
SEPTEMBER 2020, VOLUME 33.9

The Messenger

St. John's United Church of Christ



Message from the Church Council President

Friede

Paz

Paix

Salam

Shalom

Peace

It's what we all hope for, and although there are many ways to say it around the world, it all comes down to peace nevertheless.

Peace of spirit, peace in our homes, peace in our community and country, and of course World Peace.

Humans have been searching for peace a very long time. Sometime around 700 B.C.E., the prophet Isaiah exhorted Jerusalem: "God will teach us God's ways, so that we may walk in God's paths. The law will go out from Zion, . . . God will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

A Message from the Church Council President

As great as it sounds, it didn't work out for Isaiah, because unfortunately Jerusalem didn't listen. In fact, it hasn't worked out for humanity for a long, long time. Throughout history, different countries have risen and fallen through war, and not peace. Yet, humanity cries for peace with all of our hearts.

On this September 21st as the United Nations declares the 20th anniversary of the International Day of Peace by calling for a 24-hour period of non-violence and ceasefire, we hope the theme "Shaping Peace Together" will be a call for unity by spreading compassion, kindness, and hope in the face of this pandemic and period of racial strife.

St. John's will celebrate Peace as well in our worship and music for September 20th.

We often sing "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me". This year, as we once again seek worldwide peace, let's start by looking at "the man (person) in the mirror" and change our ways to be more loving and inclusive, so the Creator's peace can be what Isaiah 66:12 tells us: " . . . peace like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream."

Peace to us all,

Dreama Terrill

September Devotional

Philippians 4:6-7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In a world of daily violence, our lives can be marred by conflict and turmoil. The conflict can be physical or mental but seems to be constant. We worry about problems which seem unresolvable no matter how much we strive to change the underlying issues at work. That worry sees only the problems but our faith shows us a God who can help us handle the issues. God gives us the strength inside to face anything we experience externally. Our situation won't always feel peaceful. Our relationships and hardships won't immediately improve. Our prayers might not be quickly answered. But the peace of God does mean that we can hold onto the words of God instead of being consumed with thoughts of anxiety, fear and what-if situations.

The peace of God is lasting. It's real. It rises up against the fear that threatens to consume us daily. It brings comfort. That alone will bring the calm and peace to each of us as we navigate a world of uncertainty.

Terri Weaver

Guest Preachers

September 2020

September 6th: The Rev. Jonathan Heaslet

Rev. Jonathan Heaslet was Senior Pastor at St. John's UCC from 2003 - 2013. His wife Linda was Director of Christian Education. Standard Poodles Henson (RIP) and his successor Chester had the twin duties of director of hospitality to church visitors and street evangelism in the Fan. Hawks Nest Chronicles, Jon's first book is a novel in short stories about young Pastor Bob at St. Stephen's Church of the Blessed Martyr in Osceola, Iowa. It will be available soon from Amazon. He is working on a second book East of Apple Glen, about the dark side of life in a small Ohio town. He can be reached at jonathan@faithfullpress.com.

September 13th: The Rev. Tom Gerstenlauer

Tom has served as pastoral minister for congregations in Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, and Massachusetts including here at St John's United Church of Christ. In addition to settled and interim pastorates, he was urban mission minister at an inner-city church in Akron, Ohio. He retired from church ministry in July of 2018 and has returned to make his retirement home in Richmond with his dog Dixie.

September 20th: Lindsey Franklin

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 was recently approved for ordination by the Addison Association of the Vermont Conference of the UCC. 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.

September 27th: The Rev. Erin Burnette

Erin is a recently ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. She 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 cat, Duncan. 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.

September Mission of the Month: OAR of Richmond Opportunity, Alliance and Reentry.

OAR is a non-profit organization which began in 1971, offering both pre- and post-release services to adults with criminal convictions. The Mission of OAR is to provide “evidence-based and person-centered approaches to empower those impacted by incarceration to find individual success.” Services provided by OAR include: **Jail Services** that offer OAR case managers available to meet with jail residents; **Post-incarceration Services** that offer but are not limited to Personal Hygiene Kits, Weekly Case Management Sessions, Resume Assistance, Weekly Job Listings, Money Management Trainings, Work, Clothes, Shoes and Tools for specific jobs, GED classes, Group Counseling, assistance with receiving Birth Certificates and ID’s and a host of other services and trainings under this program. The **OAR Special Programs** include the VASAVOR Program (Virginia Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Program); The Mental Health Jail Pilot Program (MHJPP) and the HOPES Program (Hospitality Opportunity Program for Persons reEntering Society). Another program offered by OAR is its “**Ride to Re-Entry**” Program, which provides select OAR clients with bicycles, locks, lights, and helmets, as well as bike maintenance and bike safety courses. This program works towards overcoming a major obstacle of reentry, which is transportation.



St. John's Missions Chair, Marcie Agee, received an update from Sarah Dimick, Executive Director of OAR, who shared that the agency has been able to continue to provide services remotely since mid-March. Case Managers continue to provide resources and services to the Richmond jails that will allow them to come onsite as well as tele-case management services via tablet. Anger management groups via the Zoom platform are being provided at two jail pods in Chesterfield County Jail, and phone services have been provided to Pamunkey Regional and at both Henrico Jails. OAR Community Case Managers continue to provide services via telephone and via the Zoom platform, and limited in-person encounters are occurring with strict social distancing. It was also reported that between March and early June the agency staff had completed intakes for 98 new community participants. Agency office hours are Monday mornings for clients to come to the office, pick up their mail, hygiene items, clothing and items they may need for work.

OAR continues to be an active agency in the time of COVID 19, providing services to clients needing their care and assistance. OAR states that it plans to continue providing services remotely through September 2020 based on guidance from the Virginia Health Department, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). OAR is doing its part; let's do our part at St John's and support OAR as the Mission of the Month for September!



Wednesday Bible Study

All are invited to attend our Wednesday Night Bible Study sessions 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 are 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.

Join Zoom Meeting: UPDATE

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267837476?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267837476?pwd=L0UxWjN5cHVjaWdOYXdkL0doU0t5dz09)

[pwd=L0UxWjN5cHVjaWdOYXdkL0doU0t5dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84267837476?pwd=L0UxWjN5cHVjaWdOYXdkL0doU0t5dz09)

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.

September Announcements

Finance Update

Thanks again to all who have been donating to the works and ministries of the church while we have been worshipping online and by telephone. During this time we need to continue to support the costs of engaging guest preachers, producing the Sunday Zoom services, our ongoing digital outreach, our various local and UCC missions, and paying our church staff. Remember that checks can be sent to the church at 503 Stuart Circle, Richmond, VA 23220, and donations can be made online at <https://bit.ly/stjohnsdonations> for church operations and missions. The September Mission of the Month is OAR (Opportunity, Alliance and Re-entry), which offers pre- and post-release services to adults with criminal convictions. If you have any questions about church finances or online donations, please feel free to contact Stewardship Chair Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887.

SJUCC Women's Group - Mini Retreat - Saturday, September 5th

SJUCC Women's group is having a virtual Mini Retreat Saturday, September 5, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Please join us for spirited discussion and mindful fellowship, all safely distanced! Email Helena DeLight with questions at hdelight@comcast.net.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93114807605>

Passcode: 717014

Meeting ID: 931 1480 7605

Passcode: 717014

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,93114807605#,,,,,0#,,717014# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,93114807605#,,,,,0#,,717014# US (New York)

Dial by phone

+1 312 626 6799 US

Meeting ID: 931 1480 7605

Passcode: 717014

September Announcements

Congratulations to Erin Burnette on her Ordination

On August 23rd, St. John's hosted a Zoom service for the Ordination of Erin Burnette to Christian Ministry. It was very well attended by members of St. John's, Erin's family, friends and co-workers, and representatives of the Central Atlantic Conference and the Potomac Association of the UCC. Erin is currently serving as a chaplain with the James River Hospice in Richmond, Virginia. Congratulations to Erin on achieving this milestone in her ministry.

Fellowship Luncheon September 24th?

As we approach a season with cooler weather, but continue to be mindful of the need to take Covid-related precautions, several people have suggested that we consider resuming our monthly Fellowship Luncheons. We could locate an outdoor picnic area where we could meet on September 24th and safely enjoy fellowship while having our "bring your own" lunches. If you are interested in attending, or in sharing ideas for locations, please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887.

World Communion Sunday October 4th

On October 4th, St. John's will be participating in a World Communion Sunday service involving about 15 churches in the Potomac Association of the UCC. Members of St. John's will be participating in this pre-recorded communion service, which will be broadcast on our regular Zoom platform. Watch for eBlasts towards the end of September for more details.

September Announcements

Parking at St. John's

If you have driven to St. John's recently, either for the Sunday afternoon protests or to drop off or pick up items from the church, you have probably noticed that the parking spaces in the alley have been marked for St. John's use only, and 26 spaces around the perimeter of the apartment building garage are marked with a "CH" for St. John's use. During the week, many of the alley spaces are being used by our construction contractors, but many of our indoor spaces are being used by apartment residents. We are working with the apartment manager to make sure that those spaces are cleared of non-St. John's cars. You may remember that in our former parking lot, we used to hang special tags from our rear-view mirrors to identify our cars as belonging to St. John's members and visitors. When you are next at the church, please pick up an orange hang tag from the table inside the back door (at the foot of the stairs leading to the Parlor), and use it whenever you park at the church. Next month we will start having cars without tags towed from our parking spaces. Please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887 if you have any questions.

Prayers and Condolences

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of William ("Billy") Doswell, Jeff Jacobs' father-in-law, who died on August 22nd at age 93. Services will be private at Hollywood Cemetery.

We extend our sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of lifetime St. John's member Anna Brauer Oxenham, who passed away peacefully on August 29, 2020. A graveside service was held on Wednesday, September 2nd, and may be viewed at www.reellyfeproductions.com.

Virtual CROP Walk

Save the Date: Sunday, November 8, 2020 - Virtual CROP Walk
The Walk is virtual, but the need could not be more real!

CROP Hunger Walks are happening in a new way!

To keep everyone safe and healthy, this fall's RVA CROP Walk for Hunger will be a virtual event – with walkers either walking alone, with immediate family or in small groups staying a safe distance apart. It will be a “CROP Walk Week” that begins on Sunday November 8th, 2020 with an online kickoff event, and runs through Sunday, November 15th.

During that week, walkers can participate as individuals or do “micro walks” in teams of 4-5 people, masked and socially distanced. Individual teams can decide how they want to handle this. Walkers will be encouraged to share their walks via social media platforms.

As part of our 50th Anniversary observation, every walker will be encouraged to raise at least \$50. As in prior years, donations to support walkers may be made online directly to CWS for the RVA CROP walk.

The work of Church World Service and our local hunger agencies continues – and with the possibility of a global famine on the horizon, raising money for vulnerable people is more needed than ever.

We hope that you will join and/or support the St. John's UCC team of walkers – virtually - as we continue our shared commitment to stand up for the poor, the forgotten, and those left behind. The CWS Spring CROP Hunger Walks were down nearly \$1 million this year. It is urgent that this fall we continue to raise funds to provide permanent solutions to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

More information will follow in subsequent newsletters. If you have questions or want to help with this year's “walk,” please contact Beverly Lindsey at revbevlinsey@gmail.com or 804-275-7165.

Voting This November

Tuesday November 3rd is Election Day. In addition to the Presidential race, Virginia is electing a Senator and Congressional representatives from all the Virginia Congressional Districts, so it is a big, important election.

Polling places will be open from 6 am to 7 pm that day. Anyone in line at 7 p.m. will be allowed to vote. Some form of ID is required, though as of this election it does not have to be a photo ID and can be a bank statement or utility bill that shows your name and address.

Because of the Coronavirus, many voters may be concerned about going to the polls on the actual voting day. People who are concerned can vote absentee. In the past you have needed a reason to vote absentee but starting in November Virginia has no excuse absentee voting.

There are two ways to vote absentee.

Early Voting in Person:

You can vote early at your local County registrar's office beginning 45 days before Election Day and ending the Saturday before Election Day. You can find your registrar's location by going to <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/>. This has a link to the Registrar's information. To vote early in-person do the following:

- Starting 45 days before Election Day, visit your local registrar's office or a satellite voting location in your county or city to vote early. The Saturday before Election Day is the last day to vote early.
- You do not have to have a reason or fill out an application to vote early.
- At the registrar's office or satellite voting location, you must provide your name and address and show an acceptable form of ID or sign an ID Confirmation Statement.
- Accessible equipment and/or curbside voting is available upon request.

Voting This November

Absentee Voting by Mail

The same link: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/> has information on requesting an absentee ballot to be mailed in. There is a link on the page to request one. To do this you will need your driver's license number. Once you apply for an absentee ballot, please be aware that what you receive back in the mail from the Registrar's Office IS YOUR BALLOT. That means, you cannot lose it and get another one. If you do not mail your ballot in and decide to vote in person on Election Day, you must bring your absentee ballot together with the absentee envelope with you. **One way or another, the ballot and accompanying envelope you get in the mail must be accounted for.** In addition, once you vote absentee, you cannot ask to change your vote.

If anyone reading this is unable to access the website to request an absentee ballot, please contact Kathy Freise at 804-512-8559. She can get you an application to request one.

The deadline to request an absentee ballot for the November election is October 23rd, but it is good to request it as early as possible. The ballots must be postmarked by November 3rd to count, but again it is safest to return them as early as possible.

Voter Registration

The last day to register to vote in the November election is Tuesday October 13th. If you have not voted in a recent election you should check your registration to make sure that you have not been purged from the voter rolls. You can register, or check your registration status at <https://www.vote.virginia.gov>.

There will be a Voter Registration drive at the church on Sunday afternoon September 20th, as part of the UCC Faith and Democracy Sunday observance. Social distancing will be observed, and masks will be required.

September 2020 Calendar

Wednesday, September 2nd, 2:00 p.m. - Music & Worship Meeting

Wednesday, September 2nd, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study

Thursday, September 3rd, 12:30 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 6th, 10:00 a.m. - Worship

Wednesday, September 9th, 2:00 p.m. - Music & Worship Meeting

Wednesday, September 9th, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study

Thursday, September 10th, 12:30 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 13th, 10:00 a.m. - Worship

Sunday, September 13th, after Worship. - Congregational Life and Care

Monday, September 14th, 6:30 p.m. - Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 16th, 2:00 p.m. - Music & Worship Meeting

Wednesday, September 16th, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study

Thursday, September 17th, 12:30 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 20th, 10:00 a.m. - Worship

Wednesday, September 23rd, 2:00 p.m. - Music & Worship Meeting

Wednesday, September 23rd, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study

Thursday, September 24th, 12:30 p.m. - Renovations Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 27th, 10:00 a.m. - Worship

Wednesday, September 30th, 2:00 p.m. - Music & Worship Meeting

Wednesday, September 30th, 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study

September Birthdays

September 3rd - Chris Hagan

September 8th - Eddie Allen

September 14th - David Pittman

September 21st - Jeff Jacobs

September 25th - Lee Ford

September 26th - Karen-Marie Yust

September 28th - Betty Pecka

September 29th - Ashley Quick

September 30th - Pam Miller



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

© 2020 St John's UCC