

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

March, 2023 Newsletter
Steeple View
West Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



Pastor's Perspective

I greet you in the name and spirit of Christ! As I write this, the February chill is hanging on but March—that “hinge” month that can go either way, in like a lion and out like a lamb—is almost here. The season of Lent is upon us as well and, along with it, many opportunities for deepening of faith. Lent is a good time for self-reflection and asking ourselves the big questions of our faith: What is it I believe, how does it sustain me, and how am I going to put it into practice? Those are very important questions and are similar to the ones Jesus asked as he journeyed in his ministry toward the cross. We, as a church, have been asking those kinds of questions about who we are, what is our purpose, and what sustains us, in many different ways. We spent a lot of time discerning these things in the Fall months—through a Small Church Leadership community, a Paul Nickerson (UCC pastor/consultant) workshop, and in our own retreat. And, from that time, new possibilities have emerged. We are trying new things. We are attempting to go out into the community and meet people where they are. We are choosing life and vitality rather than death and stagnation. These are some of the new things happening:

- ☐ Creative forms of worship like our breakfast church service in January.
- ☐ A new model for youth ministry and the formation of a regular, ongoing Middle School Youth Group which will focus on arts and music (including the return of a youth bell choir) and service projects.
- ☐ A possible new weekly teen drop-in center.
- ☐ Helping to provide food at the “Wednesday night lights” family skiing event.
- ☐ A new members’ group with new members being welcomed this spring. As we go on this Lenten journey, we continue to look to God for guidance and inspiration. We find it in different Lenten worship services and activities such as:
- ☐ The return of the ecumenical Lenten lunches starting March 2nd (12-1 PM) and each Thursday in March.
- ☐ A Maundy Thursday Seder meal and Foot Washing service on April 6th.
- ☐ Worship each Sunday when we come together to share in Communion, incredible music, and overhear the encounters of Jesus and others engaging in “Heart to Heart Talks” (a Lenten sermon series).

May God bless and be with you on your own Lenten journey. Whether you are practicing a Lenten discipline of some kind (prayer, fasting, or almsgiving) or taking on some new practice for Lent...join us on the journey!

Peace, Tim

Christian Education News

Patricia Has Decided to Resign as Coordinator of Children, Youth and Family Ministries

After a time of reflection and prayer, Patricia has decided to resign her position as Coordinator of Children, Youth and Family Ministries. We thank her for her many gifts and years of providing ministry to children and their families.

Patricia is stepping down from her youth work but still feels very much a part of our church and our support for her. She will continue to be a participant in our congregation. Our prayers and support go out to her as well as thanks for her continued participation in the life of the church.

Jim Chandler

Christian Education/Youth Group

Bad weather throughout the month on Friday evenings has put some of our Youth Group meetings on hold, but when we were able to meet, we had a lot of fun.

WPCC Youth Group meets every Friday 5-7 PM (weather permitting) with dinner provided. Anyone in grades 4-8 is welcome. If children of other ages are interested, CE will gladly form an additional group. These Friday meetings will continue up until the June Children's Service.

In February we enjoyed pizza dinners together, played games (Sardines with Tim is a favorite), made beautiful paintings, reflected on the book reading with Mrs. Bullen, and discussed what we would like to do with our time together.

The children are motivated to help our community with food insecurity, to assist refugee families in Lewiston, make art with Ms. Lewis (art show is coming in June), make music together, and be good friends in a safe space.

March 10 starts our bell choir practice with Simon. Lessons will continue every week up to the Easter Service. The youth are thrilled! Please let us know if you plan to have your child join us for bells. Jenniifersdoyle@gmail.com

March 17 is our intergenerational potluck with Elizabeth Charles McGough, Director at Pilgrim Lodge who will be discuss the programs for children, teens, and adults. There also will be another potluck April 21, and Adam Leff from Gould will discuss his (and students) work with refugees.

Lots of fun planned for the rest of this year. Stay tuned...

Jenn Doyle, Christian Education

P.S. Please join me in wishing our youth best of luck this weekend at the Bill Koch Festival in VT. We can't wait to hear about the adventure at church on March 10.

Deacon news

Save your coins. The Deacons want to have a coin collection Sunday on April 16 following church. Save your coins during Lent and help the general fund of the church.

The Deacons are coordinating the church flower list for each Sunday in the upcoming calendar year. Please sign up to help decorate our church.

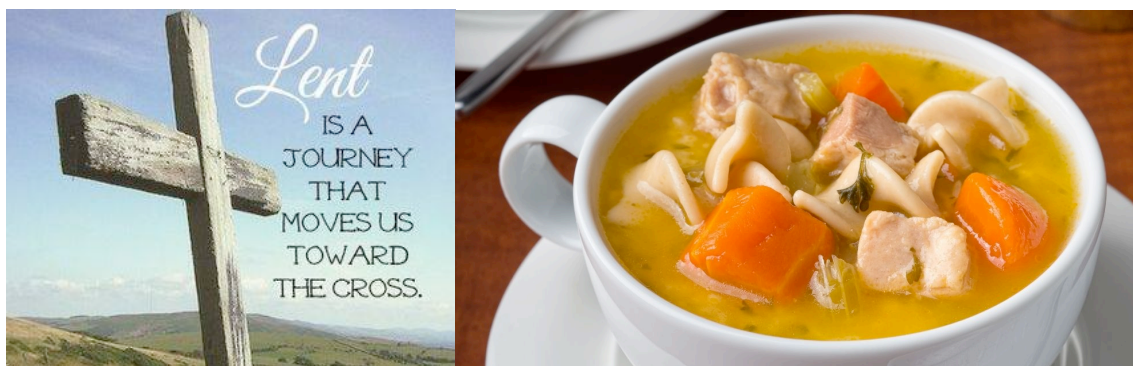
The Deacons have decided to let individuals order Easter flowers on their own and share them to decorate the church for Easter Sunday. Please bring any flowers you wish to share on the Saturday before Easter so they can be arranged in the sanctuary.



Palm Sunday, April 2 Tim will welcome new members to our church membership. This is an exciting time to celebrate our church growth.

Christian Education committee is sponsoring a Seder Meal on Thursday, April 6.

Jane Chandler for the Deacons



Lenten Lunches to start Thursday, March 2

After a 3 year hiatus, six area churches are excited to gather weekly for Lenten lunches on Thursdays from noon to 1 PM. Our church will host these gatherings, providing soup, bread and squares for the first Thursday, March 2.

We will also have someone on duty each week to assist with questions about the kitchen set up and clean-up.

Locke Mills Church and West Bethel Church will provide the meal for March 9. The Methodist Church and the Episcopal House Church will provide food for March 16. Our Lady of the Snows and the West Bethel Church will provide the meal March 23.

This is a great opportunity to share with other Christians in our community and have a spiritual message during Lent.

Sign up sheet is in the chapel.

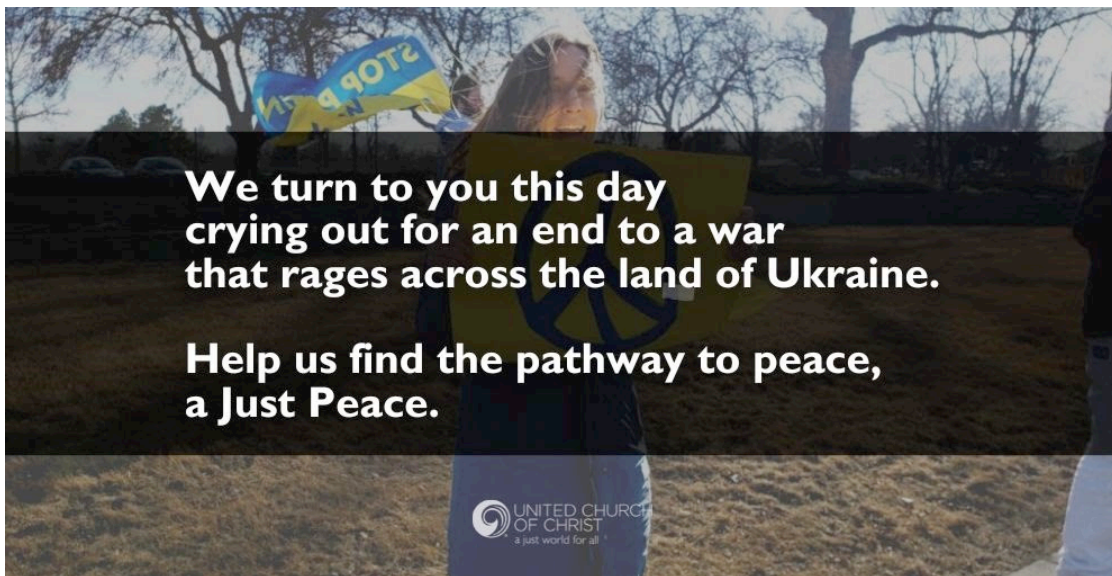
World Service

Love Bowl

March is earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria

The Deacons would like to share our care and concern for earthquake victims and families in Turkey and Syria. This devastating earthquake damaged so many homes and infrastructure and killed more than 47,000 people. It is hard to imagine the carnage from this devastating earthquake. Please give generously with your donation.

UCC Disaster Ministries is very involved in the earthquake recovery efforts. Checks to the church with earthquake in the memo line will direct the funds where they can be most effective.



A Prayer for Peace

Creator God, maker of all that is good.

Comforter God, restorer of peace between all peoples.

Redeemer God, healer of wounds that inflict trauma and chaos:

We turn to you this day crying out for an end to a war that rages across the land of Ukraine, threatens the lives of its inhabitants, and displaces millions of children no longer able to sleep in their beds, attend their schools, or play with their friends.

May your Spirit of peace soften the hearts of the politicians who rattle their sabers and threaten nuclear annihilation.

May your vision of a just world thwart the ambitions of dictators who are thirsty for conquer and lusting for lands over which to rule.

May your hope of shalom engender within our own hearts the call to let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with us.

Help us find the pathway to peace, a Just Peace, built on human rights and equity not just in Ukraine but in every land where bombs and guns are the sounds to which children fall asleep and from which families flee.

You are the source of our peace.

You are the horizon of our hope.

You are the author of our love.

May the promise of your enduring peace, your abiding hope, and your everlasting love sustain us all and bring the promise of a new and better day to the people of Ukraine.

Amen

The Council of Conference Ministers, United Church of Christ

Love Bowl for April will be One Great Hour of Sharing. Love Bowl for May will be Smile Fund to fund the local denture program in our church. The Smile Fund sale will be May 13 from 9 AM to 1 PM. Start sorting your cherished treasures for that community-wide sale.

Jane Chandler for the World Service Committee

Window Restoration Capital Campaign

The sanctuary windows don't open. They are draft and not energy efficient, and plexiglass, the cheaper solution, diminishes the light coming in.

The capital campaign, headed by Ted Davis, wants to raise \$55,000 to restore the windows so they can open and close for ventilation in the summer. This amount also includes storm windows for insulation and to save on heat.

Bruce Pierce says the work for the storm window installation will be done this fall. The Bagala Window Works specializes in historic window restoration and has our church on a list, with work slated for sometime in 2024.

Please let the light shine. You will receive a pledge card soon. Please give generously to repair these non-functioning windows, save on energy costs and let the light shine on our good deeds in the community.

Ted Davis

Book Group

Tuesday, March 7

Book group is open for anyone interested in reading and discussing interesting books. We are meeting in homes on the first Tuesday evening at 7 PM. And a Zoom link is available.



Jan Stowell will host book group March 7 at 7 PM. We are discussing *The Lost Pianos of Siberia* by Sophy Roberts. It explores the vast region of Siberia in history and culture as the author searches for pianos that brought music and enlightenment to that region.

Jim and Kay Rector will host the April 4th book group. We will discuss *The Lincoln Highway: A Novel* by Armor Towles.

Jane and Jim Chandler will also host book group Tuesday, May 2 at 7 PM. We'll discuss *The Power of One* by Brye Courtenay.

Jane Chandler

March Calendar of Events

Wednesday March 1 Men's Breakfast at 8 AM at church/on ZOOM

Thursday March 2 Lenten Lunch # 1 (hosted by WPCC), 12-1 PM; New Members' Group, 6:30 PM on ZOOM

Friday March 3 There will be NO Middle School Youth Group today

Sunday March 5 Worship with Communion, 10 AM at church/streaming on YouTube Live

Tuesday March 7 Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church/on ZOOM.

Wednesday March 8 Christian Education Committee, 12 PM at church/on ZOOM

Thursday March 9 Lenten Lunch # 2 at church (hosted by Locke Mills UCC and West Bethel Cong. Church), 12-1 PM

Friday March 10 Middle School Youth Group, 5-7 PM, Bell Choir Practice starts

Sunday March 12 Worship 10 AM at church/streaming on YouTube Live

Monday March 13 – Monday 20 Rev. Tim on vacation

Tuesday March 14 Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church/on ZOOM

Thursday March 16 Lenten Lunch # 3 at church (hosted by Methodist Church and Episcopal House Church), 12-1 PM

Friday March 17 Intergenerational Potluck with Pilgrim Lodge Director Liz Charles McGough

Sunday March 19 Worship 10 AM at church/streaming on YouTube Live (guest minister)

Tuesday March 21 Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church/on ZOOM

Wednesday March 22 World Service Committee, 3 PM at church/on ZOOM

Thursday, March 23 Lenten Lunch # 4 at church (hosted by Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church and W. Bethel Cong. Church), 12-1 PM

Friday March 24 Middle School Youth Group, 5-7 PM

Sunday March 26 Worship 10 AM at church/streaming on YouTube Live

Tuesday March 28 Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church/on ZOOM

Friday March 31 Middle School Youth Group, 5-7 PM

March flower list for the Sanctuary

Here are the people signed up:

3/12: Jane Chandler

3/19: Steve Lovejoy

3/26: Deb Richmond in memory of her mother

March Birthdays/Anniversaries

March 3 – Ivan and Susan Cooper

March 3 – Colburn Strugatskiv

March 5 – Marta Opie

March 12 – Baylee Dunham

March 14 – Maryjane Shiverick

March 18 – Will Doyle

March 24 – Martha Whittington

March 30 – Christine Trefethen

March 31 – Susan Herlihy