hands 6th grade and older who are willing to help care for and clean up camp may register (for free). Register with Pilgrim Lodge directly.

Flower List

Thank you, Susan, for organizing the list of people to place the flowers in the sanctuary each Sunday, helping to beautify our church. You have helped all of us see the beauty shared by others. There are more opportunities to sign up for other weeks. Please let Susan Herlihy know if you would like to share something for the sanctuary.

April 3 – Communion

March 10 – Palm Sunday – Iris Roberts

March 17 – Easter and Easter flowers (see note from the Deacons)

March 24 – Donna Coe

Birthdays in April

April 3 – Shawn Mulley

April 8 – Hunter Blair

April 10 – Maren DeCato

April 20 – Mary Scanlon

April 22 – Ben LeConey

April 23 – Steve Lovejoy

April 26 - Melinda Remington

April 23 – Gaelan Boyle-Wight

April 30 – James DeCarlo (Linda Gamble's grandson)

Heartwarming Church Stories project

MeSOM is offering a workshop on April 9 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. via Zoom on the Maine Small Church Story Project. What is our story now?

Vibrant Worship, Spirited Fellowship, Faithful Service: Small Congregations in the Maine Conference Create New Ways of Being Church.

This is a chance to share heartwarming stories before and during COVID. Presenters are Rev. Susie Craig, previous Associate Conference Minister for the Maine Conference; and Rev. Doug Dunlap, retired UCC minister.

About this workshop: “A common narrative of our time is that churches are dying as membership drops, and church income becomes insufficient to retain full time pastors and to maintain older church facilities. But there is a counter-narrative, that of churches, some quite small, and some following a time of brokenness, who are creating new ways of being church. In vibrant ways they celebrate their faith, care for one another, and reach beyond themselves to minister to the wider world in out-sized ways. We regard that vibrance as coming not in spite of small size, but rather as a result of congregations taking advantage of their small size.” the Rev. Doug Dunlap.

Cost of the workshop is \$10.00 due at the time of Registration. For more information and to register go to the Maine School of Ministry website: www.maineucc.org/ministries/mesom

Church Calendar for April

Sunday, April 3 - Worship with Communion at 10 AM at church and live streamed on YouTube Live;
ZOOM vespers at 5 PM

Monday, April 4 - Congo Craftsmen at 9 AM at Bob Iles' house (every Monday)

Tuesday, April 5 - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM (every Tuesday)
Book Group Zoom 7 PM

Wednesday, April 6 - Men's Breakfast at 8 AM at church and on ZOOM

Thursday, April 7 - Stewardship Committee at 2 PM at church;

Christian Education at 6:45 PM on ZOOM;

Lenten book study on Church of the Wild at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Friday, April 8 – American Red Cross Blood Drive 12 PM-4:30 PM at church

Sunday, April 10 - Palm Sunday worship at 10 AM at church and live streamed on YouTube Live;
ZOOM vespers at 5 PM

Tuesday, April 12 - Trustees at 6:30 PM on ZOOM

Wednesday, April 13 - World Service at 3 PM at church and on ZOOM

Thurs., April 14 - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service at 7 PM at church and live streamed on YouTube

Friday, April 15 - Good Friday vespers at 7:00 PM on ZOOM

Sunday, April 17 - Easter sunrise service at 5:45 AM on Paradise Hill;

Easter worship at 10 AM at church and live streamed on YouTube Live

Rev. Tim out of town April 18 through April 20th

Sunday, April 24 - Worship at 10 AM at church and live streamed on YouTube Live

All Church Retreat 2-4 PM on ZOOM

Tuesday, April 26 - Deacons at 10 AM at church and on ZOOM

Book Group this Tuesday

Book Group will meet Tuesday, April 4 at 7 PM to discuss *Enter the Aardvark* by Maine author Jessica Anthony. For now the April meeting will be via Zoom.

The next books are:

May 3 - *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah

June 7 - *The Sentence* by Louise Eldrich

July 5 - *The Things we Lost to the Water* by Eric Nguyen.

Any are welcome to the monthly book discussions. Contact Jane Chandler for a ZOOM link.

World Service to sponsor Smile Fund Sale May 14

Now is the time to clean up and clean out. Spring is coming and we have all collected “too much stuff.” The World Service committee would love to have an extra Smile or two from those items you no longer need. This fund provides dentures for adults that have no other way to gain a smile.

The Sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 14 from 9 AM to 1 PM. We won't collect any items until after Easter. The World Service Committee would like books, household items, tools, gardening supplies. Please NO clothing, shoes, encyclopedias, or electronics.



Maine Conference Covenant of Care

This Covenant of Care has been adopted by the Maine Conference Board of Directors as useful during any gathering of Conference leadership and is suggested as a model for all the churches of the Conference. The goal of all we do and all people we deal with is WELL BEING.

Our Church Council voted at its meeting on March 3, 2022, to adopt this language to be used at the beginning of all committee meetings and to be printed on all meeting agendas.

“We covenant to care for one another and offer compassion in thought, word, and deed. We will listen to learn, inquire to understand, and speak for hope and not harm. In both similarities and differences, we will ask for God’s grace and offer it freely to one another. Above all else, we will love and respect one another.” - Steve Wight, Moderator