

_April 2021

Connecting Thoughts

Holy Week, from "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" to "Crucify him!" From "It is finished." to "He is risen!"

I am writing this at the beginning of Holy Week, a week that catches the extremes of our faith, perhaps of life itself. It begins with a triumphant entry of the one who we believe will make everything right. The people rally to greet their new king, but just short days later they are yelling for him to be crucified. Jesus speaks from the cross saying, "It is finished," and then 3 days later comes the exclamation, "He is risen!"

This one week encapsulates the challenges of our lives and our faith. As we travel through Holy Week we move from hope, to enmity, on to despair, and then to new hope and life.

I asked an unchurched friend what she thought was the good news that should be preached this second Easter in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Here is her response:

•Challenging times to find or feel the good news. Perhaps a reminder of the power of hope? That's what first popped into my mind. This is one message of Easter.

•Hope in the face of circumstances & current events. Pain & suffering, man's inhumanity <u>towards</u> man, nature & her creatures ... that's life.

• We cannot give up hope. But not the kind of hope that is annoyingly blind, that dismisses pain and darkness as if it doesn't matter, as if we are not hurting. Instead, it is a quiet certain hope ... that can be transformative to the person and better yet, contagious. Realistic optimistic people bring to mind one of my favorites:

•To effect the quality of a day.... this is the art of life.

This has me thinking ... is hope the same as faith?

Hebrews 11:1 tells us, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." I think the answer to my friend's question is that hope, and faith are intertwined, and the strength and fulfillment of our hopes lie in what we have faith in. We may trust, and with good reason, that science will find the vaccine for this pandemic, but do we have faith that people, and governments will make the choices necessary to eradicate the virus? We may hope that the racism, sexism, and all the other "isms" will be overcome, and we will all live in beloved community, but do I have faith in the ability of humanity, of you and I, to make the systemic changes in our lives to eradicate the hate that divides us? I may hope that we all will fulfill the commandment to love another, ending the incivility of our societies, but do I have faith, truly believe, that we can accomplish that?

I have come to understand that my faith must lie beyond any perception of my ability, of our ability to accomplish that which I most hope for. There is an old hymn that begins with this verse:

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

It is in the reality of God becoming flesh and dwelling in our midst, enduring the joy, pain and despair of life and death that I find solace. But it is in the resurrection of Jesus, in God's triumph over the finality of death that I find the faith that frees the hope that allows me to see the continuing work of God in all creation. It is God breaking through the accepted system of death triumphing over life, that sustains my faith, my trust, that God will also act to overcome everything that would hurt or divide us. And it is that faith that invites me to become a part of that ongoing creation that will bring to fullness my hope. My hope comes from my faith in the God that has come to meet us where we are in the midst of experiences of joy, but even more clearly in our fear, our uncertainty, our anger, and bids us come, follow in the work of creating the reign of love for all of God's creation. That is what I hope to be preaching this Easter.

In Christ's service, Pastor Paul

Pastor Paul will be on vacation April 15th -22nd. Contact Pastor Ann or the Church Office in a pastoral emergency.

Walking through Shadows

A note from Pastor Ann

At any given time in our life together, one or more persons is facing illness or crisis of some sort. Experiences of serious illness or other crisis may precipitate a "dark night of the soul". This phrase comes from St. John of the Cross, a Spanish mystic who wrote a poem about his journey with God. The poem describes a sense of disorientation when God's presence with us eludes our usual experience, images, or words. A dark night of the soul, experienced by each of us at some point in our lifetimes, is a profound shift in our knowledge of self, and knowledge of God.

Our walk through the season of Lent is a parallel kind of experience. Shadows, whether present or past, crowd in upon us as we engage in repentance. In some churches, this experience of seeking to reconcile ourselves with God is marked by a Tenebrae service (Tenebrae is Latin for shadows); where, through music and scripture, we contemplate the shadows within our very selves. While somber, such shadow time is not devoid of light. After all, shadows themselves cannot be cast without it. And it is our faith, however tested, which allows us to walk more and more in the light.

This Lent, I have observed many stories of faith, of walking into light from the midst of shadow. So, I share with you now the remarkable journey, through these many past months, of Joan Hodak: Heart problems first cast a shadow in Joan's life when her father required a pacemaker in 1971. Two decades later, Joan's cousin Dick received a heart transplant, and in the aftermath of what was at that time in 1981 a very risky procedure, Dick lived for an additional month. Joan herself was diagnosed in 2008 with a heart condition. It wasn't until 2019 that Joan needed surgery to "clip" a valve in her heart. Then she required a second heart valve surgery in July 2020. Joan has always known that "my life is in God's hands", but she experienced a great peace in July 2020 before her second surgery. "I made my peace with God before the surgery, accepting whatever the outcome would be for me".

After completing physical therapy, Joan has now returned to the usual tasks of her life. She is especially thankful to be able to walk through her neighborhood now. Considering that her entire family has walked alongside Joan throughout her journey and recovery, it is no surprise that Joan's niece Nancy calls it "the miracle of 2020". Given that 2020 is mostly known as the year dominated by a deadly virus, how good it is to recast the darkness of shadow with the light of miracle!

And for Joan, the light was there all along: her faith, certainly, but also the loving care of our church: Sandy and Jim Pezzillo bringing groceries, Susie Wentworth visiting, and others delivering much - appreciated and homemade soup! And Joan sees clearly the light from prayers which lifted her spirit and helped her take steps along her recovery: Carol Hecky's helping Joan and her husband Joe schedule covid vaccine shots, Jeanne Thompson's encouraging phone calls, and Betty Newberry's making the soup.

This, Joan reflects, is the way church should be.



April Worship at Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church

We will continue to worship online through the month of April. The session will determine when the congregation will be able to gather safely for worship and other large gatherings. The Return to Church Committee continues to advise the Session on the latest developments in the pandemic. We are continuing to work to develop the procedures that will be followed when we are able to gather again. The link to our Zoom worship will continue to be:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/910100569

Or by telephone dial 1-929-205-6099, if asked, enter the Webinar ID: 910 100 569

Sunday, April 4 Easter - The Celebration of the Resurrection

10:00 worship on Zoom The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Rev. Paul Rhebergen preaching Lectionary Texts: Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Acts 10:34–43; John 20:1-18

Sunday, April 11 2nd Sunday of Easter

10:00 worship on Zoom

Rev. Paul Rhebergen preaching Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31

Sunday, April 18 3rd Sunday of Easter

10:00 worship on Zoom Rev. Ann Schoonover preaching Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

Sunday, April 25 4th Sunday of Easter

10:00 worship on Zoom Rev. Paul Rhebergen preaching Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

Sunday Morning Bible Study - 9:00 AM Led by Sam Bonner

https://zoom.us/j/564813133?pwd=WXV3dk5zYlk vUGJDUUEwZEc2R3REdz09 By phone, dial 1-646-558-8656 and enter when asked the meeting ID: 564-813-133

Sunday Afternoon Adult Ed. - 1:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81923102879 By phone, dial 1-929-205-6099 , Meeting ID: 819 2310 2879

Tuesday and Thursday Chat's with Pastor Ann

Tuesdays at 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM.

https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81010467123?pwd=U DNqWG5pNot3MFJUeDN5SFcvQnpzdzo9 Meeting ID: 810 1046 7123 Password: 271785 By phone 1- 929- 436-2866 Password: 271785

Thursdays Chat at 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM.

https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/960150849?pwd=bTd YTVV3S1M0R2xmenZSWlc5MnhMUT09 Meeting ID: 960 150 849 Password: 079496 By phone 1-929-436-2866 Password: 079496

Grief Group with Pastor Ann Tuesdays at 2:00 PM

https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/85946835493?pwd=U 1dBbHVVQlRVNnU1d25OMThrTmlUZz09 Meeting ID: 859 4683 5493 Passcode: 891990 Dial by your location 1 929 436 Meeting ID: 859 4683 5493 Passcode: 891990

Wednesday Conversations with Pastor Paul 7:00 PM

https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/86079729283 By phone 1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 860 7972 9283

Lunch Together...from Home is being held monthly, every third Thursday at 11:45 AM. Please mark your calendar to attend **Thursday, March 18th.** Here is the way to participate via zoom, by video or by phone call in:

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83279089163

Meeting ID: 832 7908 9163 Or call in by phone by dialing 1 929 436 2866 and then provide Meeting ID: 832 7908 9163

Presbyterian Women

Tabitha and Ruth Circles meet together the **second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm** via Zoom. We share concerns, have devotions, and just enjoy some social time with each other. We would love to have others join us. If you are interested, contact Jane Kidder, Janice Rockmore or Carol Hecky for information. Join Zoom Meeting <u>https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/84680928271</u> Meeting ID: 846 8092 8271 Or call in by phone by dialing: 1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 846 8092 8271

Vision Team

The Vision Team has been at work to continue to develop its understanding of the Vision for the future of this congregation. Working with what they heard during the Café Conversation, they have edited the Vision Statement slightly, and added a Mission statement that develops the ministry of the church in light of its vision. Here is what they have developed:

Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church is called to be a church where people seeking hope find the light and love of Christ and together, joyfully serve the community with abiding love and purpose.

Mission Statement: As a church

We find and share the light and love of Christ in prayer, in worship, in fellowship, and in service.

We welcome the rainbow of (God's children/humanity), and we embrace our differences.

We gather to develop relationships with God, with each other, and with the world.

We are inspired by the Word of God as proclaimed through music, and our love of music strengthens our relationship with the community.

We empower others to embody grace, mercy, justice, and peace, guided by the light and love of Christ.

We purposely demonstrate compassion, understanding, and generosity to others, inspired by the love of Christ.

We open our hearts and our doors to those seeking hope, wholeness, wellness, acceptance, and a place to be seen.

Spotlight on Mission - Stewardship at Work



The Adult Ed, Mission and Social Justice Committee would like to share with you parts of the Thank You Notes which our gifts to their organizations have meant to them. These are your gifts and your ways of reaching out and sharing who and what we are:

From LifeTies "I would like to express our sincere gratitude....It is your valued commitment in helping our most vulnerable youth that inspires us the most, your support is deeply appreciated.

LifeTies is an independent, non-profit organization committed to nurturing wellness and selfsufficiency in vulnerable youth, young adults, and their families. We have seven programs: two Group Homes in Mercer County—Triad House and Rainbow House as well as supportive housing for those youth aging out of the child welfare system and transitioning into adulthood, a Mentoring program, a Family Engagement program for youth involved with the Juvenile Justice System and two housing programs for homeless young adults. Using a holistic approach, our ultimate goal is to stabilize the youth and empower them with life skills, educational support, employment support, clinical services, and access to medical and dental care, and social services to become self-sufficient and responsible adults."

From Tres Rios Presbyterian Church in Costa Rica via Don Lovett

"It has been a very difficult year for the Tres Rios Presbyterian Church. ... They could not continue their youth feeding program (on Sundays at noon and on Thursday's evenings) and the members of the congregation stopped giving money entirely...In October, November, and December, they had restarted their feeding program for the kids on Saturdays by having the kids bring Tupperware containers to the church to collect their meal, but then the kids had to go home to eat the meal... Just last week they were able to start the youth feeding program once again. The kids come for a half hour program, and then after class they receive a hot meal in their Tupperware containers, which they still had to take home to eat. The church decided to focus their programming on the two topics that were essential for them to present to the children: sexual abuse and human trafficking in this church's neighborhood. The program has had good results-better grades in school and more positive behavior and attitude.

Over the past year, the Tres Rios church also has sponsored three food distribution events. This past Sunday was their biggest event so far. They distributed US\$45 of groceries to each of 75 families. However, because they were unable to collect adequate donations to cover the cost of the food, Pastor Jose had to take money out of his own savings to cover the expenses. And he shared that it was like a miracle: the next day, the donation from E-CPC arrived. He said that he literally broke down into tears because God had found a way to help them out. He asked that I share that he was moved deep in his heart to know that other people were thinking about them. He asked me to thank all of the members of our congregation in his behalf for supporting them in their ministry to their community."

ADULT EDUCATION IN APRIL

How systemic racism and poverty are being addressed: Working with our local Missions—presentations and discussion from our partners in mission: Eastern Service Workers Association, LifeTies, Arm in Arm, Homefront, Ewing Helping Hands and Head Start.

<u>CLASS DATES: April 4</u> - No class: *Easter Sunday, April*<u>11</u> – Eastern Service Workers and Michael Clark, <u>April 18</u> – TBA, <u>April 25</u> – LifeTies with Teresa Triano-Davis, Lori Morris and volunteer coordinator Kathy Coppins

Stewardship of Service for Justice

Systemic racism grows with silence. Houses of worship need to find their voice to become antiracist and speak to the need of reckoning and reconciliation. The well-known author Dr. Ibram X. Kendri will be the keynote speaker at the **Silent No More** seminar to be held via Zoom on <u>Wednesday, April 28 at 7:00 pm.</u> He is the author of <u>How to Be an Antiracist</u>.

Please click on this link to register. <u>https://www.eventbrite.com/e/146476995637</u> The zoom link will be provided in your registration confirmation.

DIAPER Challenge



If you have not donated diapers for HomeFront, it is not too late! Any size diapers and wipes can still be dropped off at the scout hut. Any

size is fine. These items can be dropped off through Mother's Day. Contact Carol Hecky with any questions.

BLANKET SUNDAY May 10th is Mother's Day and a time when



we honor or remember those who are or have been like mothers to us. What better way to celebrate this

person's freely given love than buying a simple warm blanket for disaster victims and families who need assistance from the cold and heat or a shelter both here and worldwide through **Church World Service?** A simple gift of \$10 buys a blanket, and \$20 buys enough plastic sheeting for a shelter for a family.



As with a lot of life these days, we will need to do things differently. Send the Church a check and a note of those people you wish to honor or give in memory of. Or you may drop it off at church through the mail slot in the door. Please don't forget to put in the memo line "Blanket Sunday". We will publish all the names in the newsletter.

Happy 102nd Birthday!



MARJORIE BURTIS

Thank you for your 102 years of shared time and for being part of our lives. May this day be memorable and filled with kindnesses, joy and love.

<u>حتجت</u> >

Message from Marjorie Burtis

"A big Thank You to all of the friends of the Church for the cards and prayers on the loss of my Grandson Todd.

Marjorie



Celebrating 55 Years Peace & Sam Weigh 55th Anniversary in March Forever to go!



A sincere thanks

to those who put together the youth craft bags for Palm Sunday. It was a great way to introduce the start of Holy Week to Declan Gallagher as pictured here.

Karin Zasoski

Tax Information from Ralph Sims

As you know I am a tax preparer. Here is some information you may want to know.

If a person collected unemployment state compensation in tax year 2020, there is an exclusion of \$10,200 for each person from the amount they received. If a person did not receive the \$600 for a single person, \$1,200 married person and additionally \$500 for children. The entry on the 1040 Tax Form is line 30. Check the 10940 Instruction manual for the details and a checklist.

I hope this will help our members or their tax preparers. Ralph L. Sims - Contact Ralph with any questions you may have.

GET FREE TAX PREP HELP

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counselling for the Elderly (TCE) programs offer free tax help by volunteer tax preparers for taxpayers who qualify. Below are some of the nearby providers: All sites require an appointment before going *with the exception of* St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Warminster.

The filing deadline has been extended till May 15th, when calling for appts. ask about additional dates if needed.

Mercer CASH – United Way of Greater Mercer County – English spoken Appt. required Offered through April 15th 3150 Brunswick Pike – suite 230 Lawrence Township, NJ 08648 609-896-1912

UWGPSN – Florence Township – VITA – English spoken Appt. required Offered through April 9th 1350 Hornberger Ave. Roebling, NJ 08544 609-447-0077

BCOC VITA – Lower Bucks County – English spoken Appt. required Offered through April 10th 721 Veterans Highway Bristol, PA 19007 215-547-4704

Hunterdon UW – Lambertville Justice Center – English/Spanish spoken Appt. required Offered through April 15th

25 S. Union St. Lambertville, NJ 08530 908-237-1689

VITA/Huntington Valley – English spoken Appt. required Offered through April 12th 1840 County Line Road – unit 212 Huntington Valley, PA 19006 215-366-5643

BCOC St. Andrews United Methodist Church – English spoken Appt. not required Offered through April 10th -Wed. 4pm – 8pm, Sat. 9am – 2pm 999 York Road Warminster, PA 18974



Newly Listed

Megan Scarborough

The Burtis family, which grieves the death of **Todd Lewis**, *Margie Burtis' grandson*. (Family includes his daughter Grayson, son Gavin, parents Lynn and Jim Lewis, brother Scott Lewis, his uncle Art, and aunt Jane Burtis) **John Breckenridge**

Dave, husband of Joan Hodak's niece.) Jarred DeWees & Stacy Robson and their Families

Susan Reisinger, aunt of Jarred DeWees

Bonnie and Gary Brandt Michael Brezak, son of Barbara Brezak Louise Burroughs Steve Carter, friend of Mari Berens Janet Corbin Maryann Eleuteri, friend of Judy Carapezza

Rita Freilinghaus, sister of Judy Carapezza Karen Fuchs, sister of Laura Wallin **Alice Haines** Jewell Hand and Family **Kevin Hecky** Lydia Hill, cousin of Cathy Holland Joan and Joe Hodak **Cathy Holland Dan Hough** John Kelso, friend of Ginny Saiia **Charlie Magee**, brother of Judy Carapezza **Paul Matyas** Maureen, friend of Barbara Gigliello **Samuel Meservey**, grandson of Lois Meservey **Aaron Morgan Rachel Morgan Carolyn Parham**, *daughter of Betty Newberry* brother of Ingrid Pope. Laura Ryan, niece of Sandra Gwin **Shirley Sandford** Michael Baily Schafer, grandnephew of Mary Hough Brad Shropshire, Doug & Carol Taylor's brother-in-law **Dave Snedecker Gwen Thomas** Travis Turner, nephew of Gay McGraw **Gloria Vernam** Kaitlynn Webster, granddaughter of Nancy Coleman Sam & Peace Weigh

To keep the prayer list timely, listings will remain for 2 editions of the Newsletter (2 months' time) and then be taken off. In the event you desire a listing to run longer, or for a shorter time, please contact Pastor Ann, or otherwise let your parish leaders know.

Remembering our Beloved Departed

May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Maundy Thursday 7:00PM	Good Friday	Great Vigil of Easter
4 EASTER – Resurrection of the Lord 10AM Bible Study 9am Adult Ed. 1pm	5	6 Chat with Pastor Ann 10:00am Grief Group 2:00pm	7 Conversation w Pastor Paul 7:00pm Holocaust Remembrance Day	8 Pastor Ann's Afternoon Chat 4:30 – 5:30pm	9	10
11 Worship 10am Bible Study 9am Adult Ed.1pm 2 nd Sunday of EASTER	12	13 Chat with Pastor Ann 10:00am Grief Group 2:00pm Deacons Meeting	14 Tabitha & Ruth Circle – 7pm Conversation w Pastor Paul 7:00pm	15 Pastor Ann's Afternoon Chat 4:30 – 5:30pm Lunch Together 11:45am	16	17
<u>18</u> Worship 10am Bible Study 9am Adult Ed. 1pm 3 rd Sunday of EASTER	19	20 Chat with Pastor Ann 10:00am Grief Group 2:00pm Session Meeting	21	22 Pastor Ann's Afternoon Chat 4:30 – 5:30pm Earth Day	23	24
25 Worship 10am Bible Study 9am Adult Ed. 1pm 4 th Sunday of EASTER	26	27 Chat with Pastor Ann 10:00am Grief Group 2:00pm	28 Conversation w Pastor Paul 7:00pm	29 Pastor Ann's Afternoon Chat 4:30 – 5:30pm	30	C.A. – Weds. 7:00PM Venture to Help- Sats. 3:00PM

Please refer to the worshiping schedule portion of this newsletter for all zoom and phone in connections.

Thank you Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Mission Committee!

Thank you for your incredible support of Eastern Service Workers Association throughout the pandemic, continuing through the Holidays and this winter. Your most recent donation of \$2,000 is helping to sponsor our food distributions at a time when unor underemployment in our membership communities is still reaching nearly 40%, and during the cold season when donations from farms are not so bountiful.

Since the fall, we have greatly expanded our preventive medical benefit with a team of volunteer doctors, including medical residents from Capital Health, volunteering for regular medical education and information sessions on the coronavirus, on vaccines, diabetes, & nutrition. Volunteers are also leading weekly benefit advocacy sessions to assist members in receiving the coronavirus vaccine.

While we anticipate warmer, and healthier, days approaching, our reach into the hardest-hit neighborhoods will grow as we struggle to ensure no one is left behind.

Machiel Clark --

Please stay well!

Sincerely,











Background by Freepil

Helping Hands & Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church-Sharing side by side

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church for partnering with us to provide support by purchasing some of the items off of our Amazon Wish List.

This will truly help us to continue to fill the weekly food bags and serve the 55+ families on our weekly distribution List. As we previously mentioned we have had a rotation of close to 90 families throughout the duration of this effort who have been on the list at various times. Unfortunately, it seems like every time one family comes off two more come on. Fortunately, though we have not had to turn anyone away thanks to everyone's support.

As always, any and all support is truly appreciated in making this possible and every bit helps. When this started almost 1 year ago, we truly never thought it would grow to where it is today. This has only been possible thanks to the extremely unbelievable generosity of our community!

Thank you again and if you are interested in donating, we are always in need of the items listed on our Amazon Wish List or other items which might be cheaper at stores such as Shop Rite (like cereal and Mac & Cheese). <u>https://smile.amazon.com/</u>.../ ref+nav_wishlist_lists 2...

