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JUNE 2020, VOLUME 33.6

# The Messenger

*St. John's United Church of Christ*



## Pray for Shalom

*Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 28:18*

"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

Dear friends,

The events of last week have brought into sharp focus once again just how frightening the world can be for many of us. A family's loved one was lost in a televised response to an arrest gone wrong. Unfortunately this is not an isolated event. It can seem that the crisis of the pandemic has exacerbated the chasms separating us from our neighbors. But the sad truth is that it's just more visible.

St. John's believes and affirms that all are welcome, no matter who you are, what you have done, or where you are on life's journey. That belief leads us to understand that if there is no justice there can be no peace. That means that there must be justice for all, no matter who you are, what you have done, or where you are on life's journey. Either we all count, or no one counts.

Our building has been shown in many pictures and in televised film footage over the past few days. There has been no damage to our building, but there is severe damage to our community's heart and soul. Shalom means wholeness, completeness, health, safety and prosperity. Please continue to pray for Shalom in our community, our nation and our neighbors for understanding, healing, and peace.

Peace to all of you,

Dreama

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# A Message the Church Council President

Dearest Members and Friends of St. John's,

Another church year has flown by and once again we are at the time when we change committee members. May 31st the congregation voted to accept the slate of officers, and the many committee members suggested by the council. We continue to be fortunate to have wonderful folks willing to serve and welcome those new and returning faces.

I would be remiss in my duties if I did not take this time to issue a heartfelt 'Thank You' to all those who have served and after many years are leaving council or committees. Each of you hard working members have brought a level of dedication and commitment allowing us to continue to move forward in our day to day life and long distance planning. I have to particularly call out Laura Totty for her long service on the council and the church in general. Her steady calm outlook has been a joy for which we all are thankful.

But as you well know, it's not just Laura. We have so many dedicated members who work diligently in the background keeping our community healthy and growing.

I look forward to this New Year with an optimism I haven't felt in a long time. We have had steady growth in our Sunday Zoom worship where we are continuing to hear from the many different ministers' voices the Worship and Music committee has found for us. W&M works hard every week with the visiting minister, Shirley T., and Daniel Martin to make the most seamless and uplifting service digital services possible. Daniel has been a God-sent blessing with his understanding of the technology needed to keep us going. Beverly, Scott and Richard have worked tirelessly to find and present meaningful worship opportunities. Restoration committee is working alongside Facilities, Finance, and Trustees with renewed energy towards our short term goal of getting back safely into the sanctuary for which there will be much celebration. Missions continues to find ways for us to serve our community at large while Congregational Life and Care does the hard work of keeping us all in communications with each other. The excitement I hear and share during the Wednesday night bible study is wonderful as we continue with our faith formation.

Our conversation with Central Atlantic Conference to find an interim minister is continuing apace. We will hopefully be forming a Search Committee within the next few months to start the process of finding a Called Minister as well.

So while we are physically separate from each other, we are together in heart and spirit. The heart of St. John's for me has always been the love and compassion we have shown our community and that heart still beats strong. Thanks to every single person in our community for the dedication you have shown during this time of uncertainty. God's eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me (us).

With utmost humility for your trust in me I wish you continued peace and joy.

*Dreama*

Church Council President

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# Worship and Music Ministry

The Worship & Music Committee has been meeting weekly for the past month; our committee members have increased in number and worship "production" has truly become a team effort as we navigate the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of worship via "Zoom." Each one of us on the committee has a vital role to play in producing the worship experience. And we have decided that we will continue our Sunday worship services via "Zoom" at least through June. We rejoice that so many people not in the greater Richmond area - friends, family members, church members who have moved away - have been able to join us and reconnect through this online venue. We will be exploring ways to continue to provide an online connection to our worship even after we feel that it is safe and prudent to return to worship in our church sanctuary.

We have been truly blessed by the thoughtful and inspiring messages brought to us each Sunday by our guest preachers. Scott Siefert has been busy lining up our preachers and somewhere else in this newsletter, you will be able to read about who they are and when they will be preaching.

We still need liturgists to do the opening Welcome, the Call to Worship, the opening prayers, and scripture readings. If you would like to "sign-up" to do this, please contact Beverly Lindsey at [revbevlinsey@gmail.com](mailto:revbevlinsey@gmail.com) or 804-275-7165 with the Sundays that you would be available.

We have also been blessed that our music ministry has been able to continue... not with a choir, but with individual singers and instrumentalists making time to record their offerings of music for our services. If you would like to offer your talents in this capacity, please contact Beverly Lindsey at the above email or phone number or be in touch with Shirley Townsend.

If you are unsure about how or hesitant to connect to our worship through "Zoom," please do not hesitate to contact anyone of us on the Worship & Music Committee which currently is: Beverly Lindsey, Richard Bighinatti, Jeff Jacobs, Scott Siefert, David Craig, and Bud Higgins.

Be careful, be mindful, and know that you are all beloved children of God.

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# June Mission of the Month: ChildSavers

How can we help save Richmond's children? ChildSavers! That is one way!!!

ChildSavers is a nonprofit organization, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, dedicated to preventing childhood trauma and ensuring that children have access to early child care. The mission of ChildSavers is to provide the community's children with trauma informed mental health and child development services. ChildSavers provides services to the community through a three-tier model that includes: Child Development Services, Children's Mental Health Services and Trauma and Resilience Training. ChildSavers "believes that all children can be safe, happy, healthy and ready to learn". Because we are our "Brother's Keeper" it is important that we work towards the positive development of the "least of these", our children and help them to become the positive adults that they can be.

Please support this very important nonprofit doing work in our community with and for our children by writing a check mailed to St. John's United Church of Christ or by donating on line at <https://bit.ly/stjohnsdonations>.



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# Guest Pastors in June

While church is closed to limit the spread of COVID-19, we will be gathering for worship remotely. Participation can be done by telephone, computer, or smartphone using Zoom.

We are blessed to have the following guest pastors leading worship during the month of June:

## The Rev. Susan Minasian - June 7th

The Rev Dr Susan Minasian is the Interim Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. She has over thirty years of ministerial experience including pastorates including Tabernacle United Church in Philadelphia and most recently at Sojourners United Church of Christ in Charlottesville. She has served on the staffs of Lancaster Theological Seminary and Franklin and Marshall College. She is a spiritual guide/coach, parent/mother, artist/dancer, preacher/pastor, contemplative/activist, motivational speaker/teacher, mentor/seeker, writer/theologian. Her sister was a dear friend and member to our church, the Rev Virginia "Ginna" Dalton.

## Lindsey Franklin - June 14th

Lindsey is a Member in Discernment with the United Church of Christ, and has been part of the St. John's church family since moving to Richmond in 2018. She currently serves as Associate Pastor for Development at Richmond Hill, an ecumenical Christian community and monastery in Church Hill, and chairs the UCC Potomac Association Justice & Witness Committee. She lives in the Fan and loves being outside, swimming in the James River, and exploring the city.

## Erin Burnette - June 21st

Erin grew up in the foothills of Tennessee and moved to Richmond in 1999, where she started seminary. Upon completion of the Master of Divinity and Master of Social Work degrees, she worked in nonprofit community based programs, till discovering hospice chaplaincy as her vocation. She lives in Richmond with her wife, Georgianne, and their two cats, Duncan and LilyBat. Erin enjoys kayaking, traveling, listening to music, a good book and a meal. She credits St. John's UCC for helping her not only keep the faith, but to continue growing in this faith.

## Dr. Richard Voelz - June 28th

Rich serves as the Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship at Union Presbyterian Seminary. Prior to joining the faculty at UPSem, he was the Senior Minister of Johns Creek Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), an Open & Affirming congregation outside Atlanta, GA. His most recent book is Preaching to Teach: Inspiring People to Think and Act (Abingdon, 2010). He enjoys college basketball, biking, cooking, and is currently learning to play the guitar.

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# June Devotion

by Dreama Terrill

## Genesis 8:13

*13 In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the Ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. 14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 "Go out of the Ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you."*

I admit sometimes I'm a whiner. And recently I've been whining ... a lot. I want to go to the store without having to wear a hot, sticky mask. I want to go to a restaurant to have dinner with friends, get my hair cut, go visit my friends in the country and sit on their new back porch. I want to see my brother-in-law, with whom I am still grieving over the death of his wife/my sister. I want to see our economy start to rebound.

I want ... I want ... I want.

Then I got to thinking about Noah, but more importantly about Noah's wife. And, being the scientific person I like to think I am, I did a bit of calculations.

According to the text, Genesis 7: 11- 13, in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, the second month, on the 17th day of the month ... they entered the Ark.

We all know about the rain for 40 days and 40 nights; we get it pounded into our spiritual heads from the time we are able to sit up. What we don't find out until well after we reach adulthood is this: the 40 days reference used over and over again in the bible is a spiritual time frame, one that signifies probation, trial and/or chastisement, not an actual unit of measure.

We all know about the animals, 2 by 2, which, based on the square footage of the Ark could have held around 70,000 creatures according to scientists at the University of Leicester in England. (And by the way, the Ark was about 1/3rd the size of the Titanic).

Frankly, I hadn't really thought about this very much until recently, given where we are right now in the world with the pandemic. But let's just consider this:

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# June Devotion

Noah was 600 years old when God closed up the Ark with he, his wife, his 3 sons, and their wives, and somewhere in the neighborhood of 70,000 animals. You have got to know that Mrs. Noah was pulling her hair out trying to keep the Ark from smelling like rancid camel dung and keeping the sheep out of the bags of corn. I can't imagine any amount of goat litter would be enough to keep the air fresh. And remember, according to the text, God had sealed the doors and windows. HOLY MOLY, Batman!!! Can't you just hear her holler "Can we just PARK this thing somewhere for Jehovah's sake and open a window??!!!"

But the story gets a bit more exciting. In the scripture I chose above, it clearly states "in the six hundred first year"!!! Wait, ... WHAT!!!

The Ark was sealed on the 17th day of the second month of Noah's 600th year, and they didn't leave the Ark until the 27th day of the second month of Noah's 601st year. Noah was 600 when they started floating around, and now he's 601!!??

A year? A WHOLE YEAR??

70,000 animals, two 600-year-old parents, their three sons and wives were adrift for a year without a window open, without a haircut, without internet ... without, without, without.

And when it was over, God sent a rainbow as a sign of his everlasting covenant to never again destroy the life on earth.

It's only been ten weeks for me, so what the heck do I have to whine about, eh? Is it fun? No. Am I worried about my loved ones and my future? Yes, I certainly am. But I'm not locked up in an ark with a 600-year-old spouse and knee deep in sheep dung.

Let's all trust God has given our scientists the knowledge they need to help keep us safe through this, and let's follow the guidelines even if they make us miss a few comforts. Remember, we could all be like Mrs. Noah and her gang of 7 + 70,000. And let's remember God's promise, to always be present for us.

## *Prayer*

Thank you, God, for reminding me most of the things I'm missing are just things. Continue to keep one hand on my shoulder and the other hand over my mouth if I want to complain too much. Thank you for the food on my table, the roof over my head, and the friends and family I am blessed to have. Amen.

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# June Announcements

## **Wednesday Night Bible Study Fellowship - June 3rd at 7:00 p.m.**

All are invited to attend our Wednesday Night Bible Study from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. We are exhibiting a powerful spirit and energy as our beloved community is coming together to study the Word. Just like our worship all our invited and affirmed (even if you weren't able to attend previous sessions).

Our focus on the Gospel of Matthew. It is the featured Gospel this year in the Revised Common Lectionary and is considered one of the most important and influential books in the Bible. It tells the story of Jesus' birth, life, and death, and resurrection. It is the "teaching" gospel as it addresses some of the most foundational Christian themes including righteousness, justice, and forgiveness.

If you have any questions please contact Scott Siefert at (804) 350-0826, or email him at [sesiefert@gmail.com](mailto:sesiefert@gmail.com).

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267837476?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267837476?pwd=LOUxWjN5cHVjaWdOYXdkL0doU0t5dz09)

[pwd=LOUxWjN5cHVjaWdOYXdkL0doU0t5dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267837476?pwd=LOUxWjN5cHVjaWdOYXdkL0doU0t5dz09)

Or telephone +1 301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 842 6783 7476

Password: 690409

We welcome anyone dialing in on the phone who wants to be recognized to introduce themselves since we can only see phone numbers on the screen.



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# June Announcements

## **Potomac Association Spring Meeting 2020 Saturday, June 6, 2020, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom**

You are invited to attend the virtual Potomac Association Spring Meeting, themed "Renewing Connections," on June 6th, which is being held through Zoom. Click [here](#) to register. They ask for a donation of at least \$1 in order to support the committees. There will also be a virtual meet and greet prior to the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

## **Ecclesiastical Council for Erin Burnette and Laura Kristhard - Saturday, June 13th, 10 a.m. to noon via Zoom**

The candidates will provide an oral presentation of a paper describing their faith journey and readiness for ministry, followed by questions/responses/examination by the assembled delegates. A vote will take place after the candidate's presentation and examination, with the candidate excused from the voting.

Click [HERE](#) for the Ordination Papers for both Candidates.

Guests welcome. Please indicate your intention to participate in these Ecclesiastical Councils via Zoom by e-mailing:

Rev. Holly Jackson

Assistant Moderator

Potomac Association

Email: [hollyrjackson@gmail.com](mailto:hollyrjackson@gmail.com)

**\*\*In your e-mail to Holly, please be sure to include:**

Your name and the church where you are a member or pastor.

Whether you are Lay Delegate, Visitor, Pastor or Non-Parish Clergy

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/9434009371>

Dial in by telephone: +1 (312) 626-6799

Meeting ID: 943 400 9371

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# June Announcements

## Annual Meeting Report

The St. John's Annual Meeting took place by Zoom after church on May 31st. The following church members were elected to the following positions:

David Agee, Marcie Agee, Betsy Bighinatti, Kathy Freise, Dreama Terrill and Terry Weaver were elected to two-year terms as members of the Church Council.

Jeff Jacobs was re-elected to a three-year term as Trustee.

Jeff Michel was elected to a three-year term on the Audit Committee.

Betsy Bighinatti, Jeff Jacobs and Beth Oxenham were re-elected to three-year terms on the Endowment Board.

Questions were addressed relating to the search for an Interim Pastor and the process for returning to worship in the church building. The Church Council is working with the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC to identify candidates for the Interim Pastor position, and will be appointing a search committee to evaluate Interim Pastor candidates. In the meantime, members and friends of the church will be preaching and conducting the Sunday online services, and you may contact Rev. Beverly Lindsey, at [revbevlyndsey@gmail.com](mailto:revbevlyndsey@gmail.com) or (804) 275-7165 if you would like to serve as a worship service liturgist. In addition, you may contact Rev. Beverly Lindsey with any personal or pastoral concerns.

With regard to returning to worship in the church building, the priority is maintaining the safety and health of our members, friends and visitors. The Church Council is constantly monitoring and evaluating guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Virginia Health Department, the UCC and other church resources, and the church's insurance carrier. We hope that it will be possible to resume worship services in the sanctuary by late summer, at which point the new heating and cooling system will be fully operational. But we recognize that some people may prefer to participate in worship without coming to the building, and therefore we intend to continue to offer worship via Zoom or another online platform even after we return to worship in the church building.

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# June Announcements

## Congregational Life and Care Update

We want everyone to know how much they are valued in our beloved community of St. John's. The Reverend Beverly Lindsey has agreed to be available for Pastoral Care. You can reach her at (804)662-0742 or email her at [revbevlinsey@gmail.com](mailto:revbevlinsey@gmail.com). Please reach out to her, myself or any member of the committee, or the church office if you are in need of support whether it is spiritual, emotional, or physical. If you need anything at all, please reach out to me. If you are hungry, let me know. If you are hurting, let me know. If you just need a friend, let me know. We are called to be in relationship with each other. That is how we show our love for God.

We stand in solidarity with all of those hurting in our beloved community of faith, our community of greater Richmond, and to all those who are suffering in our country and in our world. We are going through a difficult time of transition in our church community. We miss the spiritual and pastoral leadership that Rev Linda provided and want to acknowledge the pain and grief that comes with her leaving. We grieve for our city and state as we work through the pandemic and the civil unrest. We grieve for our nation after the tragic events in Minneapolis and long for a time when everyone will be treated with equity, dignity, respect, and with love.

We miss spending time with each other in our beautiful sanctuary and look forward to a time when we gather again. We will be planning events for the community once it is safe for us to gather. Please let us know of ideas you may have for us to be in community. I long for the time when we will be together and be able to be physically together.

We want to be there for you. We want to hear from you. It is a blessing to provide even small measures of support. Please reach out and let us know how you are and how we can be a blessing for each other. Sending virtual hugs.

Scott Siefert  
Chair of Congregational Life and Care  
[sesiefert@gmail.com](mailto:sesiefert@gmail.com)  
804.350.0826

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# June Announcements

## Financial Update

Many people have been mailing in their pledged offerings or donating online while we have been worshiping remotely, and we thank everyone for their support. During this time, we encourage everyone to maintain your financial support for ongoing church activities as you are able. Checks can be mailed to the church at 503 Stuart Circle, Richmond, VA 23220. And you can donate online through the St. John's website at <https://bit.ly/stjohnsdonations>. If you have any questions about online giving or church finances, please feel free to contact Stewardship Chair Jeff Jacobs at [jwjacobs9@gmail.com](mailto:jwjacobs9@gmail.com) or (202) 361-9887.

## Do you need food?

As our opportunities for getting out of our homes are curtailed, some of us are turning to cooking activities, and some of us may be in need of additional food. If you are having trouble getting to the store, or know someone who is, or would like to have some freshly-made food delivered, please contact Scott Siefert at [sesiefert@gmail.com](mailto:sesiefert@gmail.com) or (804) 350-0826. Likewise, if you are able to be "on-call" to respond to a need for food, also please let Scott know.

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# June 2020 Calendar

Tuesday, June 2nd, 3 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 3rd, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 3rd, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study Meeting

Saturday, June 6th, 10 a.m. - Potomac Association Spring Meeting

**Sunday, June 7th, 10 a.m. - Worship**

Monday, June 8th, 7:00 p.m. - Church Council Meeting

Tuesday, June 9th, 3 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 10th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 10th, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study Meeting

Saturday, June 13th, 10 a.m. - Ecclesiastical Council for Erin Burnette and Laura Kristhard

**Sunday, June 14th, 10 a.m. - Worship**

Sunday, June 14th, 11:15 a.m. - Missions Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 16th, 3 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 17th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 17th, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study Meeting

**Sunday, June 21st, 10 a.m. - Worship**

Tuesday, June 23rd, 3 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 24th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 24th, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study Meeting

**Sunday, June 28th, 10 a.m. - Worship**

Tuesday, June 30th, 3 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

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# June Birthdays

June 2nd - June Smyth

June 4th - Savannah Quick

June 5th - Terry Pendleton

June 5th - Georgia Pollard

June 6th - Beth Oxenham

June 9th - Phil Jones

June 13th - Tony Sharpenstein

June 14th - Joe McGregor

June 19th - Helen Bunch

June 21st - Thomas Pridgen



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## **St. John's United Church of Christ**

St. John's United Church of Christ is a diverse community forming a united congregation, seeking to grow our faith, share it with others, and serve God's people wherever the need is present. We are living God's love and all are invited!!!

**An Open and Affirming  
Congregation**

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