

The Circuit Writer

March, 2021

Apologies for the basic newsletter, EPUMC family. The program I use had issues and I had to recreate last minute. I figured content was more important than style. Style will return next month! ~ Jenny

Natalie's Notes:

Hi friends,

Happy Spring! What a joy it is to watch the changing of the seasons together!

As we head into the end of Lent and the beginning of the Easter season, I wanted to keep y'all in the know about a few things going on.

Sunday, March 28, is Palm Sunday! It's also the day that we will resume live worship! Put on a mask and come join us in the sanctuary at 10am if you feel comfortable doing so. If you're not ready for big groups yet, then I invite you to join us live via Zoom!

Friday, April 2, is Good Friday. I'll keep you posted on emerging details, but I'll make a short, meditative service available for you to watch via our website.

Sunday, April 4, is Easter Sunday! Join us at 10am to celebrate the Risen Christ!

It's an honor to be your pastor, and I thank God for every thought of y'all. Please feel free to reach out! I'm here for you.

With love,
Pastor Natalie

Coffee Fellowship

Each Sunday at 10 am, Pastor Natalie will host a brief time of fellowship.

(Please note: To join the live fellowship time from your computer or other device, click on the link below:

**** PLEASE NOTE – THIS IS A NEW ZOOM LINK ****

Topic: Sunday social time and noon book study

Time: Jan 10, 2021 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Sun, until Apr 25, 2021, 16 occurrence(s)

Mar 14, 2021 10:00 AM

Mar 21, 2021 10:00 AM

Mar 28, 2021 10:00 AM

Apr 4, 2021 10:00 AM

Apr 11, 2021 10:00 AM

Apr 18, 2021 10:00 AM

Apr 25, 2021 10:00 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZ0rf--grD8uHtTs8D0nmZI23FK73LEQWfe3/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqDMsEtaRtB2HRpx5BlqgM_zzpilbgrdpj0fBUy5eWA-kZcRpZeFTNenn

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686824440>

Meeting ID: 896 8682 4440

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,89686824440# US (New York)

+13017158592,,89686824440# US (Washington D.C)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C.)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 896 8682 4440

3

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89686824440>

Reopening

A tentative plan to resume in-person worship on Palm Sunday was endorsed at a special meeting of church members on March 1.

The virtual meeting was open to any members of the congregation who cared to join the Zoom chat and was attended by eight people. The group included Pastor Natalie Bowerman and seven members of the Church Council: David Orr, Penny Brunt, Linda and Dan Shannon, Brenda Morrow, Cathy Woodruff, and Rick Mausert, who chairs the Council and presided over the meeting.

Following a half-hour discussion, the group agreed to set Palm Sunday (March 28) as a target date for reopening. The group also agreed, however, to monitor pandemic conditions and be prepared to change course if the recent lull in transmissions does not continue or if other developments raise concerns about gathering in person.

Any plan for in-person worship would be accompanied by a virtual attendance option for members who prefer to worship with Eastern Parkway UMC remotely, via computer or phone.

The group reviewed several health and safety provisions used during last year's cautious re-opening. It was noted that no transmissions of the Covid-19 virus were traced to church attendance during that period.

The safety precautions included: a sign-in sheet for names and telephone numbers, in case needed for contact tracing; hand sanitizer; extra disposable masks at the sign-in desk; sanctuary windows open; physical distance between people from different households and mask wearing at all times.

Double-mask wearing may be recommended during this re-opening period, and restrictions on singing are likely to continue, for now. Some music may be recorded.

During the discussion, Pastor Natalie noted that strong interest in resuming in-person worship was expressed at the Celebration of Life service for Carol Haack and that the safety precautions at the service were effective and well-received. She said there is much energy among church members for gathering again, and "Zoom fatigue" appears to be discouraging some remote participation.

Pastor Natalie also observed that our technological savvy has improved since we began using remote and recorded elements of our services, as well as live-streaming and Zoom. As a result, the worship experience for those who cannot attend in person has improved.

Reopening, cont.

The Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church has not provided specific guidance or recommendations for reopening protocols, Pastor Natalie said. She said there is a wide spectrum of practices among area churches. Some never suspended in-person worship while others stopped gathering early in the pandemic and have not resumed, even temporarily.

Practices and rules regarding singing, temperature checks and other precautions also vary widely, the pastor said.

Several members of the group provided information and thoughts based on their own recent experience and observations.

Schenectady County has largely deferred to guidance offered by the Centers for Disease Control and New York State, David said. And Brenda, who recently worked with children in Schenectady city schools, said she and others wore two masks to gain enhanced protection from potential exposure.

An apparent rise in Covid cases involving new variants of the virus is raising some concerns, Brenda said.

There was a consensus to consider Palm Sunday a kind of “dry run” for Easter and to leave planning of the Easter service to the worship committee. The group also discussed possibly setting a maximum occupancy for Easter and possibly offering two service times on Easter Sunday.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR MARCH 2021 NEWSLETTER — **UPDATED**

The table below summarizes the operating budget performance through February 28, 2021, which represents 16.2% of the year elapsed.

	Budget	Actual as of 2/28/2021	Actual as % of Budget
Expenses	\$191,123	\$27,359	14.3%
Program	\$8,340	\$496	5.9%
Property	\$45,059	\$13,148	29.2%
Personnel	\$107,236	\$10,754	10.0%
Payments to Conference	\$30,488	\$2,961	9.7%
Income	\$180,083	\$23,214	12.9%
Pledges	\$128,913	\$21,737	16.9%
Trustees contributions	\$36,000	\$0	0.0%
Other Income	\$15,170	\$1,477	9.7%
Income Less Expenses	-\$11,040	-\$4,146	37.6%

The Church Council approved the 2021 operating budget at its December meeting. As shown in the table, the budget anticipates a deficit of about \$11,000.

Projected income for 2021 is \$27,400 less than 2020, a 13% decrease. Almost all of this decrease can be attributed to a decline in pledge income. The 2021 pledge campaign yielded 45 pledges for a total of \$128,913 compared to 60 pledges for \$154,437 in 2020. Of those 45 pledges, 12 represented an increase over 2020 (including one new pledge), 29 stayed the same, and four decreased.

Budgeted expenses for 2021 are \$21,000 below 2020, a 10% decrease. Most of the savings came from the personnel category including a reduction in the hours of the Administrative Assistant and the discontinuation of the Outreach Coordinator position.

Church finances continue to be adversely affected by the absence of a rent-paying tenant in the education wing. The Trustees have been working with a realtor for over a year to locate a suitable tenant, but demand for commercial space has dried up during the pandemic. In the past, the Trustees have passed along a large portion of the education wing rental income to the church budget. To compensate for this lost income, the charge conference in November voted to allow the Trustees to tap into the church endowment to provide up to \$36,000 for the church budget in 2021. The Trustees will transfer half of that amount in March and the balance later in the year as needed.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact the church treasurer, Randy Roeser.

EPUMC Church Family-

We are currently seeking individuals to join our EPUMC Usher Team!

If you have been an usher in the past and would like to continue on the Team or you would like to join the Usher Team and be part of the schedule please let us know.

Contact:

Brenda Morrow

ballynmorrow@gmail.com

518-852-9288

2020-2021 Outreach Team tentative activities
(events are subject to change due to COVID-19)

April

College Care packages

Let's support our EPUMC college and graduate students as they finish out this challenging school year!

We will once again be looking for donations to pack in boxes to be sent in April to cheer on our students. Homemade or store-bought goodies- cookies, candy, treats are welcome. Cards and other small gadgets/gifts are also welcome. I anticipate there will be about 6 to 9 students.

Our goal is to pack the boxes in mid April.

Monetary donations can also be made to EPUMC with College Care noted on the memo line. This will help with postage and additional items. Please contact Trish Roeser if you are able to provide something for the boxes and to be contacted later when plans are better defined.

More detailed information will be forthcoming!

Thank you in advance for your support!

College Care Package Information needed!

It is already that time of year when we check to see who is in college/graduate school and might enjoy a "package of encouragement" from their church family during the exam season.

Please email me information about your child if they are in college or graduate school. I will need their graduation year and their current snail mail address please. Last year, we sent gift cards, but this year we plan to send a package.

Thank you!

Trish

patriciaroeser2@gmail.com

Growth Committee News

\$143,235 !

Wow! The EPUMC GROWTH Committee has calculated that from its beginnings in 2005 through 2020, \$143,235 has been granted to many, many non-profit agencies, local and international! The list is long but covers many local organizations like the Joan Nicole Prince home for the terminally ill, Bethesda House, Schenectady Community Ministries (SiCM), Samaritan Counseling, Schenectady High School , Soldier's Heart, Roots and Wisdom, and Things of my Very Own. International causes have also been supported such as UMCOR Disaster relief and a school in Managua, Nicaragua. Please know that even during this challenging pandemic, funds overseen by our Trustees and the GROWTH Committee have been reaching out to help improve our community and our world. Hallelujah!

The application forms and more information are on our church website under "Acts of Compassion".

New members are needed on the GROWTH Committee. If you are interested, please contact our pastor, Natalie Bowerman, or committee member Trish Roeser.

Just a reminder that EPUMC administers a GROWTH Fund(Gifts, Renewal, Outreach, Witness, Talents, & Help) that awards grants to organizations and individuals for projects that are consistent with EPUMC's mission, vision, and values.

An internal GROWTH Committee reviews applications twice a year. The next deadline for submission of applications is March 31. Completed applications can be mailed to the GROWTH Committee, Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, 943 Palmer Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12309.

The application form is available on our church website under "Acts of Compassion".The following guidelines might be helpful for deciding whether to submit an application:

- Local, national and international non-profit organizations have received funding, but local groups that may not receive other set funding have received preference.
- Preference is also given for new projects, programs, or initiatives with potential to continue with other funding sources in the future.
- Funds are not meant to support an organization's general expenses.
- The amount of funding available varies each year, and there is no set amount to request.

The Committee has approved grants \$800 to \$10,000 with a majority of awards being between \$1,500 and \$3,000.

Contact Trish Roeser if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks!

Many thanks for the Valentine Greeting and the Valentine cookies! We were delighted to see Linda Shannon for a brief moment when she delivered the goodies. Will be wonderful when we can be back in our Sanctuary for worship!

With our appreciation, Russell and Joyce Smith

A huge thank you to the Member Care/Visitation Committee teams for sending Valentine's Day wishes to our seniors and homebound with phone calls, cards, cookies and muffins. Linda.

In 2021, Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church continues to fight against the challenges of disease, disaster, displacement and other concerns that leave people hungry. Join with us as we raise funds to help neighbors near and far get the meals they need today and sustainable food security for tomorrow.

Use the link below to join the team, make a donation, or both!

Let's do this together!

events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/eastern-parkway-united-methodist

February contribution statements were mailed/emailed on or about 3/2. If you expected to receive a statement and did not, please contact Penelope Brunt at: finsec.epumc@gmail.

Young People's Collection Schedule
(If you would like to include with your offering)
1st Sunday: TOMVO 2nd Sunday: Sock Project
3rd Sunday: SCM 4th Sunday: Stone Soup
5th Sunday: Circle B

EPUMC is accepting applications for a part-time (10 hours/week) Administrative Assistant. Please send resume and letter of interest to Brenda Morrow, SPPRC Chairperson: ballynmorrow@gmail.com

UPCOMING LITURGISTS

March

7 Cheryl Gerstler
14 Diana Carter
21 Tymesia Nabors
28 Sean Bowerman

April

4 Marilyn Esmann
11 David Orr
18 Bob Bour
25 Randy Roeser

UPCOMING LECTIONARY

3/14: Numbers 21:4-9, Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22,
Ephesians 2:1-10, John 3:14-21

3/21: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 51:1-12,
Hebrews 5:5-10, John 12:20-33

Palm Sunday: *Liturgy of the Palms:* Mark 21:1-11,
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29,
Liturgy of the Passion: Isaiah 50:4-9a,
Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11,
Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54

Maundy Thursday: Exodus 12:1-4 (5-10), 11-14
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26,
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday: Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22,
Hebrews 10:16-25, John 18:1-19:42

Easter Sunday: Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24,
1 Corinthians 15:1-11, John 20:1-18, Mark 16:1-8

Upcoming Birthdays

Rebecca Stacy	4-Mar
Jill Smolinski	10-Mar
Kate Batzinger	11-Mar
Nancy Curran	15-Mar
Lois Wilson	15-Mar
Alice Menis	17-Mar
Marilyn Lucas	20-Mar
James Anderson	21-Mar
Desiree Chaires	23-Mar
Tolulope Oshinowo	25-Mar
Gary Gridley	27-Mar
Jonathan Conrad	28-Mar
Robin Granger	1-Apr
Annie Grace Cumings Ledbetter	1-Apr

I wondered why there was music coming from my printer...

...apparently, the paper was jamming.