



# COVENANT NEWS

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Webster Groves

April 2021

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## FROM THE PASTOR

### Our Story

My emphasis with young people, as I teach Confirmation classes, is always to encourage them to relate the story of Jesus as it has become meaningful for them.

A few months ago, seeking projects for a new bit of technology he had acquired for converting Super 8 films to digital formats, Ian Didriksen asked for access to the church archives for any homegrown footage that might be there. One might have imagined that a church of such affluent and artistic folk as ours, might have reel after reel readily available. But Ian found only one. Even so, what a treasure came into his hands!

The 10-minute-long film showed young people of the our church's Sunday School 5th and 6th Grade class re-enacting the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus, in the spring of 1981 (All the students today are in their early fifties.). Their script is familiar and incorporates elements from all three Synoptic Gospels and John. It was shot at familiar locations around Webster Groves.

I incorporated the footage into the scripture readings for Palm Sunday's liturgy of the Passion, and the Resurrection portion will appear in Easter Sunday's service.

As near as I can tell, this four-decades-old Sunday School project flew completely under the church's radar. Still, some adult lovingly recorded the children's performances of their story, then cut and spliced the silent film into its chapters – "The Last Supper" and "In the Garden" and "He Is Risen!" With such loving care, I imagine that the springtime project wasn't ready for Holy Week 1981 (April 12-19), and as a result was shelved except, perhaps, for a screening for students and their families. How and if ever it premiered is not something for which we have evidence, nor something which half-century-old memories recall.

If this is the film's premiere, forty years later, it cannot come at a more needful time. We may be emerging from the grip of a pandemic, but we still are unable to pursue such a project for retelling our central Story ourselves. Instead, we are blessedly charmed and inspired by the resourcefulness and creativity with which a score of young people and their Sunday School teachers chose to depict the central Story of our faith. Our thanks go to all of them, here four decades later, and to Ian for taking up this project.



A still from "The Last Supper" portion of the 1981 film. <https://youtube.com/F3LGzIXbSI4>

Peace

Pastor Dave Deacon

## WORSHIP NOTES FOR APRIL

*This schedule is subject to change, as need may arise.*

**Sunday worship for Easter and the Second Sunday of Easter will be recorded** and available from our YouTube channel ([bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)), starting late in the day on Saturday. The same video will be played at 10:00am on Sunday as a Zoom watch party ([bit.ly/FCCWG-Worship](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-Worship)).

**Sunday worship for the Third and Fourth Sundays of Easter** will be live streamed on YouTube, starting at 9:55am ([bit.ly/FCCWG-YT](https://bit.ly/FCCWG-YT)).

**Virtual Coffee Fellowship** will be served at 11:00am on Zoom ([bit.ly/JehovahJava](https://bit.ly/JehovahJava)).

**Thursday, April 1, 7:00pm (virtual on Zoom) – Maundy Thursday.** Our annual observance of Communion on this night will be done virtually at the beginning of a Zoom meeting that will also include a pre-recorded service of Tenebrae (Shadows).

**Friday, April 2 (streaming on YouTube) – Good Friday.** This year's Good Friday service will be like last year's, a virtual experience of the Stations of the Cross. It will be streaming online and offered as a "watch party" at 7:00pm.

**Saturday, April 3, 10:00am (in the Jubilee Garden) – Holy Saturday.** The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be transformed this year into a Cross Decorating Event. **Watch elsewhere in this issue about this wonderful gathering for all ages!**

**Sunday, April 4, 10:00am (virtual on Zoom and streaming on YouTube) – Easter Sunday, Festival of the Resurrection,** Virtual Communion (at 11:00am during Coffee Fellowship). – Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Mark 16:1-8a. With a Paschal Fire, shouts, and cheers, we greet the Resurrection of Jesus and begin to anticipate our own restoration. Vaccines are becoming widely available, and a light is visible at the end of our historic, pandemic tunnel! The choir (virtually) sings a joyful "Hallelujah!" as we all reflect together with the pastor upon moving **"Beyond Fear and Trembling"** here in the face of such good news.

**Sunday, April 11, 10:00am (virtual on Zoom and streaming on YouTube) – Second Sunday of Easter.** Our "Journey through Creation" team, led by the Rev. Jan Barnes, present a special worship service based on the Vernal Equinox edition of JTC. Message of the Day by Rev. Barnes, music of the Oikos Ensemble directed by the Rev. Cliff Aerie.

**Sunday, April 18, 10:00am (live on YouTube) – Third Sunday of Easter.** Acts 3:1-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7. What practical part of the story of Jesus is most applicable to you? For many people, it's the promise of healing or becoming whole – to be one's authentic self or to be renewed. In this day's lesson from Acts, Peter and John help a person unable to walk not only to walk but to dance. **Message of the Day: "The Free Clinic"**

**Sunday, April 25, 10:00am (live on YouTube) – Fourth Sunday of Easter; Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries Sunday; "Break the Silence" Sunday.** Student Pastor Merrimon Ramout Boyd preaches, introducing his Senior Capstone Project, "Diversity in Parable." This Sunday also includes observances celebrating the ministries of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans ([paamucc.org](https://paamucc.org)), and encouraging those who have survived sexual violence to choose to be recognized so that they and others may be uplifted and supported ([breakthesilencesunday.org](https://breakthesilencesunday.org)).

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Below are the church operating results for the two months ending February:

Statement of Financial Activities					
	2021	2020	Budget	Change to Prior Year	Change to Budget
Income				Higher/(Lower) Income	
Pledges and Gifts	\$ 105,277	\$ 105,475	\$ 52,500	\$ (199)	\$ 52,777
Transfer from Endowment	20,000	20,000	43,167	-	(23,167)
Benevolence	2,385	2,940	2,500	(555)	(115)
Use of Space and Miscellaneous	5,233	9,444	7,853	(4,212)	(2,620)
Interest Income	4,359	4,557	1,933	(197)	2,426
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>137,254</b>	<b>142,417</b>	<b>107,952</b>	<b>(5,163)</b>	<b>29,301</b>
Expenses				(Higher)/Lower Expense	
Human Resources Expense	\$ 63,597	\$ 72,738	\$ 71,722	9,140	8,125
Facilities and Finance Expense	\$ 21,440	\$ 24,319	\$ 27,029	2,878	5,589
Benevolence Expense	\$ 2,545	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,333	(45)	2,788
Christian Education Ministry Expense	\$ 45	\$ 819	\$ 683	774	638
Parish Life Ministry Expense	\$ 607	\$ 88	\$ 1,867	(519)	1,259
Executive Ministry Expense	\$ 112	\$ 10	\$ 1,200	(102)	1,088
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>88,346</b>	<b>100,474</b>	<b>107,835</b>	<b>12,128</b>	<b>19,488</b>
<b>Net Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 48,907</b>	<b>\$ 41,943</b>	<b>\$ 118</b>	<b>\$ 6,965</b>	<b>\$ 48,790</b>

Statement of Financial Position			
	2021	2020	Variance
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 202,702	\$ 196,294	\$ 6,408
Prepaid expenses	65	1,667	(1,602)
Pledges receivable	226,627	223,259	3,368
Property and equipment	29,729	31,186	(1,457)
Minister housing long term receivable	60,000	60,000	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 519,123</b>	<b>\$ 512,405</b>	<b>\$ 6,717</b>
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Unrestricted Designated Funds	36,757	22,742	14,015
Restricted funds for:			
Per the Endowment Trust	45,815	39,419	6,396
Churchyard	34,007	34,340	(333)
Kishlar/Dickens Room Maintenance	58,096	58,096	-
Temporarily restricted funds for pledges	226,627	223,259	3,368
Memorial Funds	66,327	88,532	(22,206)
Long term liabilities	60,000	60,000	-
Unrestricted Net Assets	(8,506)	(13,983)	5,477
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 519,123</b>	<b>\$ 512,405</b>	<b>\$ 6,717</b>

Since our use of space income continues to be low due to the pandemic, the church applied for a second loan provided by the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) of the CARES Act. The PPP loan was created so that organizations can keep their workforce employed during the pandemic. In February we received \$62,300 as a second PPP loan. These funds are currently deposited in the Endowment fund to maximize earnings until needed. Last year, our income was down more than 25% in the second quarter; therefore, if history repeats itself, we will need the PPP funds during that quarter or shortly thereafter. We will transfer the funds from the Endowment to church operations as needed. *Continued*

The CARES Act allows forgiveness of some loans and our first loan was forgiven in December 2020. We will work with Enterprise Bank to apply for forgiveness of this second loan also.

If you have any other questions or want further detail, please let me know.

Thanks

Jennifer Jones, Treasurer

## FROM THE ORGANIST'S BENCH

Hello all!

Apparently, things are getting back to something recognizable as “normal.” Groups that rent space in our church building are gradually coming back. The Restart Committee is allowing a gradual return to normal operations. We will be returning to attending church services in the sanctuary again on May 2 if all goes according to plan. Currently we record the elements of a Sunday service on Thursdays – but returning to Sundays gives me 3 more days to practice what I will play! The Canterbury Bells have already figured out how to rehearse in a safe, socially-distanced way and now the choir can forsake the remote submissions of the music method for in-person rehearsals and singing in Sunday Services.



I sense a real optimism in St. Louis in general and in my communities for a cautious but safe return to “business as usual.” I am aware of the St. Louis Symphony and Chorus mounting a normal sounding season. Opera Theater Saint Louis as well as the MUNY are planning a season this summer too. In planning for concerts with my orchestra I have not been turned down by St. Louis’ concert venues. Thus, the University City Symphony is planning a “normal” season of concerts. These are the harbingers of my optimism.

I have some gala events with guest artists in June to celebrate our opening up to the community and the last part of MICA’s Journey Through Creation will also have a concert in June to celebrate the conclusion of the project. We anticipate the joy of returning to Church!

Yes friends, the glass is more than half full. Keep hanging in there and stay safe!

Leon



Marty Craig	April 1
Jane Brader	April 6
Valerie Paci	April 10
Diane Weber	April 10
Marshall Dyer	April 15
Phil Shoulberg	April 18
Diane McCoy	April 23
John Robinson	April 26
Elizabeth Walker	April 30

## MODERATOR'S CORNER – APRIL 2021

April is a special month of celebration! Not only do we observe Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross and his resurrection, but we will be preparing to restart our in-person worship service and Sunday School on May 2. The current plan is to welcome all who want to worship with us in-person and obey the COVID protocols that exist at that time. More details will be provided in the eNews prior to that first service. This is welcome news after being physically separated as a church since our last in-person service on March 8, 2020. That will have been 1 year, 1 month, and 24 days that we have worshiped online. We will have been out of the sanctuary for 59 straight weeks! I encourage you to get your vaccinations since the more people we have vaccinated, the less risk we will have for in-person worship. It is almost time to be together again!

During our year apart we have grown older but wiser, and the church has continued to function as efficiently as possible. The care and concern shown by our congregation for each other has been remarkable, as has been the functioning of the Three Ministries and the various committees needed to operate the church. Decisions have been made, votes have been taken, budgets have been planned, events have been celebrated, money has been raised, and helping hands extended. Although severely tested, the strength of our church and our commitment to our mission has prevailed.

Our Nominating Committee is currently working to fill the upcoming vacancies on our Facility and Finance, Christian Education, and Parish Life Ministries. I encourage everyone to consider serving on one of these Ministries. This past year we functioned with several unfilled positions. If you desire to serve on a Ministry, let me know and I will pass your name on to the Nominating Committee. If you are contacted by a member of the Nominating Committee, please give serious thought to accepting our request to serve. This coming year will find us having to make critical decisions that will affect our church. We need your thoughts and suggestions on how we can best fulfill our mission while meeting the needs of the congregation. The slate for the Ministries needs to be compiled before the Annual Congregational Meeting and vote at the end of May.

Thank you for your consideration.

In Christ,

Mark Edwards  
Moderator

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## BENEVOLENCE GIVING TOTAL – \$22,731.89!!!

***We are so close to reaching our goal of \$23,000.*** We have a number of available tickets to both Mike L.'s Cocktail Party in June and Rosemary's August Garden Party. There are a few choice items left on the ***Giving Store*** for sale as well, (we just couldn't close it without one final reminder).

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/fccwg-giving> and help us reach our goal.



## FROM THE PASTORAL ASSISTANT



Over the past few years I have come to think of Easter differently. Resurrection Day used to be only about Jesus in my eyes: his death, his burial, his rising. And it was an earnest and worthwhile appreciation of the central Christian story.

But as my faith has shapeshifted I've come to regard Christ's resurrection as an example instead of a one-time miracle, as something we can embody instead of only revere.

The daffodils in my yard resurrect every spring; the hostas will soon do the same. Though our trees are weighed down with snow and ice each winter, spring is always reborn. The earth tells me that resurrection is ongoing.

Thanks to the work of virologist Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett and others, medical science will soon resurrect a way of life in which we can hug each other and go on vacations

and be with our loved ones when they draw their last breath.

Seven springs ago I was pregnant with a baby who never made it past 11 weeks gestation. When I miscarried my little Zuzu I didn't think new life -- or new hope -- would ever bloom in me again. I didn't know that the fruit of Zuzu's death would be my sweet Phoebe 13 months later.

When I stopped subscribing to the inerrancy of Scripture, when I came to find penal substitutionary atonement horrifying, when I no longer felt sure anyone was listening when I prayed -- I thought I wasn't a Christian anymore. I didn't know there was more than one way to have faith or that a faith could die and come back.

Barbara Brown Taylor says, "...new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark."

What is being resurrected in your life? A dream, a relationship, a calling, a hope? What death are you coming back from? Maybe it's fresh. We say that Christ's timing was three days, but that doesn't have to be your timing. But like Jesus and daffodils, rise again you will.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Good Friday Youth Service & Vigil — April 2nd at 5:30pm**

All 6th-12th grade students are invited to join Halley in the east parking lot for a brief fireside service to remember not only Christ's execution by the state, but the many Black lives taken by the state today. We will have s'mores afterwards, and then we will join other churches for a BLM vigil on Lockwood at 6pm.

#### **Cross Decorating Event in the Jubilee Garden — Holy Saturday – April 3 from 10:00am - 2:00pm**

"Open House" style: come when you want, leave when you want. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

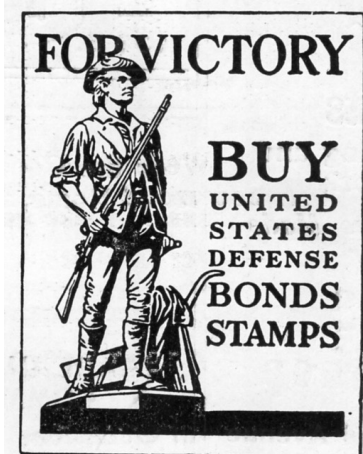
At 11:00 am there will be a gathering for those who participated in the Lenten pods. We will have bagged candy available in lieu of the Easter egg hunt. Families may place real or artificial flowers on the cross

Please observe COVID precaution

#### **Outdoor Movie Night — April 24th at 7pm**

Come watch "Akeelah and the Bee" with us outside! Halley will provide snacks and drinks. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket. For both events, please wear a mask and observe social distancing.

## OUR CHURCH DURING CHALLENGING TIMES – WORLD WAR II



Ervine Inglis followed George Gibson as our pastor. He spoke often of brotherhood and peace. When war came archival records show over 200 church members served in the war and they were all sent a copy of the New Testaments/Psalms. A “For Victory Buy United States Defense Bonds – Stamps” graphic was printed in the church newsletters encouraging people to support the war effort financially. Blue envelopes were put in the pew pockets and worshipers were asked to use them to help fund the War Victims and Service Committee. The church became the headquarters for the Red Cross nursing program and was used for a Blood Bank station every 60 days. Members pledged to connect with 10 service men for Sunday dinner each week. They packed boxes of food for prisoners of war and collected clothes for war refugees. St. Louisians during the 2020 Covid pandemic did some of the same things - collecting food and other

necessities for others in need.

During the war we received into our church family 14 Japanese from the U.S. Internment camps. The Obatas were one of these families. You might remember the artist Chivra Obata – his sumi cross and circle was chosen as the symbol of our 150th anniversary. A metal rendition now hangs in our sanctuary from time to time.

Everyone during the war had to live with rationing of food and other items necessary for the war effort. In 1942 to conserve crucial supplies everyone was issued ration books. One needed coupons to buy food, gasoline, tires and more. Ordinary citizens could get only three gallons of gas per week. These were challenging times. During the Covid period we found grocery shelves bare. We didn’t need coupons but we did face quarantining.

The women of the church rallied to the war effort. The Women’s Association First VP was made chairman of rationing. Sugar was carefully conserved. Members donated coffee for church functions and coupons for dinners. The women and Girl Scouts sewed and knitted warm clothing for the Red Cross to distribute. They put together kits of sheets, blankets, bar soap and towels that European pastors requested. Old fountain pens were collected and repaired for army chaplains. Bandages were rolled at the Red Cross every Tuesday.

Silk and nylon stockings were hard to find. The women resorted to painting lines on the backs of their legs to resemble stocking seams. When they did wear nylons, they pleaded with the men of the church to fix the chairs so they would not sag the ladies stockings

As the war was ending the women turned their efforts to reconstruction. Ten percent of bazaar proceeds went to the Congregational Union for reconstruction and aiding war victims. The church started planning for service men and women returning to civilian life. When victory in Europe and again victory in Japan came it was a jubilant time. Church members met in the sanctuary to thank God. Our church bell tolled both times intermittently all day and into the evening– the war was over!

Kay Rouch, Historian

# Easter Flower Sponsorships



## *In Loving Memory of*

Carol McCoy ..... Doug, Kristy, and Jack Barton  
Kenneth Musbach ..... Joan Musbach  
Ed and Thelma Wohlgemuth ..... Joan Musbach

## *In Honor of*

Carolyn Woodsmall ..... Doug, Kristy, and Jack Barton  
Family and Easters Past ..... Marilyn Davis  
Fred Kaul ..... BJ Kaul

## *In Celebration of*

Peggy Schenk ..... Marilyn Davis  
Family ..... Linda & Lazlo Kopetti



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***Seek Christ in each. Serve God in all.***

## Missing Someone?

Have you been missing someone for a while from worship and other church events? Please, let Pastor Dave Denoon or Joan Musbach, Parish Life Chair, know. Either will be happy to follow up for you.

## Follow us on

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