
THE EPISTLE

Volume 24 Issue 4

April 25, 2019

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:

The appointed Gospel Reading for the Third Sunday after Easter (May 5th) is John 21:1-19 in which the Risen Christ appears to his disciples after they had a disappointing night of fishing failure. After serving them breakfast on the beach, Jesus speaks to them and specifically calls Peter to “feed my sheep,” telling him again, “Follow me.”

Even as Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus calls him three more times, calling Peter to love Jesus and commissioning him, giving him the assignment of feeding Jesus’ beloved sheep. In spite (or perhaps because) of Peter’s past failure, Jesus puts Peter in charge of his flock, asking him to attend to, feed, and keep the sheep of Jesus’ pasture.



May 2019

Peter denied Jesus three times back in that dark twilight of that Friday we have the gall to call “good.” Now, thrice Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?” And thrice Peter answers in the affirmative: “Yes! Yes! Yes, I love you!”

I don’t think Jesus is quizzing Peter but repeating his question in order to reassure him. When he asks, “Do you love me?” Jesus seems confident that the answer is “Yes!” Though Peter disappointed himself and Rabbi Jesus and failed at being the perfect disciple, nevertheless his love for Jesus is sure. Dearly loving Jesus doesn’t mean that we will never disappoint ourselves or Jesus.

Yet the important thing is that Jesus returns to Peter, engages him, and commissions him. Our Gospel Reading concludes with a curious prediction of Peter’s death. One day Peter – the one who once denied his Messiah, the one who was forgiven and recalled to be a disciple of Jesus – will eventually die for his Christ. Peter, the failure, the one who was charged by Jesus with tending the sheep who were failures, will succeed as a martyr – that is, as a witness to Christ. Peter will prove, in the end, completely steadfast and faithful to Jesus’ “Follow me!” invitation.

Easter tide, the days after the resurrection, is not simply moving with Jesus into eternity, nor primarily Jesus taking us into eternity. Easter concludes with the words ringing in our ears: “Follow me.”

I think there’s a lesson here for us in this account of Jesus breakfasting with the disciples on the beach. If we thought Easter and the Risen Christ meant that Jesus has erased all discouragement, frustration, and failure from the world and from our lives, sorry!

I hope that in our times of failure, when we aren’t the follower of Jesus we intended to be, when believing in the way of Jesus is difficult for us, when we are disappointed by the results of our labors, when we face failure in our own ministry (and all of us are ministers of Christ), we will remember this post-Easter story, and take heart.

Our failure does not negate Christ’s vocation for us. Even in our failures to follow, Jesus keeps showing up to us in our ordinary lives. He keeps encouraging us, and he keeps saying to us – even us – “Follow me!”

Keep the faith! Keep on following!

Faithfully Yours in Steadfast Discipleship,
Pastor Greg Rupright



*May
Worship
Schedule*

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES

(bold font indicates key scripture text(s) for the Message)

May 5th

Third Sunday of Easter – Holy Communion

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20); Psalm 30; Revelation 5:11-14; **John 21:1-19**

Intergenerational Message: “Feed My Sheep”

May 12th

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; **John 10:22-30**

Message: “We Are Spoken For”

May 19th

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6; **John 13:31-35**

Message: “Making Love in Church”

May 26th

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5; John 14:23-29

Guest Preacher

CHURCH NEWS

THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAM MEETING

The Annual Meeting will be held following worship on **May 12th**. Annual reports will be distributed, and the election of officers and board members will be held.

Annual reports from officers, boards and committees are due in the church office by April 28th.



2019 NY CONFERENCE UCC ANNUAL MEETING

Pastor Greg will be attending the 2019 New York Conference UCC Annual Meeting which will be held in Poughkeepsie, NY. He will be out-of-town from Wednesday, May 15th through and including Saturday, May 18th.

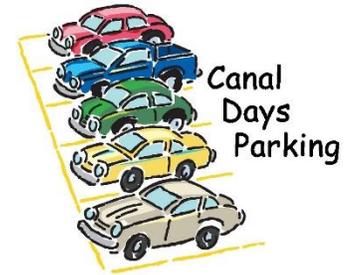
PASTOR'S VACATION

Pastor Greg will be on vacation from Friday, May 24th through and including Tuesday, May 28th. Information about emergency pastoral coverage will be announced in an upcoming News in the Pews.



CANAL DAYS PARKING FUND RAISER

This year's parking proceeds will be going to the church instead of the youth mission trip. The church needs your help parking cars on June 1 and 2. If you can help, please sign-up on the rolling bulletin board in fellowship hall. If you have any questions, contact Brian Sherry at 585-233-1010.



EUCHRE TOURNAMENT: Sunday, May 19 at 6:00 PM.

All church members and friends are welcome to play.
Bring a snack to pass.

Signup sheet located on rolling bulletin board. (Please be sure to sign up so I know how many tables and deck of cards I need to purchase/borrow)

FREE HYMNALS

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, we soon will have new hymnals. If you would like to keep an old hymnal that was dedicated to a loved one, please take it any time. If you would simply like to have a keepsake of the music of the past 40 years at our church, please take a hymnal any time. Any hymnals that you take home will reduce the impact on our landfill, so we thank you! If you have any other ideas for recycling the hymnals, please share them with Worship Ministries.



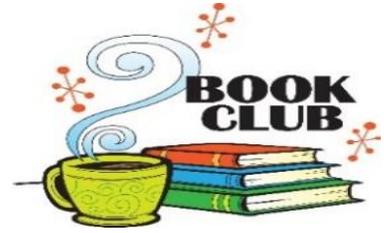
A SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS

There will be a Service for Healing & Wholeness in the Snow Room on Sunday, May 19th, at 10:45 A.M.

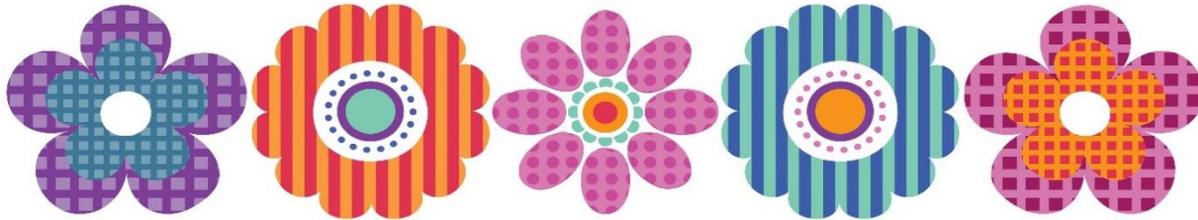
ALL ARE WELCOME!

BOOK CLUB 2019

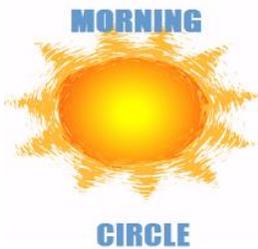
Below is the complete schedule for the next 2 meetings. We meet from **1:00-2:30** on the last Monday of the month. (*Note: In May we will meet on the 3rd, not the last, Monday, due to the Memorial Day holiday.)



Date:	Book Title	Author	Presenter
May 20*	The Sweetness of Forgetting	Kristin Harmel	Irene Utter
June 24	Planning meeting for 2019-2020		



CIRCLE NEWS



MORNING CIRCLE

Morning Circle will have its planning meeting **AT THE CHURCH** on May 14 at 10:00. Please come with ideas for upcoming programs as well as your lunch!

EVENING CIRCLE

The Evening Circle has scheduled their May 13 meeting at Lucas Greenhouse on Pannell Road, Perinton. We will start promptly at 6:30. Bring your favorite pot, a small trowel, and garden gloves. Sue charges a small fee for the potting soil and the remaining cost will depend on what flowers you pick. This is one of everyone’s favorite meetings. Please feel free to bring a friend or neighbor and join us!



Invitations from Our Neighbors

ST. LUKE'S SPRING BAZAAR

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 77 Country Corner Lane, isn't letting inclement weather spoil thoughts of springtime. It is time for the second annual Spring Bazaar! Members are planning a Vendor and Craft Show from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm on Saturday, May 18, 2019. The Bazaar is open to the public and there is no admission fee.

Over 20 booths selling spring plants, jewelry, clothing, cosmetics, essential oils, cooking products and craft items including quilt items, embroidery, painted glassware, ceramics, pottery, photography, paintings and more will be for sale. Plan on staying for lunch or a snack! The youth group and men's club will be on hand selling donuts and coffee, grilled hot dogs and beverages.

Bring your friends, your neighbor and your family. This is the perfect place to think Spring and select that special gift for yourself or someone else. For more information, contact: website at www.stlukesfairport.org, email - slukefpt@frontiernet.net, or mennis1@rochester.rr.com

DINING FOR WOMEN IS HOSTING A FREE RECRUITMENT EVENT



Dining for Women (DFW) is the world's largest educational giving circle. We work to ensure gender equality and end extreme poverty by investing in women and girls in the developing world and fostering global citizens here in the U.S.

DFW currently has more than 460 chapters across the U.S. with over 8,000 active members. There are 16 chapters in New York State including the ROCHESTER and FAIRPORT Chapters.

Since Dining for Women's inception in 2003, the organization has invested more than \$6 million to support women and girls in more than 65 countries around the world. Investing in women and girls pulls whole families, communities, and even countries, out of extreme poverty.

WHAT: **FREE** event to anyone who wants a sense of community while making a difference & having fun and is interested in learning more about how to start or join a chapter. Wine and light hors d'oeuvres will be served.

WHERE: The Inn on Church, 11 West Main Street, Fairport, NY

WHEN: Tuesday, May 14, 6 PM to 7:30 PM

WHO: Northeast Regional Leaders, Susan Prener, Fairport, NY & Kathleen Williams, Holbrook, MA will discuss what a local Dining for Women chapter is all about.

SPECIAL GUEST:

Dr. Connie Lawrence, Department of Nursing, The College at Brockport, will discuss her extensive experience as a University Partner with one of DFW's grantees, Sacred Valley Health in Peru.

Contact Susan Prener, Northeast Regional Leader, for more information or to RSVP. Phone number: 585-478-0949; email: ne3@diningforwomen.org. You can also visit www.diningforwomen.org for more information.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

SYMPATHY & CONDOLENCES

The members of First Congregational United Church of Christ extend their sympathy and condolences to Angie Last-Meraw whose mother, Nina Last, passed away on April 19, 2019. Rest eternal grant Nina, O God; may light perpetual shine upon her.



Sympathy cards may be mailed to:

Angie Last-Meraw
46 Miles Avenue
Fairport, NY 14450



LIGHT THE NIGHT

Thank you to Barb Roscoe for keeping the steeple lights burning bright during the month of April in loving memory of Bill Roscoe.

Thank you to Bill and Sue Harris for lighting the night throughout the month of May in memory of their loving parents.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Charlotte Jackson, Fairport Baptist Home
Gerry Hammond
Mary Lou Woodhouse
Marge Brooks, Heathwood



Next "Epistle" Deadline is
(The "Third Thursday")
May 16, 2019



Frequently our church will take photos or videos of members, including children and youth, involved in church related activities. These photos and videos may be used in church-produced publications, on our website or on social media including but not limited to Facebook. If you do not wish to have photos or videos of yourself or your child used, please see Vicki Sherry in the church office to sign an exclusion form.

The Epistle is printed once a month by the First Congregational United Church of Christ, 26 East Church St. Fairport, New York, 14450

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Church Service Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 9:00-3:30
Monday through Friday (Monday-Thursday in July and August)

Rev. Gregory J. Rupright, Pastor
Rev. Dr. John N. Cedarleaf, Pastor Emeritus
Administrative Assistant: Vicki Sherry
Church Moderator: Steve Smith
Organist: Beatrice Benedict
Director of Music Ministries: Heather Watras
Business Administrator: Sue Brooks
Wedding Coordinator: Betty Shamblen
Sunday School Teacher: Yaliza Frank



First Congregational United Church of Christ
26 East Church Street
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