

East Weymouth Congregational Church



From the Pastor

Hello Church,
Grace and Peace to you. The Apostle Paul wrote all of his letters to the developing churches almost 2,000 years ago this way. I wonder what his salutatory remark would be today during a pandemic that has caused societal and world-wide devastation like no other. I like what Rev. Don Remick, one of our conference leaders, offered as a mantra for this pandemic.

Breathe. Pause. Pray. Rest in God.

I have been part of our conference's Disasters Ministry team led by Rev. Don Remick which he started years ago. The team has been preparing for a pandemic for many years. Indeed, my father, who was an infectious disease physician and researcher, anticipated a world-wide pandemic of an infectious disease since the 1970s. My sister, who is chief of Epidemiology and Infection Control for a hospital in NY, has been preparing for a pandemic like this all of her career. She graduated from medical school and began her career with the beginning of the AIDs epidemic in NY. Now this. Here we are. There is no more important time to be the church. We are church together in an unprecedented time. Overnight, everything has changed. Everything changed. But so also this -- Je-



Please have your
May submissions to
me by April 20.
Thanks! -Sara



Be sure to follow
the East Weymouth
Congregational
Church on Face-
book!



All events will be
held online - check
Facebook & the
church website for
more information.

sus changes everything. And God never changes.

Church, how is God stirring your spirits to be the church in unprecedented times? Please share your ideas. How can we follow Jesus's Lenten path through the wilderness to the crucifixion, the empty tomb and bear witness to the risen Christ.

Christ will rise in our hearts and with our technology. It is not coincidence that this pandemic has happened while we have telephones, computers, smart phones, social media and communication app's in place. God uses all of them. Please do what you can to get online if you have a computer or smart phone. Facebook has become the "go to" for churches online as has Zoom. We can all help each other learn how to use them for church. Fortunately, we have an online presence already on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Email, SoundCloud and our Website. Our community and world are seeking spiritual connections on all of these platforms, and we are there. Victor, Sara and I have been steadily working on these platforms for years. We still have an uphill climb to augment our spiritual presence in these times there. Now we have a presence on Zoom, and we will reconnect with our Youtube account to put our recordings online. For those of you who use phone only and the post office, the Deacons are calling you and I am making phone calls for any of you who are in pastoral need. Please reach out. You can also call in with your phones to any of our online services. See a note in this newsletter about what services we are offering.



Church, we have a prophetic calling we developed with our Vision Team and our Coach Rev. Paul Nickerson this past spring and summer. May these words hold new resonance and promise for you and our neighbors during this pandemic season. At East Weymouth Congregational Church, UCC, we are "faithful to God's ways, bringing hope, love and light to our community and the world."

I leave you with this quote about Easter and ask that you pray about this with me.

"A packed church this Easter would be a church testifying to the importance of the stock market over the sacred worth of human life. A packed church this Easter would only be a death cult. This Easter the churches will be empty. And the tomb will be empty." Jake Morrill from Presbyterians Online.

Our resurrection window of our church displays in overwhelming glory the empty tomb and the angel pointing above who says, "He is not here, he is risen." May Christ's glory rise in and through you. This month, we will go to the cross together and bear witness to suffering, crucifixion and death. And we will also be together Easter people.

Blessings and love,
Pastor Gretchen



Notes from the Deacons

The month of March will long be remembered for the Coronavirus and its impact on the world. Our community, its business neighbors and so many others are shuttered. The leadership in a tough situation could have done nothing, but instead chose to embrace this new challenge with faith and enthusiasm. There have been many discussions on how to provide you with meaningful and the best possible worship experience. Each week is a learning experience. Music for the service is provided by the choir who met in their first virtual rehearsal.

Rev. Gretchen and Victor have been working closely with our conference, the SNEUCC, on new and inventive ways to turn this into a blessing. We are answering the challenge by continuing with online worship and adding the musical component. Each day something interesting appears that may bring added joy to our lives.

All this is new and strange. We are used to bustling around the church decorating or doing whatever is needed. Instead here we are at home preparing for Holy Week. It won't be the same, but it will be meaningful and beautiful.

One thing that's true, we are a part of the family of God. We call each other and for now we know that's best. Soon we'll be able to hug and be together. Something that we always say is ringing true:

With church doors shuttering across America, it's time for us to show it has never been about the building.

Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 5, 2020 at
10AM

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 9, 2020 at
7:30PM

Good Friday

Friday, April 10, 2020 at
12PM

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 12, 2020 at
9:15AM Breakfast

10AM Family Friendly
Worship

We look forward to sharing Holy Week. We will keep in touch. Please know that each of you is held close in our hearts and prayers. Wishing you a most Blessed Easter!

From the Trustees

BUILDING CLOSED, STEWARDSHIP CONTINUES -- Although our church building will be closed until further notice because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the work of maintaining and securing our beautiful church building continues.

The Trustees and our designees are performing their nightly security checks to make sure that the precious resource entrusted to us will remain in

tip-top condition as we await the day when we will once again be able to welcome all into God's house.

We are also monitoring the building for any leaks or system problems, taking care of small matters before they become big ones.

As for our tenants, we are working with them to balance the financial needs for the church building and the congregation with the financial challenges they face.

Please keep us in your prayers as we try to make the best of the situation. And remember that our church building is 115 years old, having weathered the economic ravages of the Great Depression and World War II. We'll get through this, too, as we honor the building stewards who preceded us.

From the Music Director



STILL HERE, STILL SINGING --- If you haven't attended our Sunday online services, please do! There is plenty of Biblical evidence for giving worship in song. (What are the Psalms but songs?) And if you're self-conscious about singing in church, you can mute yourself at home and sing along to the hymns and other music.

We're still meeting on Sundays at 10 a.m. with an optional virtual coffee hour afterward.

VIRTUAL CHOIR --- Boy, things sure can change in a month. It's difficult, it's daunting at times, but our faith will see us through.

We have been having our first virtual choir rehearsals on Zoom, and your music director is working on ways to have the choir sing and record their individual parts at during our weekly time together. The next step is to find a suitable, easy-to-use sound editing software that will allow us to produce an anthem for use during our online worship.



Virtual Worship and Social Media

Dear Church, here are important ways we are being church online. We are trying, with a lot of effort, fits and starts, and appreciate any help, prayer, forgiveness, patience, and love.

OUR WEEKLY ONLINE SCHEDULE TO DATE:

Friday & Saturday -- Our Deacons are making calls to parishioners as needed. Pastor Gretchen is available for phone calls, texts and emails and is making calls as needed.

Saturday -- Zoom / Facebook Online Conversation and Prayer from 5 - 5:40 pm

Sunday -- Worship on Zoom & Facebook Live from 10- 10:40 am. Coffee Hour opportunity follows to 11:30 am.

Monday -- REST

Tuesday -- Bible Study on Zoom and Facebook Live, 7 pm

Wednesday -- Church & Pandemic Task Force, 7 - 7:40, Digital Choir, 8- 8 pm

Thursday -- Meet with our Conference Ministers, 1:30 pm Zoom & FB Live

Friday -- Online mailings from our church

Here are our Social Platforms:

OUR WEBSITE has information about events, church theology, and also a daily devotional and daily news from our denomination. It also contains our CHURCH CALENDAR under Events. We now have added a feature where each calendar date includes our zoom meetings as well as daily biblical readings in keeping with the church universal Revised Common Lectionary. It will soon have online giving and donations possibilities.

OUR CONFERENCE WEBSITE: PLEASE spend time on our Southern New England UCC website. The banner on top of the home page has Coronavirus Resource Page and also Online and Worship Alternatives during this Pandemic. They have very important webinars with our Conference ministers full of pastoral support. They are recorded. Please take a listen.

OUR DENOMINATION WEBSITE: PLEASE tune in to our denomination at this critical time. We are all lifeboats to each other. Pastoral Letters from our denominational ministers, devotions, worship ways, Coronavirus Resource Updates, news from churches all over country.

FACEBOOK: This is a go to for online communication for churches everywhere. Pastor Gretchen updates our church FB page regularly regularly. Our music director includes live music. Gretchen includes live devotions. You do not need to be a Facebook member to access, but it is highly recommended that you use Facebook as a primary vehicle for church now. Our SNEUCC has excellent

active Facebook postings as well. Pastor Gretchen posts on her RevGretchen Facebook daily spiritual reflections that you can share. Invite your friends to our FB church page and our church group.

Weymouth Facebook sites are very active. This is where you can "be the church" in our community online in very supportive ways. Try becoming engaged on these sites and interacting with people from all over Weymouth. Pastor Gretchen has posted prayers and spiritual support on "Everything Weymouth" for years in times if need. She is posting prayers regularly re: the pandemic. "Jackson Square Community" is a group where goings on in Jackson Square are posted. Pastor Gretchen tries to keep the community up to date. You can chime in too or like and share posts. You can show our businesses support here. "Community News in Weymouth" is another very active site. There are Hingham and Holbrook sites as well.

INSTAGRAM, TWITTER: Our church is on both of these sites and has been for years. Frequent spiritual and theological updates are made on these sites and also importantly, regular connections with our community at large. Many in the South Shore are on both sites and the younger generations use these platforms more often than Facebook.

Note -- there are many other platforms. Pastor Gretchen is VERY tempted to get on TikTok -- all the rage for millennials and generation X, but is holding off!! Lord have mercy.

Please see below:

Website: www.eweyucc.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/eastweymouthucc>

Instagram: [e.weymouthcongregationalchurch](https://www.instagram.com/e.weymouthcongregationalchurch)

Twitter: [@EastWeymouthUCC](https://twitter.com/EastWeymouthUCC)

Our Conference, Southeastern New England UCC: www.sneucc.org

Our Denomination: www.ucc.org



Church School News

Our thoughts and prayers go out to our families as we stay at home . Hoping that you are safe at home doing homework and enjoying your time together. Below you will find a great idea on how to start a new Easter tradition while we spend time home away from church and each other this year . The teaching staff will be looking in to online Sunday School and we will notify you as to when it will be available. Some of our students have been making uplifting signs and writing cards and letters to our church members and friends. We are so thankful to the essential workers that leave their home each day and go to work to care for us and our needs Posters with rainbows and hearts placed in windows show our gratefulness in this difficult time, so keep Hope alive in your heart and reach out any way possible to others and remember "We are all in this Together"

Kerry Mortland, Dir. of Children's faith Formation

"Yesterday is gone, tomorrow has not yet begun, we have only today.! Let us begin" Mother Teresa

Easter

Have a Family Sunrise Breakfast

Getting up before dawn to watch the sunrise is a special treasure that is not easily forgotten in life. This Easter morning tradition of a sunrise breakfast creates a sacred space in which memories are cultivated for life. Some families already have this tradition and gather together in community for a

sunrise service. For those who don't, however, why not do it at home? Breakfast can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. The most important element is simply gathering together as a family and enjoying the time together.

Designed for all ages

Materials

1. Breakfast foods
2. Print out of John 20: 1-18

Time Investment: 1 Hour

How To

1. The night before, set the table .If possible, consider setting up outside on a balcony or deck, or near a window to see the sunrise. Also prepare as much of the breakfast ahead of time as possible.
2. Plan to wake everyone up in time to be ready at the table about 10-15 minutes before sunrise.
3. Serve breakfast and have everyone seated . Begin with a prayer of your own or use this one: "God of darkness and light we give you thanks this Easter morning. As we sit here in the dark, we are excited to experience the resurrection in a new way as the sun rises and light fills the sky. Help us to have a meaningful breakfast together as a family. Amen"
4. Begin your breakfast together and have someone read the passage from John , slowly and deliberately.
5. Notice the first line : "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark....."(20:1a) Notice if it still dark outside and notice that this is how it was outside when Mary went to the tomb. Ask" how do you think Mary felt when she went to the tomb in the dark?" If you are able to eat outside , notice the sounds you hear. Is it Quiet? Is it noisy?
6. Enjoy breakfast together and notice as it gets brighter and day breaks. Share any thoughts and experiences that come to mind. Ask questions that occur to you or use one(or more) of the following:

* What part of the story is most interesting to you or sticks out the most?

* Does the light happen all at once or does it seem to get light outside gradually? What does this tell us about the resurrection?

* In the story, Mary calls Jesus a teacher. How is Jesus a teacher to you?

* How do you think people felt when they realized that Jesus was alive?

* Resurrection means "coming back to life". What are some things that remind you of resurrection in the world?

7. Close your time together with a prayer: "Thank you God, for this resurrection breakfast, a time to focus on you and the mystery of resurrection. Help us to celebrate Easter and to share its message of hope and promise. Amen."

Notes

Parents and grandparents often complain to me how commercialized Easter has become. The focus seems to be more on gifts, bunnies, eggs and chocolate. Certainly, families can choose to engage some of the secular Easter traditions as much or as little as they would like. The beauty of this tradition, though, is that it starts in the morning with a spiritual focus and centers the day in family and faith.

This tradition is a great foundation on which to build other tradition as years go on. Add your own special recipes and surprises at breakfast.

Variations

Use different scriptures and readings in different years. Add different songs, scriptures and or other readings that are meaningful to your family. Use this breakfast as a time to reflect on any of the other practices from this book that your family has been practicing together.

"This practice excerpted for the book Faithful Families, Simple Practices for Daily Family Life by Traci