

# THE EPISTLE

Volume 25 Issue 2

February 27, 2020

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:



Ash Wednesday (February 26<sup>th</sup>), we entered Lent by gathering for a Meager Meal of soup and bread (no butter, mind you!). Lent is the season of repentance, of turning our lives toward God's ways, of admitting just how all too human our lives really are. And so, I begin this season with my own personal confession: I love eating food, especially those foods that are unhealthy but taste good. I dip my hand into that potato chip bag and promise God that I'll eat just one handful. Five minutes later my fingers have reached the bottom of the bag. I stand on the bathroom scales, read the numbers and cry, "Fake news!" How I wish I could discover a new me that wasn't so drawn to my old, human inclinations.

I have lost count of the number of people over the years who have said something like, "It seems the more I try to do what's right, the more mistakes I end up making." I always respond, "So, you're a human being." Read the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans. "Why can't I do the good that I want to do, and instead end up doing the very things that I despise?" (That's my paraphrase of Romans 7:18-20).

This human, all-too-human inclination, this feeling of being trapped, Paul colorfully calls "the old Adam." Remember old Adam? God put the first legendary hominids in a lush garden so rich and bountiful they didn't even need to work. God said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Oh, and one other thing, stay off that tree over there. You can eat fruit from the hundreds of other trees, but not that tree."

I wonder what God might say to our primordial parents' descendants (That's us!) today? "Take care of the good earth I have given you. Don't chop down more trees and kill more rainforests. Don't hoard all the food for a small percentage of the population. Share your abundance equally with all your sisters and brothers."

Well, we know how the story ends. The minute God's back was turned, Eve and Adam saw the forbidden fruit looking tasty and even more appealing because of God's prohibition. "Did God *really* say," asked the serpent, the knowledgeable first theologian, "you won't *really* die, will you?" So Adam took and ate, and Eve did the same, and let's just say human innocence lasted for maybe fifteen minutes. And that's the story of willful and rebellious old Adam and Eve.

From our beginning failure in Eden – all the sins of raping and pillaging, exploitation, wars and rumors of wars, terrorists and terror against terrorists, and liars heading our world governments – our sin has gotten loose, seeping into the whole cosmos. Paul says, "It's old Adam all over again."

So what's the Apostle Paul's remedy for all this sinful chaos? "While we were still weak, at the right moment, Christ died for ungodly people. . . . But God shows God's love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us. . . . So now the righteous requirements necessary for life are met for everyone through the righteous act of one person [Christ, the new human creature-God], just as judgment fell on everyone through the failure of one person [Adam, the old human creature]" (Romans 5:6, 8, 18).

Only God can turn the old you into the new you. Are you tired of the old you? Are you looking for the new you? These are the questions that the Church raises during the season of Lent.



Faithfully Yours in Questioning,  
*Pastor Greg Rupright*

# March



## *Worship Schedule*

### SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES

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

#### MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup>

First Sunday in Lent – Holy Communion

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 ; Psalm 32;

Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

*Intergenerational Message: “BLANKET THE WORLD IN LOVE”*

*Shared by the Sunday School & Mary Stevens*

#### MARTH 8<sup>TH</sup>

Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a; **Psalm 121**;

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

*Message: “Help Along the Way”*

#### MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>

Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95;

Romans 5:1-11; **John 4:5-42**

*Message: “Evangelists All”*

#### MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup>

Fourth Sunday in Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13; **Psalm 23**; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

*Message: “Pursued by Mercy”*

#### MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14; **Psalm 130**;

Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

*Message: “Down in the Depths”*

# CHURCH NEWS



## SPRING FORWARD

Daylight saving time begins at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 8<sup>TH</sup>. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour.

## A SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS

There will be a Service for Healing & Wholeness in the Snow Room on Sunday, March 29th at 10:45 A.M. *All are welcome!*



## MAUNDY THURSDAY TENEBRAE READERS



Readers are needed for the April 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 P.M. Maundy Thursday Communion and Tenebrae Service. The Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Sign-Up Sheet will be posted on the rolling board in the Fellowship Hall.

## CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism will be celebrated for Tyler DiMaria on Sunday, March 8th at the 9:30 A.M. Worship Service. May God bless Tyler now and always.

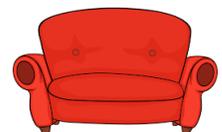


## EUCHRE NIGHT

March 15th and April 5 at 6 PM. For planning purposes please sign up on the rolling bulletin board. Feel free to bring your own beer or wine. Soft drinks will be provided. Invite your friends and bring a snack to share.

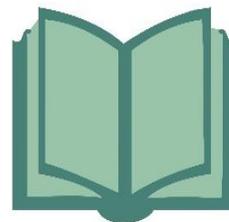
## SEEKING CHAIR FOR YOUTH ROOM

The Jr./Sr. high youth room is in need of a love seat or a cushy chair. If you have one that you would like to donate call Brian Sherry at 585-233-1010.



## UCC GVA BOOK STUDY & INTERCHURCH DISCUSSION

Every Sunday & Wednesday at 11:00 A.M., our church leaders and members are invited to discuss *Beyond Resistance: The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World* by John Dorhauer, General Minister & President of the UCC. This is a book that all the other UCC church leaders and members in the Genesee Valley Association churches are currently discussing. We began to discuss the book on Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup> and have already met to discuss chapters 1-4. We will meet in the Snow Room to discuss Dorhauer's book on the following Sundays and Wednesdays:



Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> & Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> – Chapters 3 & 4, Dorhauer, pp. 45-74.

Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – Chapters 5 & 6, Dorhauer, pp. 75-106.

Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> – Chapters 7 & 8, Dorhauer, pp. 107-125.

Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> & Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> – Chapters 9 & 10, Dorhauer, pp. 127-141.

Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> – Chapter 11, Dorhauer, pp. 143-158.

**Those wishing to participate in a brief Midweek Holy Communion Service before the Wednesday book study, please meet in the Snow Room at 10:40 A.M.**

**The leaders and members of our church are cordially invited to an interchurch discussion of John Dorhauer's book on Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. at Mt. Rise United Church of Christ, located at 2 Mountain Rise, Fairport, NY.**

**Our church will be hosting three other local churches for an interchurch discussion of John Dorhauer's book on Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 A.M. (morning session) & 6:30 P.M. (evening session).**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**



## THURSDAY LENTEN COMMUNION & BIBLE STUDY

For those interested in a more traditional Bible Study during Lent, we will meet in the Snow Room at 10:45 A.M. for brief Communion Service followed by a Bible Study of the appointed lectionary passages that Pastor Greg will focusing on each Sunday on the following dates:



Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> – Psalm 121

Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> – John 4:5-42

Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> – Psalm 23

Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> – Psalm 130

Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Philippians 2:5-11

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

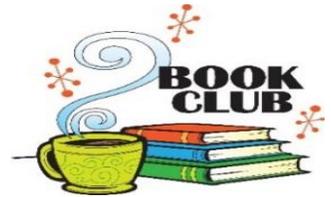


## A BIG THANK YOU!

A BIG THANK YOU! goes to all the deacons plus Sandy Conrad, Muriel Gabbey, and Sheryl Henderson for helping to set-up and provide the refreshments for Jean Wilson's Funeral Service Reception on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. *Kudos!*

## FIRST CHURCH BOOK CLUB 2019-2020

First Church book club meets in Fellowship Hall from **1:00-2:30** on the last Monday of the month. Below is the complete schedule for the upcoming year. In May we will meet on the 3rd, not the last, Monday, due to the Memorial Day holiday. (\*Note: We have had to switch the schedule for February and March.



The list below shows the book selections for this spring. All are welcome to attend.

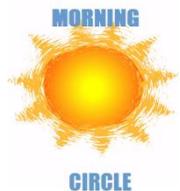
<b>March 30*</b>	<i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i> by Delia Owens	<b>Leader- Paula Pentoney</b>
April 27	<i>Behold the Dreamers</i> by Imbolo Mbue	Leader- Mary Duncan
May 18*	<i>Carnegie's Maid</i> by Marie Benedict (*Note: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday)	Leader- Jean Wilson
June 29	Planning meeting for 2020-2021	

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# CIRCLE NEWS

## MORNING CIRCLE

Morning Circle will meet at the church at 10:00 am on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. We are going to have a Physical Therapist from Genesee Valley Physiotherapy Group join us to talk about how modified exercise programs, such as chair yoga, can help us stay mentally alert and physically strong as we age. Bring a sandwich or salad and join us for lunch. All are welcome.



# MISSIONS

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT FOR RAIHN

**RAIHN** stands for **Rochester Area International Hospitality Network** and is part of the worldwide “Family Promise” organization.

Many cities in the US & abroad have chapters designed to help the poor and those who have lost their residence. They are unique in that they allow men & women in families to stay together in the program, whereas most government programs split families by gender.

RAIHN exists with the help of 14 “host” churches. Each church houses up to 14 people, currently without a place to live, for 1 week in their church, providing separate rooms plus 2 meals/day. There are also 20+ “Support” churches that provide volunteers to help each Host church. **Our church is a Support Church for host Mary Magdalene Church in East Rochester.** So, every 3 months, we ask for volunteers to serve a dinner on the Friday that Mary Magdalene hosts the families. Our volunteers have all attended a 2-hour sensitivity training session in order to be part of the network.

On March 06, we will go to Mary Magdalene with greeters, servers and 2 “overnight volunteers”, to provide a meal and interact with the families. There are usually 3-7 children, who are traumatized by the homeless experience, that need interaction with other children. We are asking for several of our youth to come that evening (they do not need to have had sensitivity training). There is always a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall about 2 weeks before the event.

If you are interested in being a part of our volunteer staff, contact Steve Smith. The next training session will be in April, (Tuesday, April 21st, 2020, 6:30 pm, at Pearce Memorial Church, 4322 Buffalo Rd., North Chili) with our next Mary Magdalene event coming on May 29, 2020.

## VOLUNTEER TO SERVE AT THE SALEM NUTRITION CENTER



Can you even imagine what it would be like to live in a housing project or homeless shelter? What would it be like to have your only source of food be that which is provided by a soup kitchen? The lunch guests who are served meals at the Salem Nutrition Center know that answers to these questions because they live them on a daily basis.

Please consider volunteering to help serve meals to our lunch guests at the Salem Nutrition Center on Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers meet at our church at 9:00 A.M. and carpool to Salem, or you can drive there: 60 Bittner St., Rochester, NY. Give thanks to God, for God is good! Volunteer with a grateful heart!

**LENTEN PROJECT 2020**  
**BLESSING BAGS FOR OPEN DOOR MISSION**  
**AND COLDWATER HOUSE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN**



This Lenten season we are gathering hygiene supplies for Open Door Mission. They have recently opened Coldwater House for women and children in addition to caring for homeless men in their downtown Rochester facility.

Open Door Mission has listed 20 items, mostly travel sizes, to be purchased and placed in plastic bags. Most of these items can be found at the Dollar Tree store in the Fairport Village Landing or The Christmas Tree Shop in Henrietta. The cost of the items, including tax, should come to less than \$25. If you want to split the list with another family, we will have lists of half the items needed available as well. If you are unable to shop, but would like to help this project, we will also gladly accept monetary donations. The Board of Missions and Outreach will provide the 2 gallon-sized plastic bags. **We hope to collect the hygiene products for 25 Blessing Bags.**



We will have a table in Fellowship Hall during Lent to hand out lists and to receive your donations starting Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> through Palm Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. You may mail a check to the church office. Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church with Open Door Blessing Bags on the memo line.



## OUTREACH EVENT

Come join us for an inter-generational outreach event on March 14 from 9:00 AM until noon. Foodlink is looking for 30 people, over the age of 8, to help sort food items at their distribution center. No experience is required. Come have fun and help the less fortunate by spending 3 hours of your time sorting food. We will meet at the church and caravan to the distribution center.



A signup sheet is located on the rolling bulletin board. However, **all participants age 17 and above also need to sign up on the Foodlink website:**

1. Follow this link to the Foodlink Volunteer System: <https://give.foodlinkny.org/campaigns/13421-first-congregational-united-church-of-christ-in-fairport>
2. Click the “Volunteer” button and then “Sign-up with email” to set-up your volunteer account. (If you’ve volunteered with us before, please select “login” after clicking the “volunteer” button)
3. Select your group’s shift(s) to reserve your volunteer spot and click “Next”
4. Verify your contact information and click “Finish”

If you have any trouble or questions, please contact Doug Strong.

# OUR CHURCH FAMILY

## SYMPATHY & CONDOLENCES

The members of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Fairport, NY, extend their heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of Jean Wilson, who entered eternal life on February 12, 2020. Rest eternal grant Jean, O God; may light perpetual shine upon her. Amen.

Sympathy cards may be mailed to:

Tom Wilson  
6 Hanson Way  
Fayetteville NY 13066

Robert Wilson  
253 Middle Road  
Falmouth ME 04105

Bonnie Eastman  
354 County Route 89  
Oswego NY 13126

Hugh McMillan  
14 East Pointe  
Fairport NY 14450

Elizabeth Hild  
36 Onyx Drive  
Penfield NY 14526

## LIGHT THE NIGHT



Thank you to Jean Wilson for keeping the steeple lights burning bright during the month of February in memory of Arthur Wilson. It would have been his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this month.

Thank you to Eileen Slocum for keeping the steeple lights burning bright throughout the month of March in memory of Lester Slocum.



## REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

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



Next "Epistle" Deadline is  
**March 19, 2019**  
(The Third Thursday)



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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E-mail: vsherry.ucc@gmail.com  
Webpage: fairportucc.org

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: Doug Strong  
Organist: Beatrice Benedict  
Director of Music Ministries: Heather Watras  
Business Administrator: Sue Brooks  
Wedding Coordinator: Betty Shamblen  
Sunday School Teacher: Yaliza Frank



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First Congregational United Church of Christ  
26 East Church Street  
Fairport, NY, 14450