

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

South Haven, MI

March 2020

Entering the Passion of Jesus Lent 2020

The events of Christ's Passion, which take place during the last week of Jesus' life, often don't receive enough time in our worship and study. These stories are important to our faith journey and our identity as followers of Jesus. And yet we often move too quickly from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday with little time to take in the dramatic story of that last week.

Throughout the six weeks of Lent we will "freeze-frame" moments in Holy Week so we might put ourselves in the picture, thereby "Entering the Passion of Jesus." How might taking a closer look at the ancient story open us to deeper conviction for our role in its ongoing message?



**THE GREAT HOUR
OF SHARING**



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC. We will celebrate this offering on March 22nd, On the first two Sundays in March a special mission moment will be offered to explain this offering.

Through your generosity, the world is a better place. But more is needed. Today, you have an opportunity to plant seeds into the lives of others. Be a co-worker with God. Building, planting, watering...and trusting that God gives growth to all good gifts shared in faith. Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for your generosity.

We will be collecting for OGHS during the month of March. Envelopes are in the pews beginning March 1st.

Prayers for continued healing of our church family:

Rick Olsen
Rick Siler
Steve Siler

Grieving

Family of Chuck Johnson

God 
Answers
Prayers

Adopt-a-Days from February

This box has been empty for a couple of months. There has to be something in your lives that you want to celebrate. Is there someone who has passed and you want lift their name up.

The process isn't hard. Pick a day, any day, and write on the calendar that is in the Narthex what you are celebrating or remembering. Besides writing on the calendar there are cards to fill out that are attached to the calendar. Fill one out and place it in the offering plate with your check/cash.

That's all it takes! How easy is that!



Youth and residents at one of our local senior citizen facilities delivering containers of cookies.

Here is a brief look at worship during Lent. Sunday worship is at 10:30 am

March 1st: The Parade - Matthew 21

Jesus' ride into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week was full of risk. Rather than a nice impromptu celebration, it can be seen for the carefully planned and significantly symbolic event that would rub those in power the wrong way. In a moment already filled with tension, this "victory parade" had many implications, and many consequences.



March 8th: The Temple - Mark 11:15-17

Jesus' response to a visit to the Temple in the midst of this busy, noisy, Passover "tourist season" is utter frustration turned to anger. With so much at stake, "business-as-usual" seems obscene. This can be true for us today. The banality of our everyday lives sometimes seems ludicrous in the face of such suffering around the world. But taking a moment inside the scene where Jesus is overturning tables in this "house of prayer for all nations" can offer us a way to see what we actually might do to reassess our own actions and make our own corner of the world (our "temples") a more welcoming place for all people.



March 15th: The Teaching - Matthew 22:18-21

That last week, Jesus doesn't "lay low." He puts himself out there, susceptible to those who want to trap him, twist his words, get him to say something damning. He cannot turn from his vocation—he is not only a master teacher, but prophet and voice of the Divine. It is his ability to draw the people to his teachings that pose a threat, a challenge, to the authorities.

March 22nd: The First Dinner - Mark 14:3-7

Besides the Last Supper, Holy Week contains another important story that happens at dinner. Earlier in the week, Jesus and his followers gather for a meal, and a woman shows up unexpectedly to anoint Jesus in an extravagant show of devotion. To say she caused quite a "stir" might be understating it a bit. We imagine ourselves in the room and we see the looks of judgment and even outrage on the faces around us. Are we ourselves moved by her generosity and outpouring of emotion? Or are we uncomfortable as Jesus refers to his own death? Does our complaining or anger really serve to hide our own fear? Jesus invites us to tell this story "in remembrance of her." What uncomfortable stories are we called to tell in our time?

March 29th: The Last Supper - John 13:12-16

Jesus' words at the Last Supper were shocking to those in attendance. His words can seem familiar, even comforting to us because we hear these words every time we have communion. But at the moment of their utterance, they were anything but "usual."

EASTER AND HOLY WEEK



April 5th: The Garden - Mark 14: 32-36

Our service will begin with Palm Sunday and then move to Jesus in the garden at Gethsemane. In the garden, Jesus is taken into custody and there is no going back. So we pause a moment with him in the garden just before his arrest, and we feel with him the temptations that arise when facing difficult circumstances—to run, hide, use whatever power we have to change things, fight it, perhaps even bargain with God. We walk among the sleepy disciples who just can't grasp what is about to happen. And we open to let the story remind us that no matter what we face, or how we fail to meet the demand of the moment, second chances are possible.

April 9th: Holy Thursday Worship "In Remembrance of Me"

Worship at 7 pm with communion as we remember the Last Supper on Holy Thursday.

April 9th: Good Friday Community Service at First Congregational Church in South Haven

A community service with area pastors participating. The service will be from noon to 1 pm in the sanctuary and focus on the seven last words of Jesus from the cross.

April 12th: EASTER SUNDAY worship at 10:30 am

Update from the Associate Pastor: Mike Tupper

We are off to a great start. I thank you and the rest of the church people for welcoming me into your midst and including me in your ministry.

I have visited with nine of our younger adults so far. Some of these visits have been at their homes. Some have been at the church. I've also been meeting people at the local coffee shop and local restaurant. I will continue making these visits in the coming months. This will be the bulk of my work for the next few months. I'm listening and learning.

I've had the privilege of getting a taste of church life this month. I've attended one Church Council, one worship service, one youth Sunday School class, one Thursday night supper, one men's breakfast, and one Christian Education meeting. I will not be in worship on Sunday morning till May 3 because of my previous commitment at the Gull Lake United Methodist Church.

I was approved for UCC ministry at the Feb. 6th Southwest Association Church and Ministry meeting. The next step will be Ecclesiastical Council at the Phoenix Church in Kalamazoo on Saturday, March 14 at 1:00. I look forward to becoming a UCC pastor after 39 years as a United Methodist pastor.

I have started setting up my office in the former library area. I have moved in many of my books in my personal library onto the shelves. Thanks for the office space. I recognize that I'm sharing the space with others.

If you need to communicate with me, call/text me at 269-303-3743 or michael-jamestupper@yahoo.com.

Ecclesiastical Council for the Rev. Michael Tupper for Privilege of Call in the United Church of Christ. The Ecclesiastical Council is at 1:00 pm on Saturday, March 14, 2020, at Phoenix Community Church, 2208 Winchell Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008. All are welcome to attend this meeting. We can have 3 delegates who will be able to vote that day.

If you would like to receive a copy of the paper Mike has written, contact the church office.



during Lent

During Lent St. Basil church will host a fish fry on Fridays from 5-7 p.m. These will be held at the Moose Lodge.

Many from the church attend these, perhaps some could gather together for a meal and fellowship.

Race Across Michigan- March 15th

The University of Michigan Runners are coming back! For many years we have hosted some 60 to 70 runners from the University of Michigan who arrive here early on a Sunday morning (often around 5 a.m.) They spend Saturday into Sunday running across the state. Last year they raised over \$20,000 for Special Olympics.

While they don't expect anything more than clean bathrooms and a place to sleep for a couple of hours, we have always provided a continental breakfast.

We are looking for some people to help plan for their arrival. This would include getting breakfast items out for them and making coffee and hot water for hot chocolate. Also need someone willing to open the church at 4 or 5 a.m. for them.

Lastly, donations for the breakfast would be appreciated. This includes bananas, yogurt, breakfast bars, juice, and other fruit.

There will be a sign up sheet at the church in the Narthex as well as in the weekly e-mail.

Neither rain, nor sleet, or snow..... except Electricity

Things didn't quite work out the way it was planned on Saturday, February 22nd, due to the power outage. Thank you to all who helped out delivering cookies to residents at the Warren Center and River Ridge. The residents told us over and over how much they appreciated our efforts. We got to give Carolyn Willobee cookies at River Ridge. Carolyn was our head of Christian Ed for more years than I can remember and I very much enjoyed working with her. She very much enjoyed our visit. I think these visits should become part of our youth activities.

In order to finish off baking and delivering the remaining 600 cookies we will meet after church on March 8th immediately after worship.

There is no Sunday School on March 1st. We will meet three times in March and then take the first two weeks of April off (April 5th and 12th Spring Break). We will then meet on April 19th and perform the worship Service on April 26th. Please reserve the April 26th date on your calendars. That will finish off our Sunday School year for the summer. It would be great to have everyone participate in the worship service.

Jesus said, *"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"*. You guys did great in distributing. We really did bring some joy into people's lives.

-Rick Olsen and Holly Cochran

Diversity Coalition to meet

The newly reformed Diversity Coalition will meet here on March 12th. More information will be coming about what they will be doing.

All are welcome to attend.



**NO FOOLIN'.
IT'S
RUMMAGE
TIME AGAIN**

April 1 from 3-7 pm. New bargain table

April 2 from 1-4 pm.

\$5 bags until 3pm, then free. Clean up begins @ 3:30.

Presale set up will begin after the last Thursday Night Supper about 7. Help appreciated. Tables and signs put in place.

Rummage may be brought in from then until Sunday afternoon. PLEASE PLACE IN APPROPRIATE AREA. You do not need to set it up.

DO NOT bring in earlier unless you check with Jeffrey or Kris.

It is a big help when your items are CLEAN, sets (ie. towel sets, shoes, games, toys, gloves/mittens, PJs, outfits, etc) are bundled, pinned, or bagged and linens/curtains have sizes marked. Indicate that electronics work.

Help is needed:

****Sunday and Monday to straighten and organize.**

****Tuesday items over \$1 priced and Bargain Table set up (under \$1).**

****Wednesday a.m. finish if needed. Sale from 3-7.**

****Thursday sale 1-4 . Pack and deliver to Mission.**

The fun begins at 8:30 Monday and Tuesday A.M.'s. Stop by whenever/ how long you can. There will be plenty of people to tell you what to do and where to put it! Don't be shy. Pricing has been streamlined.

(cont'd next column)

Check out people are needed during sale hours. Two per station.

Remember, as always, this is an equal opportunity event. Uniforms, meals and snacks provided. First picks on incoming items!! Make a friend, bring a friend! Consider adding this to your Lenten "do" list.

Looking forward to seeing and working with you,

Kris Ayers 637.8762

Help Restock the Personal Care pantry this month

Some items:

Shampoo/Conditioner
Body soap
Deodorant
Feminine products

Laundry soap
Dish soap
Trash bags
Toilet paper

And many other necessities. What couldn't you live without in your daily life?



Please come help!

March 28–April 3

Contacts

*Mike Nelson 214-6846
Bob Linderman 214-2550*

Easter Flowers

The flowers at Easter add a richness to our worship that is very special. You are invited to place a flower (lily, tulips, hyacinth) in honor or in memory of someone. A minimum donation of \$15 is requested. Your gift over and above that will go to help add additional flowers, and decorations for our Easter Worship. Extra forms are available in the Narthex.



Order Form

This year for Easter you may order a specific plant(s) that will adorn our altar for Easter morning. After the Easter morning worship service please take the plant that you ordered home to enjoy. Deadline for placing your order is **Sunday, April 5th**.

Please complete this form and return it to the church office with your check made payable to the church. Each plant costs \$15.

_____ I will take my plant(s) home.

_____ I will leave my plant(s) at church.

The plant is in memory / honor of: *(please circle which one)*

NAME: _____

_____ Easter Lily

_____ Tulip

_____ Hyacinth

The plant is in memory / honor of: *(please circle which one)*

NAME: _____

_____ Easter Lily

_____ Tulip

_____ Hyacinth

Your name, which will appear in the bulletin Easter morning.

Lent 2020

The season of Lent has often been a time when we think about "giving something up"—a holdover from its penitential flavor in the medieval church. Another way to approach Lent is to consider how we might encounter God during this season. In the story of the Transfiguration, the disciples encounter God on a mountaintop in a new way. How might we encounter God/

Here are some ideas and ways that people encounter God. Some do so by giving up something, others by taking up something or doing something new. You can even do both! Again, these are just ideas - do give them prayerful consideration and if you are willing, let the church know what you have decided. May we journey through Lent, with eyes and hearts open to meeting God.

What might you give up in Lent?

Chocolate. Fast Food. Soft Drinks. Time playing games on phone
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) Something else

And here is a different way to look at this practice. This year, several churches across the country are encouraging congregants to give up plastics. From dozens of Pennsylvania churches near Pittsburgh that belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are encouraging their churchgoers to forgo commonly discarded single-use plastics. Each week, parishioners will be encouraged to give up a different item: shopping bags, drinking straws, water bottles, plastic foam and food wrappers.

Taking your own bags to store (which at Aldi's is a necessity), or your own coffee mug to Biggby. Take your own take out container to a restaurant for your leftovers. Refuse to use a straw! The Michigan Interfaith Power and Light organization has a Plastic Fast for Lent calendar. You can find it at their site https://www.miipl.org/lenten_fast.

Here at First Congregational Church we have tried to reduce our use of plastics at the Thursday Supper and at Coffee Hour. We could do even more. Imagine if we were to not use plastic cups for communion! Just saying.

What might you do different during Lent

Increase your devotional/scripture time? Many devotionals to chose from. Each Sunday during Lent and in the weekly email, Pastor Dick will offer some bible verse to read during the week.

Take more walks outside. Spend more time in prayer. Visit a place you feel closer to God that is nearby - the beach, the park, the chapel at church.

Another approach is to do more with other people. Here are some suggestions to engage and encounter God with others:

- Sunday Adult Class meets at 9:30. Choir practice at 9:30. Worship at 10:30
- Tuesday Prayer Group - 1:30 in the lounge.
- Wednesday breakfast - A group of men meet at Phoenix Street at 8 and a group of women meet at Six Chicks at 8:30.
- Wednesday Worship with communion and prayer at Epiphany Episcopal Church. Pastor Travis Wilson leads this service. Service is at noon.
- Thursday Night suppers (through March) come and eat or come and work.
- Friday Fish Fry at the Moose (5 to 7 pm) offered by the Knights of Columbus. Invite some friends to eat together - or invite someone you have just met to get to know each other better. Pastor Dick will be at many of these.



Two other options. One would be a book group. Have an idea? Let's make it happen. The other is a "Let's go to the movies". A number of people recently saw the movie, "The Last Full Measure" which is based on a true story. A powerful movie. Would be good to get together and discuss this. Will there be other movies to watch in town? Hard to know. We could also have people watch a movie at home and then meet to discuss.

Please let the church know how you will observe Lent this year. You can email the church or fill out a form at church.

I plan to observe Lent in 2020 by doing the following:

I will be giving up _____

I will take on or increase the following: _____

I will participate in the following activity: _____

I would be interested in a book group. Yes

Book suggestion: _____

I would be interested in a movie discussion. Yes

Movie suggestion: _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

News from the Good Shepherd Orphanage in Haiti

We received the following good news from the orphanage on Feb 17th! Our church contributed \$500 toward this project in addition to some individuals who made donations. The Women's Fellowship is now sponsoring two children at the orphanage and the youth group is sponsoring one, as well as Jeffrey and Lynn Dick. The pictures of these boys are on the new bulletin board by Fellowship Hall. More pictures of the food truck are there as well.



*The 40-foot food container you helped us purchase has arrived to The Good Shepherd Orphanage! In November, we shared our urgent need with you that our food supply had run out due to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. This container is full of pre-packaged food to serve the community and feed our children at TGSO. There are **272,160 well-balanced meals**, called Manna Packs, that are specially formulated by nutritionists to provide essential carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. These packets form the central component of daily meals, but they are also designed to be supplemented with fresh fruits and vegetables; so we will continue to grow and buy local food when we can. These Manna Packs have provided immense relief to the Good Shepherd Orphanage ministry by allowing us to go on feeding over 150 people daily through our community feeding program.*

We hope you enjoy the photos and video of the boys unloading the truck of food as much as we enjoyed receiving it! The excitement we all felt that day was truly palpable. We cannot thank you enough for this generous gift. In the words of one of our GSO boys, Sami (the boy with his hands raised in the photo), "We're all going to eat tonight!"



Boys unloading the boxes of food that were shipped from Illinois to the orphanage.



Looking at March

Lay Assistant

- 1– Sue Murphey
- 8– Sophia Cochran
- 15– Celeste Wheeler
- 22– Don Kitchin
- 29– Terry McGarr

Nursery

- 1– Keri & Terry McGarr
- 8– Patty Brennen +
William or Kitty
- 15– Lynn Dick +
- 22– Art & Kris Ayers
- 29– Virginia Cooper and
Samantha Guzman

Hospitality

- 1– Sarah & Sean Peterson
- 8– the Diaconate board
- 15– the Mission board
- 22– Denise & Jeff Muck
- 29– Elena Garcia & family

Financial Counters

- 1– Aaron Strebeck
Mike Nelson
- 8– Dave Daugherty
Ted Guimond
- 15– Terry McGarr
Doug Gruber
- 22– Ken McNicholas
Jeff Reber

Anniversaries

- 03/03 Jeff & Denise Muck
- 03/18 Tony & Holly Cochran
- 03/23 Ed Withey & Louise Wepfer

Birthdays

- 03/05 Raziya Williams
- 03/07 Tom Barczak
- 03/08 Margaret Todd
- 03/13 Terri Wakild
- 03/14 Doyle Bingham
- 03/14 Gabriel Saucedo
- 03/17 Dea Bishop
- 03/18 Wes Stephens
- 03/19 Len Walter
- 03/20 Donna Beauchamp
- 03/21 Jocelyn Saucedo
- 03/24 Tom Ruesink
- 03/24 Kathy Straits
- 03/25 Rick Siler
- 03/28 Nancy Asche
- 03/28 Ted Guimond
- 03/29 Madison Nelson
- 03/31 Millicent Huminsky



Deacons for the Month

Mike Nelson
214-6846

Philip Rood
982-4212

Do you see your name up in the ministry helpers above?

We all tend to forget now and then if we have a responsibility on the coming Sunday. To help you remember the Church Office sends out (if they don't forget) a reminder on Friday to all on the list.

We do hope that helps you.