
MAY 2021
VOLUME 34.5

The Messenger

St. John's United Church of Christ



Message from the Pastor

My friends,

We do not typically observe Ascension Day in the Protestant church (May 13th this year). It is, however, included in the Revised Common Lectionary we use to guide study and worship development. A bit of scripture from Ephesians is referred to for this date; it is a prayer for *“the saints who are... faithful in Christ Jesus.”* (1:1) Same chapter, verses 17-18: *“I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints.”*

How did leaders of the early churches devise the idea that such wisdom and revelation were possible? The apostles of Christ who helped to nurture and care for these churches were students of the ancient texts of their faith ancestors. An Old Testament reference for Ascension Day might have been in their minds when this prayer was offered. In Psalm 47:2-4 (Jewish Publication Society Translation): *“All you peoples, clap your hands, raise a joyous shout for God. For the LORD Most High is awesome, great king over all the earth; He subjects peoples to us, sets nations at our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom He loved.”*

It may be difficult to comprehend how such language yields a prayer that we might receive with encouragement. This is why I use many and varied resources in my study and prayer times, including a paraphrase of the ancient text titled Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness, by Nan C. Merrill. She has rendered the last two verses of the psalm quoted above like this: “Love invites the people to co-creation, the nations to peace. Love is our birthright, our heritage, to be shared with all.”

Through study, prayer, worship, and many other holy gifts, we are called to make meaning in community and the world. Ascension Day may not be a common day of celebration for us, but the spirit of the day and these texts are for our nurture. This is at the source of my hope for you, for our congregation, and for all of God’s creation.

Peace be with you now, and always.

Pastor Tom

From the Council President

“March went out like a lion
A whippin' up the water in the bay
Then April cried and stepped aside
And along come pretty little May!
May was full of promises
But she didn't keep 'em quickly enough for some
And a crowd of doubtin' Thomases
Was predictin' that the summer'd never come
But it's comin', by gum
We can feel it come
You can feel it in your heart
You can see it in the ground
You can see it in the trees
You can smell it in the breeze.”

-Richard Rogers

The lyrics above are from the movie “Carousel”. It was a typical 1950's musical: boy meets girl, they fall in love, lots of bad things happen and finally they “live happily ever after”.

In between the first notes of the Overture and the last note of the Finale, there is singing and dancing and the pure JOY of being there. AND I LOVE IT! I have always loved musicals; the depth of human experience told in song and dance has captivated me from my youth. If my mother wanted me to calm down and behave she turned on the record player with LP's from musicals. Next thing she'd know I was singing and dancing to the music. It was glorious.

I'm still like that. I love to sing and act out the old musicals in my head and in my heart.

The lyric above is from a song called “June is Bustin' Out All Over”. And while it's not yet June, I feel the spring and summer coming. I can see it in the trees and sky. I can feel it in the warming of the sun and blush to the flowers.

Best of all we are coming out from under the wet blanket of the pandemic. More and more of us are getting our vaccines and getting to visit with friends and family again.

Our hearts are full of joy for the return of spring and summer. Let us lift up our faces to the warmth of the sun and soak in GOD's creation.

*You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.*

Isaiah 55:12

May Mission of the Month: ChildSavers

Our May mission of the month is ChildSavers. ChildSavers provides children's mental health services, childcare resources and training for children's mental health professionals. Throughout the pandemic they have worked tirelessly to continue their services. They have provided technical assistance, training, and resources to help keep childcare providers open and safe. They have worked to connect local businesses and hospitals with providers that are available for childcare for employees shifts. They have provided teletherapy and worked with teachers to identify signs of stress, depression, trauma and abuse. They continue to meet their goal to prepare children for lifelong learning, address mental health and recovery from trauma. Please be generous in your support.



May Announcements

Wednesday Night Bible Study Fellowship

All are invited to attend our Wednesday Night Bible Study from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. Join other members of our beloved community to study the Word. All are invited, welcomed, and affirmed. This is a great way to be with others in a time of study and fellowship.

We currently are studying the Book of Revelation. This 14-week study will run until Wednesday May 12th. We will be taking May 19th and 26th off. A new study will be announced in the next couple of weeks and will begin on June 2nd. Pastor Tom Gerstenlauer and Scott Siefert will be co-facilitators. Our study will connect with the church's active discernment in this time of interim ministry.

We would love to have you in our group. If you have any questions on the study, please contact Scott Siefert at (804) 350-0826, or email him at sesiefert@gmail.com.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83862586668?
pwd=eUxGQjIrcCtsbzVteHc2RHhYTjFJdz09#success](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83862586668?pwd=eUxGQjIrcCtsbzVteHc2RHhYTjFJdz09#success)

Meeting ID: 838 6258 6668

Passcode: 003903

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,83862586668#,,,,,0#,,003903# US (Germantown)

+13126266799,,83862586668#,,,,,0#,,003903# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

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.

May Announcements

Pastoral Care

We are fortunate to have The Rev. Tom Gerstenlauer with us to provide spiritual support and pastoral care to our congregation. He can be reached at revtrgerst@gmail.com or (413) 378-0828. As you know, Pastor Tom is serving as our Interim Pastor on a three-quarters time basis, and this month will be unavailable from May 24-30. During that time, please contact the church office at (804) 358-9291 with any pastoral care emergencies.

Sunday Protest Vigils - New Time!

St. John's UCC is demonstrating our support of peace, justice and the Black Lives Matter movement. We will meet on **Sundays from 5 to 6 p.m.** on the steps of the church. Bring a friend and a sign. We will also have signs available for those who need them. We are wearing our masks and observing social distancing as we stand in solidarity on the front steps of the church. Contact Lindsey Franklin at lfrankli@gmail.com or (978) 877-7132. We look forward to seeing you whenever you are able to attend.

Do you need food, or know someone who does?

As the pandemic continues, and people may be quarantined or feel unsafe going to the store, some of us may need help in maintaining food security, or know others who do. As you know, we are blessed with many terrific cooks at St. John's, and many have offered to provide meals to those who may need assistance. If you are having trouble getting to the store, would like to have some freshly-made food delivered, or know someone in need, please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887. Likewise, if you are able to be "on-call" to respond to a need for food, and have not already let Jeff know, please contact him to know of your availability.

May Announcements

Potomac Association Spring Meeting May 1st

The Potomac Association Spring Meeting will be on Saturday, May 1st at 9 AM, by Zoom. All are welcome. If you'd like to participate, please contact Dreama Terrill (at (804) 218-5530) or Marcie Agee (at (516) 425-0465).

Vocal Recital Tuesday, May 4th

On Tuesday, May 4th, at 7 PM, Kelly Adam, a music student at VCU, will be presenting her Senior Recital in our Sanctuary. All are welcome; masks and appropriate distancing will be observed. Ms. Adam will be presenting a selection of operatic and other classical vocal music with a keyboard accompanist. Church members are asked to park in the garage across the alley from the church in the spaces marked "CH", along the right and far walls as you enter the garage.

You are called to the Annual Meeting, by Zoom, after worship on May 16th

The Church Council calls you to the Annual Meeting of St. John's United Church of Christ, by Zoom, after worship on Sunday, May 16, 2021. All are welcome to attend, but only members may vote.

The following people will be nominated for election to the indicated positions:

Church Council — Jeff Jacobs, Daniel Martin and Lynn Snyder

Trustee — Rob Osborn

Endowment Board — Bud Higgins and Tony Sharpenstein

There are two openings on the Audit Committee; if anyone is interested in being elected to that Committee please contact Dreama Terrill or Jeff Jacobs.

continued on next page

May Announcements

In addition, the Renovations Committee will make a report and will ask the Congregation to authorize the expenditure of additional funds available from the sale of the parking lot to complete the installation of the HVAC system in the education/office wing of the church, to replace the yellowed coverings over the stained glass windows, and make other necessary improvements to make the building more usable for church members and the community.

If there are any other items that you would like to have discussed, please contact Dreama Terrill (at (804) 218-5530) or Jeff Jacobs (at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887).

Fellowship Lunch May 20th

We had our first gathering of the year at Forest Hill Park in April, and we'll meet for our next lunch/picnic at 1 pm on May 20th, at a location to be announced soon. All are welcome! If you'd like to order a box lunch from Montana Gold Bakery, please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887. Lunches are \$10, and include a large sandwich (chicken salad, pimiento cheese, turkey/cheese, ham/cheese or roast beef/cheese), potato or pasta salad or potato chips, an orange and a cookie (oatmeal raisin, chocolate chip, snickerdoodle or gingerbread).

May 2021 Calendar

Saturday, May 1 - Potomac Association Spring Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, May 2nd, 10 a.m. - Worship Service by Zoom

Sunday, May 2nd, 4 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil in front of St. John's

Tuesday, May 4th, 7 p.m. - Kelly Adam Vocal Recital

Wednesday, May 5th, 7 p.m. - Bible Study by Zoom

Thursday, May 6th, 9 a.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, May 9th, 10 a.m. - Worship Service by Zoom

Sunday, May 9nd, 4 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil in front of St. John's

Monday, May 10th, 6:30 p.m. - Church Council Meeting by Zoom

Wednesday, May 12th, 7 p.m. - Bible Study by Zoom

Thursday, May 13th, 9 a.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, May 16th, 10 a.m. - Worship Service by Zoom

Sunday, May 16 - Annual Meeting, after worship by Zoom

Sunday, May 16nd, 4 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil in front of St. John's

Wednesday, May 19th, 2 p.m. - Music & Worship Committee by Zoom

Thursday, May 20th, 9 a.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, May 23rd, 10 a.m. - Worship Service by Zoom

Sunday, May 23rd, after worship - Congregational Life & Care Committee meeting by Zoom

Sunday, May 23rd, 4 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil in front of St. John's

Thursday, May 27th, 9 a.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, May 30th, 10 a.m. - Worship Service by Zoom

Sunday, May 30th, 4 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil in front of St. John's

May Birthdays

May 10th - Cameron Higgins

May 12th - Charlie Weaver

May 15th - Trey Lyle

May 17th - David Agee

May 22nd - Henry Martin

May 24th - Travis Schaefer

May 26th - Emilye Pittman

May 28th - Don Stiegler

May 29th - Elisabeth Burnette

May 29th - Beth Stiegler

May 30th - Jennifer Martin



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

Email: office@stjohnsrichmond.org
Web Site: www.stjohnsrichmond.org

© 2021 St John's UCC