

Spirit & Sparks

God is still Speaking, We are Responding, Come Journey with Us

APRIL 2017



The Congregational Church of Weston, UCC, 130 Newton Street, Weston, MA 02493
www.westonucc.org 781-899-5417 781-647-1165-fax

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Grace to you, and peace from God our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ! "The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof!" (Psalm 24:1). This simple statement has been brought home to me in very profound ways during this Lenten time, thanks to a daily reminder I receive as part of the ecumenical Lenten Carbon fast in which members of the United Church of Christ are participating. If we believe that the Earth is the Lord's, and we only its stewards, then there are many things we can do to better care for our trust. Likewise, if we view all humankind as our neighbors we need to ask how we can care for our neighbors' needs in regard to natural resources, as well as the needs of future generations. The word "sustainability" is central to the question of our use of resources. Whereas we often remember our concern regarding energy when the price of oil goes up, we don't always recall our energy use in order to question whether we can sustain our current practices and safeguard the needs of future generations.

There are some people who simply do not believe that this is our responsibility. I would argue that it absolutely is our responsibility; it is our sacred trust. We have been given the use of our creation by God, who created us and it. We read in the first chapter of Genesis, "Then God said, 'let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in

the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

There is some argument, and at minimum some discussion regarding the words "rule" and "dominion" as we talk about our responsibility for God's creation. We regularly use the word stewardship to talk about what we must do with our "rule." We are to care for what God has given us to use. We are to provide for the "least of these," whom Jesus names as those who are poor, who are widowed, and who are imprisoned. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves. Why mention this in the context of our use of natural resources? 20% of humanity uses 80% of the Earth's resources, and this simply isn't fair. We deplete our energy supply at increasing rates, thereby also affecting the warming of the Earth, and there are ways that we can consume less.

Consume less . . . there's an idea. I invite you to pay attention to the way you use our natural resources during what remains of Lent, and beyond. Let us not forget that we are responsible for what God has given us to use: oil, electricity, water and more: the land and all that live upon it. We might look to our children to know some sustainable practices of cutting down and cutting out, and in so doing we can celebrate the beauty around us and contribute to its longevity.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Lisa

APRIL 2017 REMINDERS

	4/2	4/9 Palm Sunday	4/16 Easter	4/23	4/30
Greeters/Ushers	<i>Open</i>	Nicholson	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	Cross/Salerno
Coffee Hour Host**	Adelson/Brunk	Seddon	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>
Flowers*	<i>Open</i>	Schendel	<i>Open</i>	Alex von L.	Cross/Salerno
Light Bearer	Griffin T.	Fiona S.	William S.	Kayla B.	Nadia W.
Deacon(s)	Ruthanne and Vin	Elaine Fulton	Vin and Ruthanne	Betsy Bailey and Elaine	Kristen Reeder

** A host brings snacks only; the church provides the rest including the set up.

*Flowers cost \$55 when the church orders from Leibys or you may provide your own.

THE PASTOR'S CORNER:

HOLY WEEK

Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday on April 9th**, when our children will lead us in a joyful procession with palms and singing! On this day, we remember the celebrations that surrounded Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem as preface to the more somber events later in the week. Join us for a service remembering the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples on **Maundy Thursday at 7:30 pm**. Our Confirmation Class will recall to us Jesus' serving the disciples by washing their feet, and we will all partake in Communion as we remember the way that Jesus himself instituted our sacrament. The evening will conclude with a traditional Tenebrae service in which we read the Gospel account of Christ's passion amid the growing darkness.



On **Good Friday at 7:30 pm** we will gather for worship with our brothers and sisters from the Spirit of Life Community, when Pastors Jean and Ron will join Pastor Lisa in leading us in a service focused on the seven last words of Christ, and including the liturgy "See! Now is the Acceptable Time, Part II: Good Friday," written by Rev. Mary Nelson Abbott, Pastor of Malletts Bay Congregational Church UCC, Colchester, VT.

Our **Easter Sunday** worship begins at 10:30 am as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Children are invited to remain with their families during worship and will be provided with a quiet activity to occupy them during the service. They will also be augmenting our adult choir in an anthem that morning. If you love to sing and don't usually make time for choir, do feel free to join us that morning at 9:00 as we continue to prepare our anthems for the day!

CONFIRMATION CLASS

It is a great pleasure to meet with our confirmands each month, and I was proud of their participation in the MACUCC retreat in March. As we explored what it means to be a

Christian in a time when our faith lives are challenged by the social narrative, we learned a lot about the uniqueness of the United Church of Christ and our mission. During our make-up session from February's snow day, we began to look at what it means to have a spiritual life, and have just scratched the surface to know how to develop ours. We look forward to sharing our faith timelines with each other and also with the mentors who will be preparing their own, as well.

In our discussion of "saints of the church," we learned that in the Protestant tradition, all who follow Christ are considered to be saints, set apart for God's purposes. In order to grow in our understanding of the different ways in which faith moves in individual's lives, our students will be interviewing a member of the congregation. Thanks in advance to those of you who agree to participate!

BIBLE STUDY

We have left *Hebrews* behind us, and are going to begin Paul's letter to the Romans at our gathering on Tuesday, April 4th. Please join us as we read through one of the seminal works that guide Protestant Christianity. We will engage the chief passages that detail an argument for "faith over works," even as we understand that a life of discipleship to Christ asks that we do for in response to what we believe. See you at 9:00 am in the library!

BOOK STUDY

Those of us in the book group reading *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*, have been delighted by the worldview of both its central figures, even while sometimes less than appreciative of the author's narrative voice. That said, we are learning a lot about how one can build compassion for others in a way that fosters our own joy, as well! Sharing the discussions that transpired over two weeks spent in Dharamsala, India, Douglas Abrams compiled pivotal points from the conversations between Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, as shared

with Abrams. We had to postpone our last meeting, so for April 5th we will read through page 275, and decide together when we will meet again, if we want to engage some of the suggested practices together. Anyone is welcome at 7:30 when we gather in the library!

Coming Up in Our Benefit Concert Series

If you have wondered about the performances we have had here in the church during the past year, you may now view one produced by the Weston Media Center. The concert by Nathan Gourley and Laura Fedderson on March 11th is available to view at the following link: <https://vimeo.com/channels/776619>. We are grateful to Gloria and Alanna for their excellent filming and for sharing news of this series through their website.

On **Saturday, April 29th at 4:00** we welcome Hans Araki and Owen Marshall sharing tunes and songs in the Celtic and Breton tradition. You can view their duo as part of a four-piece group in the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwHnW6D-rBQ>. Multi-instrumentalist Owen Marshall is one of the most highly sought-after accompanist in the United States. With his unique sense of harmony and rhythm, he has traveled and performed all over the world with many of the top acts in traditional music. A demanding schedule doesn't interfere with his pursuit of new and innovative sounds as a bedrock accompanist with a style that never grows stale. Those of us who know him from his teaching at various camps in New England are also prepared for a stage presence that is as much comedian as musician! We are in for an entertaining evening!

Once called "a quintessential world-music musician," award-winning singer and flute player Hanz Araki has been a prominent figure in the Irish music community in North America and beyond for more than 2 decades. In that time he has released 11 albums, played countless festival stages, toured internationally, and collaborated with a number of well-

respected musicians within and outside of the Celtic music genre. A portion of the proceeds from this concert will benefit the Africa Exchange Project, sponsored by the Plymouth Church, Framingham. You may read about their clean water project in Tanzania and continuing work in the community of Pommerini on the following webpage: <http://www.africaexchangeproject.org>.



OUTREACH

This year's Easter Offering will go to REACH Beyond Domestic Violence. We have supported REACH in this way for many years and we feel that their mission, their high level of professionalism and their attention to the needs of this area make it a worthy recipient of our support.

“REACH is a non-profit organization providing safety and support to survivors of abuse while engaging communities to promote healthy relationships and prevent domestic violence.”
This mission is achieved through the following services:

- i) **Emergency Shelter Program:** to provide crisis intervention and support services for victims of domestic violence who are not safe in their own home. Those services include assistance with finding longer-term housing, support with legal issues, and access to other resources which help families heal physically and emotionally.
- ii) **Community-Based Advocacy Program:** to offer a similar range of services to domestic violence survivors who do not live in shelters.
- iii) **Prevention Programs:** to help community members and professionals recognize and respond to signs of abuse. REACH shares domestic violence education, including how to spot the signs, where to refer someone for services, and how to help.
- iv) **Hotline staff** are trained to provide supportive and confidential services in English and Spanish.

Lent and Holy Week are times when we think about the suffering that Christ endured in the desert and on the cross. We hope that you will join us in supporting the work of REACH, which ‘reaches out’ to those currently suffering in abusive relationships, to those trying to recover from past trauma and to all those who work with our local communities to increase education, vigilance and support.

Thank you!
Jessica Schendel
for the Outreach Committee

Faith Discovery for Children



As we go to print, we are in full Workshop Rotation mode. Our topic this year is "Jesus tells Stories," during which we are focusing on three of Jesus' parables. In our SCIENCE Workshop we are watching as the lost son comes back home and his father has his arms outstretched in welcome. The kids will see colors of the rainbow spinning so fast they become almost white as an illustration of how God wipes the slate clean of all our mistakes and dodgy choices when we turn to God. In our COOKING workshop, we consider the parable of the Great Banquet, equating food with blessings while we create awesome S'mores Rice Krispie Bars. Blessings that have come to us go in; ways to be a blessing come out. In our ART workshop, we will create the sheep needed to tell the parable of the lost sheep, and talk about how we are sometimes like sheep. Thanks to Jessica Schendel, Candy Paquin and Betsy Bailey for leading these workshops.

REALLY BIG SUNDAYS IN APRIL!!

April 9 is Palm Sunday. The children will lead the choir into the sanctuary waving palm branches. After Time with Children, their journey continues with Cathy, going from room to room to ponder symbols for Lent from the Lenten Banner. Then, in

time for the last hymn, they will parade back into the sanctuary with the banner.

The biggest Sunday of all? **April 16 is EASTER Sunday.** Children will be in the sanctuary with their families for the whole service. A special in-seat activity will be available.

Very soon the season of HUG making begins. This is the best craft EVER because everyone can do it. And it's especially good for children, not only because it's easier for them to get down to and up from the floor. These are fleece blankets for ... CHILDREN, children who need extra comfort because someone close to them has died. And as we all know, HUGS are really good for that.

Heads up for May 7: Classes will start right at 10:30 because the children will join their families for Communion.

STEWARDSHIP/OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES FOR APRIL

- Bring in your offering to support Pets for Vets.
- Help your teacher clean up your Classroom after Class

**Pastor Parish Relationship
Committee
(PPRC)**

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Thank you to those who filled out the Worship and Leadership surveys. We got some very thoughtful responses, BUT WE ARE MISSING YOURS. We can send you Leadership and Worship if you misplaced yours.

Remember that Lisa has asked for the members of the congregation to evaluate her performance in four sections: Worship, Leadership, Relationship, and Education. We are asking you to fill out a brief 5-6 question survey each month, February through May.

The April survey is about Christian Education. The surveys are available to you by email, in paper form, or with Survey Monkey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FJY22YM>

Please participate. Lisa wants your candid comments and suggestions. She has asked you to sign the form so she can talk with you personally about your ideas.

Thank you for your help.

Tom Nicholson
Chair PPRC

APRIL 2017 SPECIAL GATHERINGS

All are welcome! Invite others!

Tues., 4/4, 4/11, 4/18 & 4/25	9:00am	Adult Bible Study w/Pastor Lisa
Sun., 4/9	10:30am	Palm Sunday
Sun., 4/13	7:30pm	Maundy Thursday Service
Sun., 4/14	7:30pm	Good Friday Service & Vigil
Sat., 4/29	4:00pm	Owen Marshall Concert
Sat., 4/30	8:00am	Work Day

Consult www.westonucc.org for a detailed calendar

FAITH COMMUNITY NEWS

Birthdays

April 6 Davis Tantillo
April 9 Becky Shelton
April 19 Steve Gunderson



April 27 Candy Paquin
April 28 Jenny Salerno
April 29 Nicole Frenkel

