## St. John's United Church of Christ THE MESSENGER

## MARCH 2020

#### March 2020 Volume 34.3 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

503 Stuart Circle Richmond, Virginia 23220 Telephone: 804.358.9291 The Rev. Linda Higgins Pastor

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Published Monthly © 2020 St John's UCC This week as I prepare for lent to begin and continue to plan how to bring the journey of transformation to life, I am also reading ordination papers, preparing for ordination interviews for two women. Two women who began a journey many years ago that they hope is coming to fruition soon. We live in a world that expects things to come instantaneously. In fact, a toy that I often use for Easter is a caterpillar that turns into a butterfly no chrysalis stage necessary.

I think many of us would like life better that way. Just as we try to travel from Palm Sunday to Easter without stopping at the story of betrayal and death on the way. One book I read years ago spoke of lent and holy week as our annual practice of how to die or more exactly how to lay down our lives. The caterpillar we are told creates the chrysalis with no knowledge that it will be changed to the point of becoming mush before it reforms as a butterfly and comes out.

There is no hurrying this transformation if you open the chrysalis to expose the butterfly before it is ready it dies. The women we will be speaking with this week each had to make their journey to be ready to be ordained, for one it was a shorter journey than for the other, but both had to travel as was right for them. The journey included some similar steps, education, CPE, internships but each journey was unique. They could not clone the journey of another so they could be sure to be successful but had to do the hard work of their own journey.

It was almost two years ago that we entered this time of being in a different state as we sold the parking lot. We knew life would be different while the building next store was built, and we did not have parking available as we were used to. We knew we were doing it to get ahead of maintenance issues, so we were not in a constant reactive mode as things broke down in the building. We did not know that the air handler would break before the HVAC renovation and we would worship in the fellowship hall for a year. We also did not know that we would be blessed with new members who would come with a heart for justice and acting their faith through working for a more systemic fix to things than only doing charity. We did not know in fact who would stay with us through this time and there was fear around making the changes. Some told me they would leave because they could not have church be different, and some did, but some have stayed and journeyed with us who did not think they could.

But now it is time to envision what we are creating. What have we learned, what have we loved? What have we hated in this time? How are we ready to be different as we come out the other side of this journey? We wrote our mission statement preselling the parking lot. Does it still work for us or do we need a new one? In this time, we have in many ways been a Sunday only organization and we have been focused on the social end of church life. How do we refocus on discipleship, both the learning and the doing of God's work so we are church, not a social club, but a church that will attract others who want to share the journey? The work of being in a chrysalis is only half done when the butterfly begins to form and we are not ready yet to become, but it is time to envision what we will be. Do we believe that St John's can be a butterfly? How do we take what we like about meeting downstairs back upstairs to the sanctuary? This is not a time to try to go back that would kill us, as it would the butterfly, but it is time to get ready to be something new. We can envision some of it, but not all. Resurrection is a journey with God so we are not in control. Are we willing to continue to journey forward to something new? Are we ready to dream together and envision where we think God may be taking us?

With Love and Prayers, *The Rev. Linda Higgins* 

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST THE MESSENGER

# MARCH 2020

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### Fellowship Lunch March 12th at noon - NOTE NEW TIME!

This month's Fellowship Lunch will be on Thursday, March 12th, at <u>noon</u>. We're going to try the earlier time to accommodate those who have other mid-afternoon commitments. We'll be meeting at Firebirds Grill, 11448 Belvedere Vista Lane in North Chesterfield. Please contact Beth Stiegler at (804) 475-7340 to reserve your place.

#### Equality Virginia Dinner March 28th

The annual Equality Virginia Commonwealth Dinner, a celebration of the state's LGBTQ+ community and a recognition of this year's pro-equality legislative victories, will be held at the Convention Center on Saturday, March 28th at 6 pm. As in previous years, St. John's will be hosting a table (or two, if there is enough interest). The cost is \$90 per person, but financial support is available so don't let cost be an issue if you're interested in attending. Please contact Jeff Jacobs ASAP at (202) 361-9887 or jwjacobs9@gmail.com to reserve your seat at the table.

#### SAVE THE DATE - Potomac Association Spring 2020 Meeting May 16th

Potomac Association Spring Meeting Saturday; May 16, 2020 9:00 am

#### BELOVED COMMUNITY CHURCH UCC

17500 Indian Head Highway Accokeek, Maryland 20607 www.belovedcommunitychurchmd.org Pastors Sherry & Guy Molock

Advance registration encouraged via Eventbrite Day of registration begins at 8:30 a.m. \$15.00 Registration Fee (Registration Fee includes Meeting Materials, Continental Breakfast, and Lunch)



### ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST THE MESSENGER

## MARCH 2020

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### Trustees/Renovation Update

A number of renovation projects were completed or are underway as March begins. Repairs are underway on the elevator, which will cause the elevator to be out of service until March 6th, and a chairlift on the stairway from our back parking area to the parlor is being installed. Paving of the alleyway and our back parking area, along with repair of the cement sidewalk in front of and along the side entrance of the church, should be completed this month. Reinforcement of the ceilings in the classrooms on the second floor of the church has been completed. We have received proposals to replace the yellowed coverings over the stained glass windows, and we are also looking at restoration of several stained glass windows that have fallen into disrepair. We are moving forward with replacement of the center railing on the side entrance of the church (near the copy room) with railings on either side, to make access to the door easier for all. And equipment has been ordered for replacement of the HVAC system, on which work is beginning this month. If you have any questions or comments, please contact any of the Trustees or members of the Renovations Task Force -- Rob Osborn, Jeff Hetzer, Jeff Jacobs, Sarah Allen, Dreama Terrill, Betsy Bighinatti, Richard Bighinatti, and Pastor Linda. The Renovations group is meeting on March 3rd,17th and 31st, at 3 pm at the church, and all are welcome to attend.

#### New Directory

We are in the process of updating our church directory. We'll have copies of the current directory available at church the next several Sundays; please check your entry and let us know of any needed corrections or updates.

#### March Mission

As the month ends, it has come to our attention that the new building for Caritas is scheduled for opening this June. We have been invited to participate in this exciting new journey with them. Your mission team has agreed to sponsor one of the new apartments on behalf of St. John's. The cost for a 1 bedroom is \$3000. We are grateful to the Stille Foundation for making this possible. BUT given St. John's long history with Caritas we would like to do more!! With the support of the congregation, we could sponsor a 2 bedroom for \$5000. We are challenging you to support Caritas in raising an additional \$2000. The building will have apartment housing and support services all in one location. Ending the need for intake & overnight housing of women in churches all over the community. We will have the opportunity to participate in the setup of "OUR" apartment. This is a one-time contribution from our congregation but a long term investment in Caritas, so please continue our strong support of the organization by making a donation in March. Even if you gave in February, please consider giving again!

#### Change the World RVA

Change the World RVA, a foundation assisting homeless students to succeed in high school, college, and life will be collecting donations in March for their big fundraiser, Another Woman's Treasure. The sale will be held on April 3rd & 4th. They are collecting gently used purses, jewelry, & women's accessories for this fun two-day sale. The sale is held at Bon Air Methodist. Donations may be dropped off there. Info can be found at changetheworldrva.org.

#### **One Great Hour of Sharing**

One Great Hour of Sharing is the UCC offering to provide assistance during disasters here and abroad. We will receive this offering during worship on Sunday, March 22. This aid has enabled the Church to respond to hurricanes in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, North Carolina, Texas, and Florida; to fires in California; earthquakes in Mexico, Indonesia, & Haiti; flooding in El Salvador, Hawaii and South India. This assistance provides sustainable solutions from disasters near and far.

The mission and outreach committee hopes that you will respond with the generosity. Jesus calls us to offer assistance to all our neighbors.

Please use the envelope in your bulletin or if you include your donation in your regular offering envelope please be sure to designate OGHS.

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InNature.org/practices	agriculture group:	how together you can	or guest speaker:	bit.ly/DitchYourDryer	support people and the	infinite and all-inclusive.
CenterForSpirituality	a community-supported	Month), and discuss	Invite a workshop	money. Read more here:	reinvesting in ways that	God's circle of love is
in nature today:	farmers' market or join	next month (Earth	of Earth Day?	dry to save energy and	from fossil fuels and	- Joint
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Go outside 14	Purchase 13	Plan a community 12	How will your	Wash laundry in 10	Care for Creation 9	"For God so loved 8
			replaced.			time: EcoPalms.org
need a professional.	20	ContactUs@VAIPL.org	have discarded and	when you leave home.		3/13 to receive them in
powered heater, you may	instead of driving?	for more resources:	you might otherwise	Always turn the heat off		Guatemala. Order by
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you can do this yourself.	driving solo? Bike, walk,	bit.ly/weatherizehome	Take time today to	Buy a programmable	action	standards and protect
electric water heater.	Carpool rather than	how-tos:		day and 60° at night.	solar: volt Lot & use	improve workers' living
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an easy way to start.			Learn more, bic.yrastiwedpress	LCa		
kitchen window can be	bit.ly/eat4good		by dirty air.		rewed spirits.	us, returning to You with renewed spirits.
An herb garden in your	fast to bless others:	Contract of Contraction	communities who are sickened		through our sinful overconsumption and the systemic injustices that surround	through our sinful overconsi
and start some seeds	other ways to use your	vainform/ga2020/	polluters and the people and	*	and all those with whom we share this, our common nome ford help us to restore what has been domosed	and all those with whom we share this, our commis- Lord help us to restore what has been damaged
Plan a garden today	check out Oxfam's	faith and environment	a report on the worst air		, Your Creation,	in our relationships with You, Your Creation,
- Gen 2:15	vegetarian today and	legislative priorities the	Christ and environmental		we ask that our eyes be opened to the ways we can do better;	we ask that our eyes be op
Eden to till it and keep it."	centuries. Try eating	updates about the	Today, the United Church of		Through brayer, fasting, and sharing over these 40 days,	Through prayer, fasting, and
took the man and	at	Assembly session is	sday	within me.	Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.	Create in me a clean heart
"The Lord God 70	Christians have 79	The General 77	RUA	FE		A prayer from Psalm 51:
SATURDAY	FRIDAY	THURSDAY	WEDNESDAY	TUESDAY	MONDAY	SUNDAY
Our religious response to climate change.	Our religiou	Creation care.	climate—may we answer God's call to be faithful stewards, speaking out for Creation care.	II to be faithful stew	ay we answer God's ca	climatem
Light	DC.M	y our damaged	On behalf of future generations and all living in poverty—those most harmed by our damaged	II living in poverty—	ture generations and a	On behalf of fur
Power	D.No	our daily nabits	May this calendar remind us to be more mindful of the ways that our daily habits impact both our common home and all those with whom we share it.	d us to be more min	ay this calendar remind	IN .
and IPLdmv.org		ut this season.	many others in heeding the call to be stewards of God's Creation throughout this season.	o be stewards of Go	rayer, lasting, and more	Lent is a time for p
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power & light	bower	2020	Care 2	Creation		Lenten
a intorfaith	virgini	1 to days.	Because the world can change a lot in 40 days.	ie world can	Decause th	AILSIIIT
Compiled from many sources by	Compiled from	An dawn	change a lot in	to world con	Borning +	Vincinio

URLs that begin with bitly are case-sensitive; all other links are not.

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Honor the Lord's <b>15</b> day (and the Lord's <b>C</b> reation) by walking, biking, or taking public transportation to church today! Planning a trip? Consider purchasing carbon offsets.	ls your local stream 16 dean enough for baptisms? Locate your waterway and its condition: bit.ly! watershedfinder Pray: Got of scored woters, mo/ we be o bessing to your woters.	Green grass lawns are not so "green." Learn how to cultivate grounds that are good for people, plants, and creatures at home: bit.ly/greenergrounds and at church: bit.ly/ sacredchurchgrounds	Use cleaner <b>18</b> energy at home. Go solar with the help of Solar United Neighbors: SolarUnitedNeighbors.org/ Virginia	Want to host a 19 film screening and discussion about Creation care at your church? Browse VAIPL's Film Library: vaipl.org/ resources/film-library/	As you fast from 20 meat today, consider plant-based dishes for Easter Sunday; StFrancisAlliance.com/ recipes	In the US, >30% of <b>21</b> all food is wasted. Reduce your food waste by planning well and eating leftovers. Consider composting what's left at home or get table scraps picked up: CompostCrew.com, VeteranCompost.com
"You were once <b>22</b> derivities, but now <b>22</b> you are light in the Lord" Read Ephesians <b>5:8-14</b> and "live as children of light" without electricity! As a Sabbath practice, turn off or unplug everything you can for a half hour.	Organize a 23 congregation and 23 community stream deanup for Earth Month in April. Participate in Project Clean Stream: bit.ly/projectcleanstream	What role does 24 your church 24 community play in repairing our climate? Get involved with our green work, and flock together with other "green sheep" through VAIPL: bit.ly/VAIPLsignup	"Whoever serves me must follow me" 25 - John 12:26a Pray for all our neighbors who face environmental devastation and for the courage of Jesus to sustain your commitment to environmental justice. Read more: bit.ly/VirginiaEJ	Continue your stewardship into the Easter season. Organize "E-cycling" for your congregation to dispose of old phones, tablets, computers, and TVs responsibly: e-stewards.org/ find-a-recycler	Tomorrow at 8:30 pm, millions of 27 people will switch their lights off for an hour to commit to climate action, Plan how you want to spend your hour in contemplation or throughtful discussion with family or firends tomorrow.	At 8:30 pm, join hundreds of 28 millions of people around the world who will be switching off all lights for one hour to commit to global climate action andmore mindful energy use: EarthHour.org
Read Matt 5:43-48 <b>29</b> and reflect on our call to love our "enemies." Pray for all those, especially business or elected leaders, who stand in the way of climate action or perpetuate injustices. Call or write to express you concerns.	"On either side of 30 the river is the tree of life and its leaves are for the healing of the nations." - Rev. 22:2 Plant trees for healing this spring. Find out what's native to your area here: nwf.org/ NativePlantFinder	Consider the gifts 3 given to you. Pray about how you are called to use your time, talent, passion, and treasure to care for our common home.	APRIL Read "Letter to a Young Climate Activist on the First Day of the New Decade" and reflect on the beauty that still surrounds us and the hope we can find through collective action: bit.ly/RebeccaSoInitletter	In your home, replace incandescent and compact fluorescent lights with LEDs. Each bulb replaced will save hundreds of pounds of climate pollution over time: bit.ly/chooseLEDs	Fast from meat today and read aloud "Prayer After Eating" by Wendell Berry:"I have taken in the light that quickened eye and leaf. May my brain be bright with praise of what I eat May I be worthy of my meat."	Learn about how our 4 Jewish neighbors give thanks before and after meals, praising the One who "brings forth bread from the earth"; bit.ly/foodblessings
Paim Sunday Rest today. Take a break from the TV and internet. Turn off everything, and unplug it if you can. Play a game, go for a walk, or read a book! Read Blessed Earth's resources on Sabbath living: SabbathLiving.org	On average, a family of four in the US uses 40 gallons of water per day just in the shower! Set a timer for 5 minutes and consider installing a low-flow shower head: EPA.gov/WaterSense/ showerheads	How will you continue <b>7</b> to seek God through Creation? "Although we have done everything we can to separate ourselves from other(s) from the land and its waters and from God, God has never left us." - Bahnson & Wirzba, Mcking Pecce with the Lond	Talk with your family about your Lenten Creation care journey. What ideas do you have to continue your stewardship into the Easter season?	Maundy Thursday 9 Today we remember Jesus's last supper with his disciples and his prayers in the garden of Gethsemane. Following Jesus' example, take time today to pray outdoors, remembering all who suffer through drought and starvation.	<b>Good Friday</b> "At that moment the cursolin of the temple was torn in two the earth shook, and the rocks were split." - Matt 27:51 Contemplate destruction already caused by climate change through wildfires, floods, and stronger storms.	Holy Saturday "God looked et everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good." - Gen, 1:31a Take a walk and notice signs of new life. resurrection, and spring in your neighborhood. Take pictures or notes in a journal of what you see.
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whether on earth or in heaves, by making peace by the blood of his cross," - Colossians 1:19-20 10.9

"The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout Creation by his universal Lordship" - Pope Francis, Loudoto S"

take time to give thanks for the changes of heart and habit you have taken on since Lent began, and continue to live out your call to Creation stewardship with the hope of the resurrection always in your heart! Trusting in the words of Philippians 1:6, "that the One who began a good work in you will bring it to completion,"



Take some time today to reflect on all of the activities that you have performed during Lent, and how they have brought you into greater harmony with the earth and with all life. Conclude your Lenten Creation care practice by making a personal pledge to serve God and serve others by pursuing a more sustainable way of life.

## **Poor People's Campaign** A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

SIGN UP for the bus to DC on June 20! https://rally.co/poor-peoples-assembly



## MASS POOR PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY & MORAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON

#### To Address: Systemic Racism • Systemic Poverty • Ecological Devastation • War Economy and Militarism • Distorted Moral Narrative of Religious Nationalism

Join directly impacted people, state coordinating committees, moral leaders and hundreds of supporting organizations as we challenge the nation.





# EQUALITY CELEBRATION SUNDAY, MARCH 8 · 3PM

Monroe Park - 620 W. Main Street, Richmond, VA

Parade \* Marching Bands \* Giant Puppets \* Food Trucks \* And More!

Join us as we march from Monroe Park to the Virginia State Capitol to celebrate Virginia making history for equal rights! This year, Virginia became the 38th and final state needed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). For more info, visit: <u>VAratifyERA.org</u>

Rain or Shine Family Friendly Free Street Parking All Welcome
#ERA2020 #VAratifyERA #EqualRights

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Ministry	March 1 Team 3	March 8 Team 4	March 15 Team 4	March 22 Team 1	March 29 Team 1
Welcome Team Leader	Pam Miller	Helen Bunch	Helen Bunch	Richard Bighinatti	Richard Bighinatti
Sound System	Bruce Miller	Jeff Michel	Jeff Michel	David Pittman	David Pittman
Tellers	Jeff Michel and Scott Siefert	Jeff Michel and Scott Siefert	Rob Osborn Tony Sharpenstein	Rob Osborn Tony Sharpenstein	Mark Souza and Betsy Bighinatii
Liturgist	Beverly Lindsey	Scott Siefert	Rick Sumner	Robin Walsh	Chris Wing
Facilities	Bill Watson	Bud Higgins	Bud Higgins	Richard Bighinatti	Richard Bighinatti
Altar Guild	Sandy Higgins	Lynda Merry	Johanna Gilbert Charlotte Quick	Helen Bunch	
Fellowship Hosts	Johanna Gilbert	Andrea Miller and Rick Sumner	Laura Totty	Jessica M and Robin Walsh	Terrie Pendleton

Teller Coordinator: Bud Higgins 804-301-5059

Fellowship Host Coordinator: Rev. Beverly Lindsey 804-275-7165



Please find a substitute if you are unable to perform your ministry and contact your Team Coordinator and let the office to let them know who will be filling in for you. Thank you for making our church ministries run smoothly!

## ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST THE MESSENGER

## MARCH 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Finance Com- mittee 5:30 p.m.	3 Renovation Committee 3 p.m.	4	5	6	7
8	9 Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.	10	11	12 Fellowship Lunch Noon	13	14
15 RISC Update and Mission Moment during Service with Special Guest Emily Small	16	17 Renovation Committee 3 p.m.	18	19	20	21
22 One Great Hour of Sharing Mission Meeting after Worship	23	24	25	26 Music and Worship Meeting 1:30 p.m.	27	28 Equality Virginia Dinner 6 p.m.
29 Congregational Life & Care Meet- ing after Worship	30	31 Renovation Committee 3 p.m. RISC Rally at 2nd Baptist 6:30 p.m.				



- 1 Teresa Jolles
- 2 David Townsend
- 4 Rick Cook
- 8 Beverly Lindsey
- 16 Scott Siefert
- 31 Johanna Gilbert