

THE EPISTLE

Volume 23 Issue 2

February 22, 2018

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:

Back in the day (a long, long time ago in universe far away), I remember hearing UCC minister, the Rev. Mimi Hollister, preach an Ash Wednesday sermon, "Lent Is for Pilgrims." Rev. Hollister said that Lent is a journey toward Golgotha that is marked with painful, tiny steps leading to the death of self. Lent helps Christian sojourners to live through their daily difficulties because they are walking alongside the One who set his face toward Jerusalem. Surely, Jesus must have realized that journeying toward Jerusalem and clashing with his religious leaders could mean severe punishment or even death. Why would Jesus knowingly journey toward his death?



In this journey we call life, are we not all knowingly journeying toward death? Could Lent be a time for honest reflection and assessment of one's own life journey? What could this journey mean for us in light of our world's turbulent international relationships and the horrific shootings over the past year-and-a-half?

So maybe Lent is a good time to remember that we will not live forever. Lent is also a good time to reflect on the first question and answer from the Heidelberg Catechism, one of the many testimonies to faith that is accepted by our United Church of Christ:

Question: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I am not my own, but belong – body and soul,
in life and in death – to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

Well, to whom do you belong, and where are you on your lifelong faith journey?

Thoughtfully & Prayerfully, Your Fellow Sojourner,
Pastor Greg Rupright



March



Worship Schedule

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES

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

MARCH 4TH

Third Sunday in Lent/Holy Communion

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19;

1 Corinthians 1:18-25; **John 2:13-22**

Intergenerational Message: "Walking With Jesus at Temple"

Presented by the Sunday School directed by Ms. Jennifer Lessard

MARCH 11TH

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22;

Ephesians 2:1-10; **John 3:14-21**

Message: "The Test – God's Love!"

MARCH 18TH

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12;

Hebrews 5:5-10; **John 12:20-33**

Message: "The Magnetic Cross"

MARCH 25TH

Palm Sunday

Psalm 31:9-16; Hebrews 11:1-13, 39-40; Isaiah 41:1-10;

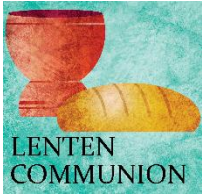
Philippians 1:3-6; 2:5-11; Ephesians 2:1-10

Palm Sunday Choral Music Presentation, "In Hope, Faith, and Service"

Presented by the Chancel Choir

Directed by Ms. Heather Watras, Director of Music Ministries

CHURCH NEWS



WEDNESDAY LENTEN COMMUNION

Each Wednesday during Lent, there will be an informal and brief Communion Service in the Snow Room at 10:15 A.M. on March 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Holy Communion & Tenebrae Service, **March 29th at 7:00 P.M.**

Six Readers are needed for the Tenebrae portion of the Service. Please sign up on the Maundy Thursday Reader's Sign-Up List posted in the Community Room. Thank you.



GOOD FRIDAY

At noon on Good Friday, join our neighbors carrying the cross through the village of Fairport. We will pray at the police station, memorial parks, churches, funeral homes and school administration offices remembering some of the ways our Fairport community does address suffering. All ages are welcome; bring little ones in baby carriages, strollers and wagons; the pace is not fast and wheelchairs traverse the Way of the Cross just fine. **We will start at the First Congregational United Church of Christ opposite the Fire House at 26 E. Church St at noon March 30th. If you would like to carry the cross or read a scripture please let Pastor Greg know as soon as possible.** Thank you.

GRIEFSHARE SUPPORT GROUP

A new GriefShare Support Group will begin on Tuesday, **March 20th from 10:00 A.M. – 12 Noon** in the Snow Room. GriefShare is a network of thousands of grief recovery support groups meeting around the world. GriefShare is a faith-centered program with direction and purpose. With GriefShare you will learn how to walk the journey of grief and be supported on the way. It is a support group where people who

Grief Support Group

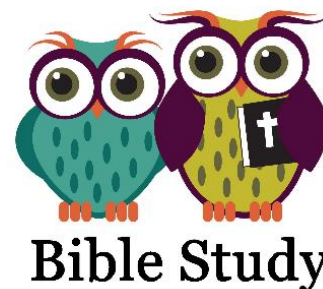


have lost loved ones and friends can find healing and hope. GriefShare covers various aspects of going through the grieving process over a period of 13 sessions. Pastor Greg & Diana Smith will be among some of the co-facilitators for this group. We are looking for other co-facilitators. If you wish to participate in the GriefShare Group either as a participant or a facilitator, please sign up on the GriefShare Participant or Facilitator's Sign-Up List posted on the Rolling Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall. Thank you.

MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

The 11:00 A.M. Wednesday Morning and Sunday Morning Bible Study Groups will be completing *Worship Old & New* by Robert E. Webber, which presents the worship history of the Judeo-Christian faith.

On Tuesday, March 13th & Sunday, March 18th, the Morning Bible Study Groups will begin reading *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson. This book is the Vol. III of *Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series*.



FEBRUARY 28TH & MARCH 4TH

Read *Worship Old & New*, Chapter 20, “The Services of the Christian Year,” pp. 217-227 & Chapter 21, “The Sacred Actions of Worship,” pp. 229

MARCH 7TH & MARCH 11TH

Read *Worship Old & New*, Chapter 22, “Worship and Related Ministries,” pp. 253-259 & Chapter 23, “A Challenge to Evangelical Worship Renewalists,” pp. 261-264.

** Since some members of the Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group will be attending a lecture at the Jewish Community Center on Wednesday, March 14th, the Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group will meet on Tuesday, March 13th at 11:00 A.M.*

MARCH 13TH* & MARCH 18TH

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, “Welcome: Oh, How I Like Jesus,” pp. xvii-xxi & Chapter 1, “Son of Man,” pp. 1-13.

MARCH 21ST & 25TH

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 1, “Son of Man,” pp. 13-27. Please be sure to read the following scriptures that accompany Robertson’s textbook: John 1:35-51; Luke 2:21-40; John 11:1-57.

**There will be NO MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUPS on Wednesday, March 28th or
Easter Sunday, April 1st.**

WE MEET IN THE SNOW ROOM & ALL ARE WELCOME!



A SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS

There will be a Service for Healing & Wholeness in the Snow Room on Sunday, March 18th at 10:45 A.M. All are welcome!



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS ON MARCH 11TH!

Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 11th at 12 A.M. So remember to spring ahead on Saturday, March 10th by setting your watches and clocks ahead by one hour.

RMDS, QCDS AND CHURCH GIVING

If you are the owner of a traditional IRA and are receiving a Required Monthly Distribution (RMD), are you aware of a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD)?

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity, such as First Church. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year, as long as certain rules are met.

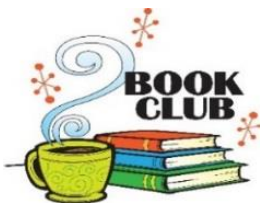


With the new tax law, many of us may no longer be able to itemize deductions on our tax returns. If you are 70½ and are currently receiving an RMD, you may be able to make your donations to First Church directly from the custodian of your IRA. By doing so, you are able to reduce your adjusted gross income on your tax return.

This is a little known tax advantage for seniors over 70½ who are receiving an RMD. However, many restrictions and requirements must be met. Contact the custodian of your IRA and your income tax professional for more information.

BOOK CLUB

On February 26th Pat Patt will lead our discussion of *The Language of Flowers*, by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. We meet in Fellowship Hall, usually on the last Sunday of the month, at 1:00 and all are welcome.



On March 26 Sharon Barmore will lead our discussion of *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead.

Looking forward to April, our book selection will be *The Friday Night Knitting Club* by Kate Jacobs. We will meet on April 30th.

YOUTH NEWS

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM WITH MT. RISE UCC

First Congregational UCC will join with Mt. Rise UCC for A Joint Confirmation Program, beginning in December. Confirmation Session dates and meeting places:



03/11/18 (Mt. Rise);
03/25/18 (First);
04/15/18 (Mt. Rise);

04/29/18 (First);
05/06/18 (Mt. Rise);
05/20/18 Confirmation Sunday (First).

Presently, all Confirmation Sessions will be from 1:00-2:30 P.M., which may vary depending on the focus of each Confirmation Session. The facilitators are the Ms. Anne-Marie Miller & the Rev. Dr. Greg Osterberg (Mt. Rise UCC) and Ms. Jennifer Lessard & the Rev. Greg Rupright (First Congregational UCC).

Missions

BACKPACK PROJECT:

Our Lenten Project this year will again assist Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services. RRRS plans to start a small business to manufacture school backpacks. We along with Fieldtex, RIT and Nazareth will help them.



URGENT NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS AT ADVENT HOUSE!

If you've been thinking about volunteering for a while but just haven't made the move - please consider coming to Advent House as a Hands-On caregiver! You don't need experience ~ just a caring heart. ❤️

Advent House will train you and the time commitment is only one 4 hour shift twice a month. You can find more information on their website: theadventhouse.org

If you're interested or have any questions please call Laurie at 223-6112 or email at theadventhouse@yahoo.com.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

SYMPATHY & CONDOLENCES

The members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ extend their heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the following families:



The family of Sandra Vera Tolley (Butterworth), who entered eternal life on January 26, 2018. She is survived by her best friend and husband, John Tolley, and her sons, Steven (his wife, Lois), Paul (his wife, Kris), and grandchildren: Kenny (Heather), Samantha, John, Aiden, and Leah. Rest eternal grant Sandra, O God; may light perpetual shine upon her. Amen.

The family of Easton ("Kel") Kelsey, who entered eternal life on February 9, 2018. Kel is survived by his wife, Joanne, his son, John Kelsey, his daughter-in-law, Marlene, and his grandchildren, Stephen, Lauren, her fiancé Constantine, and Sasha. He was predeceased by his son Jeff. Rest eternal grant Easton, O God; may light perpetual shine upon him. Amen.

LIGHT THE NIGHT



Thank you to Sue and Bill Harris for lighting the night during the month of February in memory of their parents.

Thanks to Joyce Cowden for keeping the steeple lights burning bright in March in memory of loved ones.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Charlotte Jackson, Heathwood
 Robert Wagner, Fairport Baptist Home
 Gerry Hammond
 Charlotte Jackson
 Mary Lou Woodhouse
 David Breckenridge
 Sue Boland



Next "Epistle" Deadline is
 (The "Third Thursday")
March 15, 2018



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.

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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
Christian Education Teacher: Jen Lessard



First Congregational United Church of Christ
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