
THE EPISTLE

Volume 23 Issue 4

March 22, 2018

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:

As I read this year's Easter Gospel from Mark 16:1-8, I'm interpreting it in light of our young people's national response to the Parkland, FL shooting. As the sun rises, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome are on their way to the cemetery to anoint Jesus' body with spices (the method of embalming in Jesus' day). They're asking one another, "What will we do when we get to his grave? He's already been buried." I thought of our Congress and Senate talking among themselves after the Florida shooting and asking, "What can we do about this continual gun violence and these perpetual acts of murder?"



The women found Jesus' grave already opened. A young man was just sitting beside his grave, and the women didn't quite know what to do. The young man says to them, "Don't be astonished! You are looking for Jesus, aren't you? See, his grave is empty. Go and tell the other followers, especially Peter, that you will see Jesus in Galilee, just as he told you." As I listen to the voice of that first Easter messenger at the empty grave, I hear the collective young voices of Emma Gonzalez, David Hogg, Cameron Kasky, Alex Wind, and Jacqueline Coren from the February 18th Face the Nation interview. They are crying out to our national leaders and us to enact legislation that will support mental health care and ban assault weapons. They are marching for their lives. **THEY MARCH FOR OUR LIVES!** They are preaching a new beginning for our nation. They are lifting up a new way of life. They are living the resurrection of new hopes and possibilities for our common future. How will we respond to these new Easter messengers?

The Gospel of Mark tells us that the women ran away from Jesus' grave because they were confused and terrified. After all the events of Holy Week, who wouldn't have been in a state of shock? But then Mark ends his original resurrection story by saying, "... and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (Mark 16:8b). Will that be our response and the response of our national leaders to the horrific event of February 14, 2018, to run away in fear? Or will we continue to join our youth and March For Our Lives and theirs?

Those are Easter questions.



Life triumphs over death!
Love wins!
Christ is risen! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Christ is risen, indeed!

Happy Easter!
Pastor Greg Rupright

April
Worship
Schedule



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES

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

APRIL 1ST

Easter Sunday/Holy Communion

Mark 16:1-8

Intergenerational Message: "Easter Changes Life!" Pastor Greg Rupright

APRIL 8TH

Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133;

1 John 1:1-2:2; **John 20:19-31**

Message: "Unexpected Peace"

APRIL 15TH

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4;

1 John 3:1-7; **Luke 24:36b-48**

Message: "Easter Witnesses"

APRIL 22ND

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23;

1 John 3:16-24; **John 10:11-18**

Message: "Shepherding the Flock"

APRIL 29TH

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31;

1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8

Message: "You Are Welcome Here!"

CHURCH NEWS

THANK YOU MS. JENNIFER LESSARD

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:

By now I am sure that some of you may have heard that Jennifer Lessard, our Christian Education Teacher, has accepted a Supervised Ministry Internship at Greece Baptist Church, Rochester, NY for 2018-2019.

We thank Jen for her service. She has done an excellent job in her role as our Christian Education Teacher. Our church youth have benefited from her participation in our church's life. Jen has brought some fresh ideas and encouraged our youth's participation in meaningful ways in our Sunday Services and our Sunday School. While our young people will miss her next year, we are pleased that she has been offered an Internship at Greece Baptist Church. We know that this experience will help her develop her skills in other areas of ministry. Since Jen's goal is to become a full-time pastor, it is most beneficial to her to be in a church with more opportunities than we have available and that has a staff that can offer her the best supervision. We send her off with our gratitude and God's richest blessings for continued growth in her ministry.

There will be a celebration of Jen's outstanding work as our Christian Education Teacher on Sunday, June 17th during Coffee Hour.

Blessings,
Pastor Greg Rupright



GRIEFSHARE SUPPORT GROUP

The GriefShare Support Group will meet on Tuesday, April 3rd & Tuesday, April 17th 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 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 Fellowship Hall Board. Thank you.

Grief Support Group





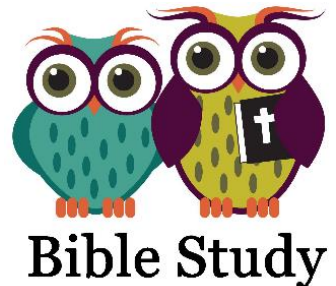
Ushers Needed

USHERS ARE NEEDED

Two Ushers are needed for the New Church Year starting in June 2018. The term is for three years. Each usher is responsible for four different months during the year. At the beginning of the church year a twelve month schedule is provided so each usher will know the months that they are scheduled to work. All interested members should call Ed Johnston at 585-703-7046 for more details.

MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

The 11:00 A.M. Wednesday Morning and Sunday Morning Bible Study Groups are studying *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson. This book is the Vol. III of *Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series*. Both Bible Study Groups meet in the Snow Room.



Bible Study

APRIL 4TH & APRIL 8TH

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 2, "Son of David," pp. 29-44. Please be sure to read the following scriptures: Matthew 15:1-20; Matthew 22:15-46; Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 3:1-22; Matthew 14:1-12.

Since some members of the Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group will be attending a lecture at the Jewish Community Center on Wednesday, April 11th, the Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group will meet on Tuesday, April 10th at 11:00 A.M.

APRIL 10TH & APRIL 15TH

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 2, "Son of David," pp. 45-58. Please be sure to read the following scriptures: Luke 10:25-37; Matthew 27:1-26; Mark 14:53-15:15; Luke 22:66-23:25; John 18:19-19:16.

APRIL 18TH & APRIL 22ND

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 3, "Son of God," pp. 59-75. Please be sure to read the following scriptures: Matthew 17:1-13; Matthew 27:1-66; Matthew 16:13-28; Matthew, Chapter 5-8.

APRIL 25TH & APRIL 29TH

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 3, "Son of God," pp. 75-97. Please be sure to read the following scriptures: John 1:1-8; Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-31; John 21:1-24.

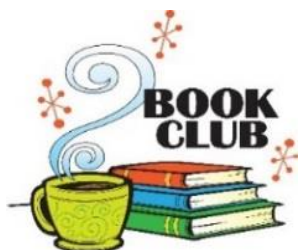
ALL ARE WELCOME!

A SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS

There will be a Service for Healing & Wholeness in the Snow Room on Sunday, April 22nd at 10:45 A.M. All are welcome!



BOOK CLUB



On April 30th, Nancy Midgley will lead our discussion of *The Friday Night Knitting Club* by Kate Jacobs.

Looking ahead to May 21st (note: this is the 3rd Monday, not the last) we will be discussing *The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion* by Fannie Flagg.

Then on June 25 we will hold a planning meeting for next year. Come prepared with your book selections.

CALLING GOD SHE: A PANEL DISCUSSION

Rev. Dr. Barbara Thorington Green,
Retired Pastor United Methodist Church and author of *Calling God She?*

Rev. Edris Hitchcock,
Pastor at The First Baptist Church of LeRoy

Rabbi Kelly Levy,
Associate Rabbi at Temple B'rith Kodesh



We talk about God. We write about God. We use words. Letters, words, and language are all developed constructs. All language falls short of what we perceive as reality. What is the impact of continuing to use male language for God without using female language? Join us on **March 28th at 11:30 am** for a panel discussion and informal lunch conversation with women of different faith communities. Please bring your own non-meat lunch. Coffee and delectable desserts will be provided.

The program is free of charge, but a donation of toilet paper for the Brighton Food Cupboard would be appreciated. We would like to collect 125 rolls in honor of the 125th anniversary of Sisterhood.

Reservations are helpful, but not required. Contact 244-7060, ext. 233 or wri@tbk.org if possible so that we may prepare adequately. Please let us know the number of people attending when you rsvp.

ST. LUKE'S SPRING BAZAAR

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 77 Country Corner Lane, is planning a Vendor and Craft Show from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm on Saturday, April 28, 2018. The Bazaar is open to the public and there is no admission fee.



Over 20 booths selling jewelry, clothing, cosmetics, plants, essential oils, cooking products and craft items including quilt items, embroidery, painted glassware, ceramics, pottery, photography, paintings and more will be for sale.

Bring your friend, your neighbor or your family. This is the perfect place to think spring and select that Mother's Day (May 13) gift, a present for someone special or just treat yourself. Plan on staying for lunch or a snack! The J2A youth group and ROMEO men's club will be on hand selling food items.

For more information, contact: website at www.stlukesfairport.org, or email - slukefpt@frontiernet.net, or mennis1@rochester.rr.com

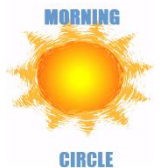


Circle News

MORNING CIRCLE

Morning Circle will meet on April 10 at 10 AM. A representative from Rochester's Crisis Nursery will discuss the need they meet in helping parents and their babies in crisis situations.

As always visitors are welcome--bring a sandwich and stay for lunch!



EVENING CIRCLE

Evening Circle has scheduled speaker Carol Samuel from Osher to give a talk on historic carousels for the April meeting. We will meet Monday evening, April 9th at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Guests are always welcome. Please join us for what should be a very interesting evening.

YOUTH NEWS

SUNDAY SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

March began with the Sunday School presenting an interpretation of John's gospel narrative of Jesus cleansing the temple. The children presented the skit, "Walking with Jesus at Temple," complete with chasing the animal vendors and tipping over the money changers temple and ending with the ASL message, "This is my Father's house. Come follow me, Jesus said." A big thanks to the families who participated.

You may find photos on our website and/or Facebook page. Easter is

coming up quickly and we hope to have a few readers from the Sunday School for the Easter communion liturgy. If your child is able to read, please see Pastor Greg. The children will be in worship on Palm Sunday (to enjoy the special music offered) and on Easter Sunday. The children will be invited to participate in an Easter egg hunt inside the church after worship, so please allow 10 to 15 minutes after worship for them to do so. On May 6, due to a special request from the children, we are having a repeat presentation in worship about Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones. Please keep an eye out for more information. We will likely need a short rehearsal on Saturday May 5th. Please keep an eye on the volunteer chart in the Fellowship Hall, as I continue to be in need of helpers each Sunday. Have a great rest of the month! ~ Ms. Jen.



A NOTE FROM MS. JEN

I emailed a note to parents earlier this month to let them know about my tenure at First Church coming to an end in June. Some may have already read about this in the last council minutes. As part of my Masters of Divinity program, I must participate in a field internship/supervised ministry during the 2018-2019 school year. Unfortunately, First Church is not in the position to offer such a placement. I have secured a placement at Greece Baptist Church, which will require my presence on Sundays. Therefore I will not be able to continue as Christian Education Teacher for the 2018-2019 school year. My last day in worship will be Father's Day/Youth Sunday, June 17th. I still plan to attend the REACH mission trip with the Jr/Sr High youth in July. I confess that your children mean the world to me and that I am sincerely saddened by not being able to be their teacher next year. I spoke to some of the children already after informing the parents. I told the children that First Church is looking for a new teacher for them for next year and I will be sure to let the incoming teacher know just how AWESOME they are. I will be assisting with the transition in every way I can. I am honored to have had this amazing opportunity and look forward to enjoying every moment of the rest of this school year. ~ Ms. Jen

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM WITH MT. RISE UCC

First Congregational UCC will join with Mt. Rise UCC for A Shared Confirmation Program on the following dates:



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.



NOURISHMENT: BODY AND SOUL

Submitted by Pat May

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, and the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all".

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column. Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful for cards, notes, and expressions of sympathy extended to our family. We are very appreciative and we would like to thank you all.

Kel's Memorial Service will be Sunday, May 20th, at 3:00 p.m.

-The Kelsey Family

THANK YOU

Dick Clark would like to thank all of you for your prayers and thoughts during his time of convalescence.

LIGHT THE NIGHT



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

Thank you to Barb Roscoe for lighting the night during the month of April in memory of Bill Roscoe.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

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



Next "Epistle" Deadline is
 (The "Third Thursday")
April 19, 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



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