

Congregational Connection



Pastor's Column

Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

In front of my house are huge oak trees, each several hundreds of years old. Every trunk is as large as a dining room table. The branches are so long that they extend far beyond our yard and high into the sky – probably 4 stories high.

Don't you love looking at trees this time of year? As Spring unfolds, it's wondrous to see buds line the limbs of trees, turning into blossoms of pink and white. What is God showing us with these trees? Where's the invitation in the marvelous witness of Spring. What are the sacred lessons?

Our church has some special trees with big branches. Some of you have told me stories about our trees. And of course, when you walk into our sanctuary, lo and behold, up on a tapestry in front is the image of a large tree with big branches and our churches vision about being rooted, grounded and growing. Spring seems to be a great time for branching out, growing and going out on a limb.

Jesus went out on a limb. He extended his reach from his little town in Galilee, journeying and taking risks all the way to Jerusalem, the temple and the cross. While it's true that His disciples huddled in Jerusalem after Jesus was crucified, they eventually went out on their own limbs, risking what was familiar to reach out to the "ends of the earth" and spread the good news of the risen Christ, walking in his ways. As Easter people, we know what this means. When we branch out this way, hope wins. Love heals all wounds and binds all fissions, peace surpasses all misunderstandings.

What are your stories? What ways have you gone out on a limb to do good or to follow the ways of Christ?

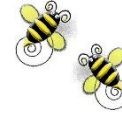
Every night this Spring, I go outside and look up at those long, extended branches. They are not yet covered with leaves so the form is clear beneath the stars. How am I reaching out, I ask. What will I go out on a limb for in the name of justice, truth, divine love? Jesus went out on a limb to save the world. Surely I can take risks. Will I extended myself further than I've ever stretched? If this big old creaky oak tree that has grown relentless for 100s of years, surely I can grow too?

The psalmist tells us:

The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (Ps 92:12)

In the book of Numbers, we are called to be:
"Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens beside the river, Like aloes planted by the LORD, Like cedars beside the waters. (Num 24:6)

May it be so as we stretch together, beloved Easter people.



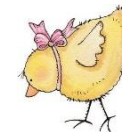
From the Desk of the Deacons

Our season of Lent ended during Holy week in which we began with Palm Sunday and Jesus Christ triumphant beginning in Jerusalem to Maundy Thursday service which ended in darkness and the death of Christ. Good Friday was spent in prayer and reflection and then we moved on to the beautiful service of Easter Sunday and the Resurrection of Christ. Christ has risen – Christ has risen indeed!

We wish to thank one and all who helped in the services, purchased Easter flowers to brighten and glorify our church along with the beautiful voices of both children and adults singing on Easter! We also wish to thank the North River Brass ensemble who played on both Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday services.

Together we can all do many wonderful things to honor Christ.

Thank you!
The Deacons



From the Trustees

Spring is here, Holy Week is over, time to conduct church business. We were less active for some of the winter months as tax season, vacations, and other assorted issues slowed us to a crawl. We have several irons that need to be put back in the fire. Clean up, fix up discard broken items and wall repair and painting in the Fireside Room. Lighting improvement, floor repair and other fix ups to the Thrift Shop. Exterior painting, wood repair and restoration, and of course the repair/rehab of our original stained glass windows. All these items are worthy and necessary to continue to enjoy and preserve our beautiful building. Our budget included a substantial sum for repairs, and through memorial gifts and designated funds in the Trust, plus utilizing a chunk of the Trust for these capital improvements we can make a dent in our project list.

We'll have more news after we meet, and hopefully a timetable for our many projects. As always, if you have an item of any kind for us, please let us know. Thanks, your Trustees.

Bob Criswell, Curtis Ellett, Norm Fulton (emeritus), John Holman, Tom Kosonen, Kathy Mosher, Tom Ritchie



Notes from the Music Director

VIOLINS IN VIENNA AND DIXIE --- The Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra, our wonderful orchestra in residence, will play a varied program that will take listeners from the heart of Europe in the 19th century to America's Deep South in the 20th when it closes the season of Music at Sanctuary Hall Friday, May 5.

The concert, *Violins in Vienna and Dixie*, will be at 8 p.m. Friday, May 5. Doors will open at 7 p.m. for coffee and dessert. Music will start at 8.

The program will include works from great 19th century European composers, including "Die Fledermaus" by Austrian composer Johann Strauss II, "Valse Triste" by Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, and "Slavonic Dances" by Czech composer Anton Dvorak. The program will then cross the ocean to the United States with a segment of Dixieland jazz and selections from the great early 20th century Jerome Kern musical, "Showboat."

The program will also feature our senior choir's alter-ego, the Herring Run Festival Chorus, in a performance of "America the Beautiful," arranged by orchestra conductor Robert C. Babb, and "I Will Be That Peace," by Mark Hayes, which had its first performances last year at 15th anniversary remembrances of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Tickets are only \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students and \$20 per family. A concert of this quality in Boston would cost you at least three times as much.

Bring a friend, bring an enemy, bring a kid, bring everyone you can. This is THE musical/social event of the year!

GREAT JOB, KIDS AND ADULTS --- Many thanks to all the kids who participated in our special choral processions on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. They, along with the help of teachers Kerry Mortland and other members of the Church School staff, added immeasurably to our worship.

This year we were also grateful to have the North River Brass Quintet as part of our Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday services. Their wonderful sound brought another dimension to the celebration of the Resurrection, and they were so impressed by the great spirit in our congregation.

Last but not least, thanks to the members of our Senior Choir, who commit to providing their very best to our worship week in and week out.

MUSIC AT SANCTUARY HALL 2017-20187 --- Plans are already under way for our seventh season of Music at Sanctuary Hall. We are preparing for the return of Jake Armerding in September and The Lindsays in February or March, and there are some other great events in the works.

More in the June newsletter!

Victor DeRubeis
Director of Music



Music at Sanctuary Hall

Friday, May 5 at 8 p.m. --- The Southeastern Philharmonic, our orchestra in residence, prepares yet another stellar program of classic pop and popular classics. This is always a great way to conclude our Music at Sanctuary Hall season. The concert honors the memory of Barbara Knapp, a beloved member of our church, our choir, and the orchestra.



Church School News

With great joy and enthusiasm we celebrated the resurrection on Easter Sunday. The children lead us with great spirit into worship with their song, "Jesus is the Lord" and then sang "Mary Laid Her Baby Down" and "Jesus Rose up From the Dead". How thankful we are to the parents, teachers and musicians that made this possible for us to share in such joy together, He Is Risen, Indeed!

Easter doesn't end at midnight on April 16th but it lasts for 50 days until we reach Pentecost. Share Eastertide with your family and friends, show them that Easter is a joyous season that celebrates the risen Christ and that the powers of evil, fear, death and destruction do not have the final word! Here are some ways for you to share the season with others.

- Greet everyone with an enthusiastic "Happy Eastertide!"
- Look for Signs of New Life and Renewal in Nature. Take a walk and notice new buds on trees and flowers pushing up through the Spring soil.
- Be Grateful. Notice something new and be thankful, share your thankful appreciation with someone.
- Poetry and Journaling. Put your thoughts on paper and read them often or share with others.
- Pursue Virtue. Just like the Season of Lent where we find new ways to repent, use Eastertide to strive to do better and get a deeper understanding of your faith by choosing to concentrate on a new virtue each week. Honesty, Discipline, Compassion, Gentleness, Cheerfulness and Prudence.
- Share an Easter Basket with someone that may not have celebrated Easter and show them the Joy of Eastertide.

Prayer Pals

We ask the adults of the congregation to help the Sunday School Staff pray for all of the children, whether in our church or community. This year we keep our thoughts and prayers directed to every child that walks through the door and show them how much they are loved and treasured by our Staff and congregation. We also ask the children to pray for Our Church, Our Pastor Gretchen and our Community, keeping in mind that Jesus taught us to love one another and to be kind and caring towards others.

"Holy Jesus, we have seen you and known you. We know your glory and love. We lift up our hearts to praise you. As you lifted up your hands to Bless your disciples you lift them today to Bless us, and in response we lift up our hands to praise you." Amen
Taken from the Intergenerational Worship 4/30/17
Kerry Mortland, Church School Superintendent. Seek Joy!



Mission and Outreach

We will be putting together another basket of baked goods at the Strawberry Festival to give to the E Wey Police along with a thank you card for all to sign. This was a big success last year both in outreach from our church to these valued members of our community and as it generated more sales of cookies, etc which benefited us! If you are able to do extra baking ..two dozen instead of one.. we would appreciate it. More to sell and give. Thanks as always.



Soup/Sandwich/Scripture

The next gathering for Soup and Scripture will be Tuesday, May 16 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. The scripture is Acts 7:55-60. The next meeting will be in September.



Stewardship

Stewardship is busy with planning the Strawberry Festival which will be held on Saturday, June 17th. We are accepting Strawberry donations at this time to store in the freezer. Thank you in advance for the strawberries!

Another reminder for our Paint Night Fundraiser on Monday, May 8th starting at 7 pm. Light snacks will be provided. Tickets are 35.00 each. Please see a Stewardship member for tickets. We need a headcount by May 1st!

Peace,
The Stewardship Committee.



Upcoming Pastoral and Preacher Coverage

May 7th	Rev. Gretchen Elmendorf
May 14th	Rev. Gretchen Elmendorf
May 21st	Rev. Gretchen Elmendorf
May 28th	Rev. Gary L. Marks



Birthdays

Lois Kennedy	May 4
Linda Santacroce	May 19
Colleen Noonan	May 28



Lynn Tenney
Yvonne & family
Dave
Peg & Joe
Mary
Servicemen & women
Karen
Jamie
Mike Nichols
Herick Leonel
Jack
Angela
Wendy
Kathy
Jack Dhall
Linda
Joy M
Robert
Job searches

Gayle Perry Malloy
Chickie
Michael
Shirley
Paula
First Responders
Cheryl Thornton
Richie
Family of Theresa Goss
Johnathan Taylor & family
Norman
Bette
James
Mary Crawford
Pauline
Sharon Moccia
George Doucette
Fran and Greg Lee
Laura



Notes from the Office

Please have your June submissions to me by **May 20th** Thank you! - Sara