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Something to think about ...

In “An Easter Carol,” the poet Christina Rossetti expresses our oft-held association between Easter and spring:

*Spring bursts to-day,
For Christ is risen and all the earth's at play.....
Break forth this morn
In roses, thou but yesterday a Thorn.
Uplift thy head,
O pure white Lily through the Winter dead.*

Easter is a time when we decorate the altar and our homes with Easter lilies, daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips both as symbols of Jesus' resurrection and the resurrection of the earth after the cold of winter but unfortunately, in Western NY at least, the timing of the two isn't always perfectly in sync. Last year, the snows fell into May and this year, even with the warmth of the last few days, up here on my hill it will be a while before green shoots dare to stick their head out of my soil, let alone the roses and lilies of Rossetti's poem. Right now, the main produce of spring at my house is flies — thousands of cluster flies who have emerged in the warm sun to swarm around the house bumping against my light bulbs. Furthermore, instead of bringing swaths of beautiful flowers and frolicking bunnies to my landscape, spring always initially turns my yard into an eyesore. As the pristine snow recedes, I can see how many rodents spent their winter burrowing tunnels in my lawn. All of the bedraggled toys that Dexter left outside in the fall to be encased in ice for months are now lying damp and limp across the yard. Piles of sunflower seed shells are heaped underneath my bird feeders, and fence posts, heaved up by the frost, lay askew around the perimeter. And to my complete disgust, every year the melting snow reveals scads of dog poop from two dogs taking care of their business every day of the winter. For the uninitiated, the bacteria and mold that cause dog feces to decompose can't function in freezing weather and two dogs produce an awful lot of dog poop to keep in cold storage all winter. Thawing dog poop is the worst part of spring.

Altogether, in spite of our poetry and music heralding Easter as the springtime of new life, at my house there is a lot of old life that first has to decompose, trash that has to be picked up, and winter damage to fix before beauty is seen in the land.

One could argue of course (as I am about to) that the muddy trash-strewn spring of Western NY is a more appropriate analogy to the new life Easter offers than lilies and bunnies. Through Christ's resurrection, God offers all of us the opportunity for new life, new ways of thinking about ourselves and the world, and a chance to let go of our old selves and become new creatures, but we know that such a change is not without cost. The empty tomb came only after the cross. Absolution comes only after confession. Easter isn't cheap grace where God just waves a magic wand and instantaneously everything in our lives is set right; Easter is the promise that new life is *possible*. For those beaten down by their trials or so full of self-doubt and recrimination that they despair anything can ever be better than the frozen wasteland that has become their hearts, Easter says, "Bathed in the warmth of God's love, even you can become someone different from who you have been. Even you can know healing and experience joy. To get there, however, you might need to clean up a lot of trash that's been cluttering up your heart and put right a lot of things that the frost has set askew." Easter promises the possibility of better relationships, a better self, and a more meaningful life, but it doesn't promise that getting there won't take some honest scrutiny of what has gone wrong and a willingness to do some work to put things to rights.

It takes some imagination at this time of year in Western NY to believe in the beauty that awaits but we trust in the promise that flowers will bloom, birds will sing, and the poop will decompose! In the same way, we as Christians will trust in God's promise that this worn-out ugly life of ours can flourish and grow; that if we are willing to take on the work of the cross, God will bring us to the glory of the resurrection.

John



Blessings
Easter

Church News & Events



Mission of the Month



Alfred Area Food Pantry

The April Mission of the Month will benefit the Alfred Area Food Pantry. Coordinated by the Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church, located in the Christian Education Building, Alfred Station SDB Church, the pantry relies on donations of food, money, and volunteers to fulfill its mission to provide food for those in need. Volunteers are from the Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church, UUC, and St. Jude's. The pantry is open Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Patrons choose from the following food categories: vegetables, fruits, protein, cereal, and pasta and/or rice according to the size of their family. Cash donations enable the pantry to provide perishable items such as chicken, eggs, bread and milk. In December, the Food Pantry offers food bags/ boxes, depending on the size of the family, to those patrons who sign up and then pick up their food on a designated Sunday afternoon. Patrons receive either a turkey or ham and the appropriate food related to their choice of meat. Also included are cookies from the volunteer churches.

Please make checks payable to the Union University Church with "Food Pantry" in the memo line.

Transitional Minister Committee Update

The Transitional Minister Committee met on Wednesday night, March 24. The following is a summary of the meeting:

Co-chairs recommend that we continue to work with multiple agencies, to include ABC USA (American Baptist Church USA) Transition Ministries, CCH (Center for Congregational Health) and IMN (Interim Ministry Network) until we sign an agreement to bring a transitional minister to UUC.

Pat Hernandez (ABC USA) indicated that these transitional ministry organizations are not in competition with one another and there are no fees associated with their services to identify ministers. The committee agreed that working with multiple organizations will give us more options. All three organizations are highly respected.

Dave Porter has contacted a number of recommended potential candidates, three of whom have expressed some interest in our position.

Dave & Larry will take the next step to set up Zoom meetings with each of the 3 candidates, followed by selecting summer dates for them to conduct Zoom church with the congregation. (upon approval by the Elders).

The transitional church profile will be completed by April 1, 2021 and will be posted on the UUC website.

Estimated Timeline for Transitional Minister Search

Feb. 2, 2021—Organizational Meeting of Search Committee

- Elect a chair and secretary
- Establish meeting dates
- Establish target date for hiring a TM

By April 1— Complete UUC Profile

February 1—May 1—Identify & meet on Zoom with potential TM candidates

April & May—Two or three "serious" candidates meet on Zoom with full committee

July—Two or three candidates preach/and or lead a Sunday service on Zoom

July/August—Committee makes final decision

September/October—Sign agreement/covenant with a TM to start January 1, 2022

November/December—TM consults with Rev. DeMott as agreeable by both ministers.

Search Committee and/or Trustees arrange housing or housing allowance

Trustees make any needed budget adjustments for the period Jan1 through April 30.

January 1—TM begins duties at UUC

Church News & Events, cont.

Virtual Lenten Journey Around the Bible

Our UUC Caravan of 43 participants is nearing the end of our long trek and I do mean long. The group which includes people from as far away as Florida, has been dutifully exercising every week of Lent and sending Laurie their mileage totals which she then plots on Google Earth. We started in modern day Iraq in the birthplace of Abraham and Sarah, followed their trail all the way to Turkey, down through Syria, and into Israel stopping to gaze at sights like the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the view from Mount Hermon. We continued down the coast of the Mediterranean and then followed Abraham and Sarah's great-grandson Joseph into Egypt where, after checking out the pyramids, we escaped with Moses and the Hebrew slaves to spend some time wandering in the wilderness. After receiving the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, we trekked up through Jordan and just this past week, crossed over the Jordan River into Israel again.

As of this writing, the group has hiked (biked, swum, run, or otherwise exercised) 2328.81 miles! We will be slowing down our pace for Holy Week as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, visiting the places in Jerusalem that are so significant to our faith, places like the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Temple Mount, and Laurie will include a devotional for each day of the week. For those not on the email list, you can read the emails and devotionals on our website at <https://unionuniversitychurch.org/virtual-lenten-journey/>



*God of hope,
our hearts overflow with gratitude for your
abiding presence during these exceedingly
difficult and troubled times.*

*May the flames of hope remain aglow among
individuals, families, communities and nations
during the pandemic.*

*May our trust in you be affirmed, especially as
we continue to navigate each day the challenges
that have confronted us.*

*Let all that we are wait quietly before you, O
God, knowing that our hope is in you.*

*By your Spirit, may we be grounded in the hope
that is proclaimed in your word:
you are our rock and salvation, our fortress
where we will not be shaken.*

*We pray in the name of One who, by his
resurrection, has given us the hope of life
eternal, Jesus the Christ,*

Amen.

(from The World Council of Churches)



Mindy Smith, Catherine Chambers, Ding Jiaxi & family, Michelle Garcia Escobar, Clayton Stutzman, Hugh Langelier, Lois Stiles, Sharon & Roger Smith, Wes Bentz, Beverly Snyder's sister (Barbara), 3 yr. old Lowin, Marnie Johnson (Joan Schulze's niece), Sharon Burdick, all those whose families are suffering from Covid-19, Michele Hluchy's father (Rev. Stephen Hluchy), Joyce Rausch & family on the death of Jim.

Church News & Events, cont.

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday - March 28, 2021

They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!" John 12:12-13



Holy Week begins with a Fusion Palm Sunday Service—in person or via Zoom. The altar will be decorated with palms and extra palms will be available for those who would like one. The service will include a montage of photos commemorating the one year anniversary of Covid-19 style worship.

Maundy Thursday - April 1, 2021

*While they were eating, Jesus **took** a loaf of **bread**, and after blessing it **he** broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."* Matthew 26:26

Our Maundy Thursday service will be celebrated Fusion church style with a 7:00pm worship service in the sanctuary and via Zoom. We will join together in sharing the Last Supper. The service will include a montage of photos commemorating the one year anniversary of Covid-19 style worship.

Good Friday - April 2, 2021

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit - Luke 23:46



Reverend DeMott will record and post a Good Friday prayer service to Facebook, Youtube, and our church website

(www.unionuniversitychurch.org) on Good Friday, April 2, at noon. She will email links to that next week so please check your email

Easter Festival - April 4, 2021

The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." Luke 24:5

Our Easter Service will be Fusion style with Zoomers displaying their Easter flowers so they are visible on their Zoom screens for everyone to enjoy. Those worshipping in the sanctuary will be able to bring plants to church with them on Easter Sunday for display.



April Board Members of the Month

Deacon.....Amie Acton (actona85@gmail.com; 607.382.3143)
 Elder.....John Buckwalter (buckwajd@gmail.com; 607.968.0540)
 BOCE.....NA
 Fellowship.....Cindy Tucker (ckaytucker@gmail.com; 607.368.6431)
 Trustee.....Jerry Jusianiec (jusianjm@alfredstate.edu; 607.587.8274)

Who do you call? Flowers or lay leading—call an Elder; greeting or coffee hour—call a Deacon;
 Sunday school—call BOCE; building issues—call a Trustee.



Upcoming Church Volunteers

Date	Lay Leader	Flowers	Usher
April 4	John Buckwalter	Lana Meissner	Heineman
April 11	Mary Lou Cartledge	Beth Slack	Heineman
April 18	Dave Porter	Joan Schulze	Heineman
April 25	Tiersa Watson	Deb Stephens	Heineman
May 2	TBD	TBD	Heineman
May 9	TBD	TBD	Heineman
May 16	TBD	TBD	Heineman
May 23	TBD	TBD	Heineman
May 30	TBD	TBD	Heineman



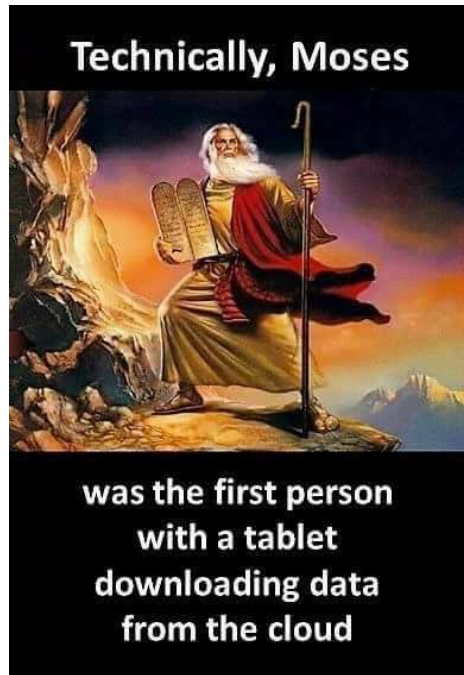
Mission of the Month

Alfred Area Food Pantry

“April is the kindest month. April gets you out of your head and out working in the garden.” — Marty Rubin

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7pm Maundy Thursday Service	2 Good Friday	3
4 10:30 Easter Worship	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 10:30 Worship	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 10:30 Worship	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 10:30 Worship	26	27	28	29	30	

Just for Fun



milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years."

The cow said: "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. How about twenty and I'll give back the other forty?" And God agreed again.

On the fourth day, God created man and said: "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. For this, I'll give you twenty years." But man said: "Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?" "Okay," said God, "You asked for it."

So that is why the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years, we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years, we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.

And that's how life is explained through God's creation.

Play Ball

One day the devil challenged God to a baseball game. Smiling, God proclaimed, "You don't have a chance. I've got Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle and all the greatest players up here." "Yes," laughed the devil, "but I have all the umpires."

God Created the Dog

On the first day, God created the dog and said: "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this, I will give you a life span of twenty years."

The dog said: "That's a long time to be barking. How about only ten years and I'll give you back the other ten?"

So God agreed with the dog.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said: "Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty-year life span." The monkey said: "Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a pretty long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the dog did?" And God agreed with the monkey.

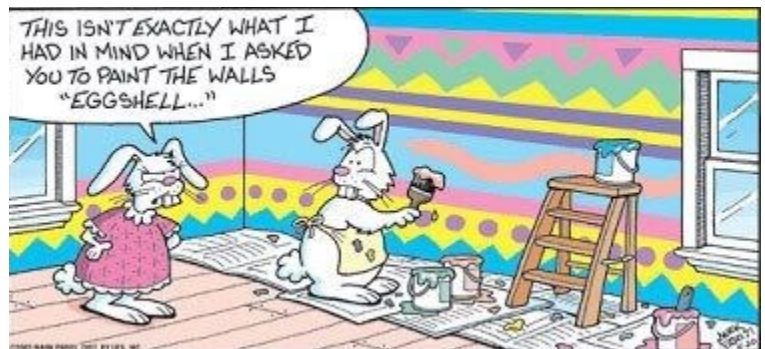
On the third day, God created the cow and said: "You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves, and give

Sin?

A woman in a confessional said, "Bless me Father, for I have sinned. I have committed the sin of vanity. Twice a day I look in the mirror and tell myself how beautiful I am." The priest took a look at her and said, "My dear, that isn't a sin. It's simply a mistake."

Kids Say the Darndest Things

A Sunday-school teacher was telling her class about the Bible. She told them about the kings of the Old Testament and the queens who vied for attention. Then she told them there was a higher power and asked them if anyone could tell her what it was. One student raised his hand and said, "Aces!"





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April, 2021 Newsletter