

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Making connections and offering opportunities for faith, love, and service"

Worship 10 am

Education Hour –TBD

TOTAL STEWARDSHIP: PRAYERS, PRESENCE, GIFTS, AND SERVICE



Pastor
Rev. Daven Oskvig

Office Manager/Ministry Assistant
Janelle Davis

Minister of Music
Paul Staley

Financial Secretary
Doris Schanzlin



350 Saratoga Road, Amherst, NY 14226

Phone: 839-2460

Fax: 839-2166

www.christchurchamherst.org E-mail: Cumc350@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9 am –2 pm

Office Closed Monday, April 5 and Monday, May 31



The Caller



New Flooring in the Café, Crafts Hall, and Office Hall

April/May 2021



Who hasn't encountered one of those sugar-coated, chocolate-eyed, pastel colored marshmallow treats called a Peep? They bombard and pervade our stores, sending our young people into sugar-induced visions and parents into panicked states thinking about the possibilities beneath the cellophane. While I once adored these delights, now the idea of eating one makes my stomach churn!

It is easy to be appalled at the nudging out of the religious meaning of Easter by the market. From bunnies to baskets, the true origins and meaning of such celebrations are just given a glancing Sunday hour. The bunnies and chicks bring smiles and ecstatic cries to our young people, while the glory of the resurrection is lost in the shadow of the seasonal and secular. But this year as I stared at the new colors of Peeps (who knew they could add any more?) while my stomach churned in the imagined taste of this invitation to over-indulgence, I found meaning among the marshmallow. It was the women who first went to the tomb that 'peeped' in and found it to be empty. Could it be that these treats actually are attached to this resurrection revelation? While I highly doubt it, it does cause me to wonder if there isn't a way and if it isn't time for us to help lift up the meaning of Easter to its once prominent place so that the treats, bunnies, and chocolates are what stand in the shadow of an empty tomb. Do we not owe this to one another and others, that the most amazing part of Easter is what God did, what Jesus overcame, and what the women 'peeped' into the tomb and found?

This is our most joyous season as people of faith. There is sweetness in our lives because of these events. I pray that you will join me in restoring this sweet reality as the core of our Easter celebrations. And may our participation in the amazing sweetness of God's love for us in Christ be a special treat with which we greet every day!

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Daven*

April Birthdays



| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Kathy Weaver | 5 * |
| Charles Gilbert..... | 6 |
| Stephen Mugal | 6 |
| Tom Brunner..... | 7 |
| Larry Burdette..... | 10 |
| Don Critoph | 10 |
| Mary Jane Nehrboss | 12 |
| Al Tolsma | 13 |
| Michelle Cordero..... | 14 |
| Daven Oskvig | 15 |
| Drew Smith..... | 21 |
| David Lawson..... | 22 |
| Pamela Gibson..... | 23 |
| Doris Schanzlin | 26 |
| Benjamin Weaver | 30 |

May Birthdays

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Andrew Cordero | 1 |
| Roger Johnson | 2 |
| Margaret Mugal..... | 3 |
| Mary Ball..... | 13 |
| Herb Darling | 13 |
| Jordan Lawson | 14 |
| Rosemary Kochan | 16 |
| Kristen Darling | 18 |
| Mary Landel | 20 |
| Rebecca Lopez | 21 |
| Ryan Lopez..... | 21 |
| Scott Smith..... | 21 |
| Lisa Juergens..... | 22 |
| Sally Pollard | 22 |
| Ed Gilbert..... | 23 |
| Pastor Theva | 24 |
| Christopher Maliken | 27 |
| Annette Smith..... | 27 |
| Richard Radel..... | 30 |
| Alexander Juergens..... | 31 |



April Anniversaries



| | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Brad & Mary Loliger..... | April 07, 2018 |
| Bob & Anna Lovell | April 26, 2006 |

May Anniversaries

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Greg & Lynn Ramsey | May 04, 1984 |
| Roger & Dede Johnson | May 10, 1986 |
| John & Pam Lopez | May 21, 1994 |

If you would like to add your birthday and/or anniversary to the list, please contact Janelle in the church office 839-2460.

Remember When?

Café, Stage 1



Café, Stage 2

Café Finished!



Sabbatical Leave

The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program is a grant which provides an uninterrupted, extended leave for a period of renewal and reflection to the pastor and congregation for regaining enthusiasm and creativity in ministry. Under the 'News' tab on the website is a description of the program and includes a working draft of the nature and scope of that program, which would take place during the summer of 2022. Questions, feedback, support, and concerns are encouraged and can be shared with Peggy Bermudez or Pastor Daven, as congregational support is paramount to grant awarding.

Activities in the Church

We are no longer restricting in-person worship, adding additional opportunities and gatherings of church groups. We do seek the best possible practices to ensure people's health and safety, seeing in Jesus the deep care and concern for the health and wholeness of all people. So we continue to follow the guidance in regards to the health and safety of all with mandated face coverings and physical distancing while in the building. In addition, if your group is planning to return in person, we are asking that you call the church office with the number of people in your group, and your preferred date and time so that we can safely accommodate all who utilize this building in appropriate spaces for the given day.

Home Visits

Visitation to elder residential communities, long term care centers, and nursing homes recently was expanded. We recognize, however, that each person's comfort level regarding visits differs. At this time, we would ask that if you are interested in a visit from the pastor and/or members of the Visitation Team, please contact the church office.

Christ Church and YouTube Channel



We encourage everyone to Like & Subscribe to our YouTube Channel. This will help to alert you every time a new video or opportunity is added to that platform.

www.youtube.com/CUMCAmherst/live

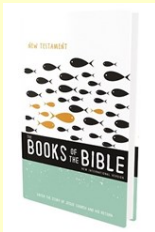
SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM

Sundays, April 11, 18, & 25 - Resurrection Reflections

Team members Paula Kreib, Diane Klenk, and Dr. David Pliss will share their insights on the resurrection stories that resonate with each of them. Reflections will be presented on Sundays prior to worship and will be available on our YouTube channel, CUMCAMherst, for viewing later.

Want to shake up the way you read the Bible?

Take the New Testament Challenge



The New Testament Challenge is a simple but revolutionary idea:

What if you have a New Testament **with the books arranged in a disruptive yet insightful sequence**, and you are challenged to read it all the way through?

This is a 40-day reading plan which uses a special edition of the New Testament

called ***The Books of the Bible, New Testament***. By reading this Bible, which arranges the books with each of the four gospels at the beginning of a group of related books, you gain insights and make connections between books in a way that is both revealing and fascinating as you encounter God in a fresh new way.



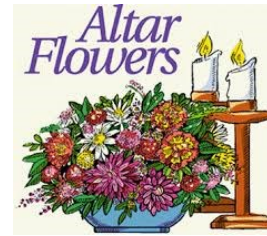
Christ Church will offer two opportunities to participate in this study on Zoom:

Wednesdays, May 5 – June 23 @ 7:00 pm

Facilitators: Beth Reilly Brown & Paula Kreib

Thursdays, May 6 – June 24 @ 1:00 pm

Facilitators: Diane Klenk & Peggy Bermudez



A 2021 flower chart is located in the Family Room for those wishing to provide flowers for the Lord's Table on a given Sunday. If you are interested in beautifying the worship space with a floral arrangement in honor or memory of a loved one or special occasion, please sign up on the chart. A member of the Worship Team will be in touch. If you are not coming to worship in person at this time but would still like to provide flowers, please contact the church office (839-2460).



Remembering Your Church

For many people, the ability to make a gift to their church in their will is a source of comfort and great satisfaction. They know that long after they are gone, the ministries of their beloved faith community will still thrive and grow, in part because of their generosity.

Making your church a beneficiary of your will isn't difficult. You'll want to talk to your attorney, of course, and work with him or her to draft a legal document that is well-written and complete. Your gift to the church may be in the form of cash, or you may make the church a beneficiary of a life insurance policy - thus allowing your gift to be far more significant in size than what you might otherwise be able to give. You may also gift the church with appreciated securities, real estate, charitable gift annuities or charitable annuity trusts, or IRA distributions.

As you prepare to set up your will, talk to your loved ones so that they understand your wishes regarding your bequest to your church and the rest of your estate. And, of course, spend time in prayer and contemplation to help you discern how best to use your financial assets.

Niagara Frontier District United Methodist Women

Gift Day – FREE Event!

Saturday, April 24 10:00 am – noon



Trinity United Methodist Church
82100 Whitehaven Rd, Grand Island, NY 14072

OUTDOORS

Karen When, Keynote Speaker

Asst. Professor of Environmental Science at ECC/SUNY
and District UMW Social Action Coordinator

*The Latest from United Methodist Women
on Climate Justice*



Our program will be presented from the
Worship Wagon in the parking lot.

You may watch from your vehicle with your radio tuned to
FM 100.3 or bring a lawn chair and enjoy the fresh air.

Please bring your own water or coffee, wear a mask,
and keep a safe distance.

We will be gathering gifts for 10 ministries in our District.
Gift Day lists and a tote to receive gifts can be found in
the Family Room. Thank you!



Welcome back! Photos by Tom Weaver

Custodian/Cleaner

Christ Church is hiring! We are beginning a search for a custodian/cleaner. For more information, please visit <https://www.christchurchamherst.org/staff/custodian/>



SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM

Thirstaid Thursdays
from 1:00 – 2:30 on Zoom

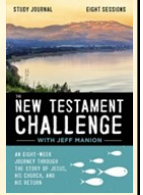
April 1 @ 1 pm

Entering the Passion of Jesus
A Beginners Guide to Holy Week
by Amy-Jill Levine
Facilitator: Peggy Bermudez

May

Take the New Testament Challenge
May 6 – June 24

Facilitators: Diane Klenk & Peggy Bermudez



Exploring Sunday's Scriptures: Tuesdays at Noon

Join Rev. Oskvig in a conversation about the Scriptures which will be explored in the sermon on the following Sunday.

Feasting on the Word with Rev. Oskvig – Posted Wednesdays on our website: www.christchurchamherst.org.



CIRCLE NEWS

Circle of Joy will meet at Christ Church on Thursday, May 6, at 7pm to share stories from the past year.

Elizabeth Circle will meet Tuesday, April 13 and Tuesday, May 11 at 1 pm at church.

Creation Care from Stewardship Team

Bon Appetit!

Earth Day is April 22nd. Did you know that the United Methodist Church partners with Creation Justice Ministries, which represents the creation care and environmental justice policies of major Christian denominations throughout the United States? They work in cooperation with 38 national faith bodies, including Protestant denominations and Orthodox communions as well as regional faith groups and congregants to protect and restore God's Creation. You can check their website for innovative ideas at creationjustice.org.



We are all looking forward to the time when we can gather again for coffee hour and potlucks. In the meantime, here are a few easy and delicious ideas from Creation Justice Ministries to care for the earth:

Eat Those Leftovers!

A great way to be a steward to the Earth is to consume your food. Did you know that Americans throw away 25% of the food they buy? Not only is this a waste of money but it is also harmful to the environment. Producing food takes land, water, and heavy machinery. By eating your leftovers you are not only saving money but also preventing energy waste from food production. Not to mention you are keeping them from taking up space in a landfill.

Commit to Low or No Waste Grocery Shopping

Some ways to reduce waste when shopping for groceries are to buy unpackaged fresh fruits and vegetables, bringing your own container to a bulk food store, investing in some produce bags to transport fresh foods, avoiding prepared foods, and bringing your own grocery bags.

Start a Garden - Indoors and Out!

Gardening is good for creation and saves you money. If you do not have space outdoors, you can grow veggies or herbs in pots in your place of residence. Indoor plants will produce oxygen to improve your indoor air quality.

Eat a Plant-Based Meal

or Meals with Ingredients from Local Farms

Eating plants is good for your body and good for the earth. Find a new recipe to try!

Missions of the Month

Opportunities to share ourselves, our talents, and our resources with others


Hearts for the Homeless

One of the problems the pandemic has worsened is food insecurity for many people. *Hearts for the Homeless* has been working tirelessly to help the homeless and hungry throughout this time. They have been doing this through their Hearts mobile soup kitchen, Hearts Harvest food pantry, and a mobile food pantry. In 2020 they served a staggering 281,845 meals and 57,109 people. In December alone they served 1795 people. There are several ways you can help them to continue to serve. They are accepting donations online as well as donations of food and clothing. Gently used clothing may be placed in the red receptacle in Christ Church's parking lot. They also have an Amazon wish list. More information can be found at <https://heartsforthehomeless.org/>. Missions will be having a **Food Drive for Hearts for the Homeless during April**. We will be collecting: **canned beef stew, chili, baked beans, canned potatoes, canned carrots, spaghetti sauce, and parmesan cheese**. Donations can be placed in a bin in the church's entrance. *Thank you for sharing God's love by helping to feed the hungry of our community.*

Native American Ministries Sunday - April 18

When you support Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who will honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. You also empower congregations that are finding fresh new ways to minister to the Native American communities with the love of Christ. Our giving allows Native Americans to Encounter, Worship, and Serve Jesus.

Golden Cross Sunday – May 9

 Through your Golden Cross offering, religious services are provided for the residents of Beechwood Continuing Care Facility in Amherst.

Hearts and Hands, Faith in Action



Hearts and Hands, Faith in Action is a volunteer agency providing free transportation, grocery shopping/delivery and friendly phone pals to seniors in Erie and Niagara County. Currently, they are experiencing great need of volunteers and want to spread the word about our mission of neighbor helping neighbor.

The pandemic has brought about many challenges. This is especially true for the older adult population. These challenges include finding reliable transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and social isolation that is brought about by both the pandemic and the winter months. This is where Hearts and Hands can help. Amazing volunteers generously give their time to provide services for the challenges listed above and more, throughout the Western New York Community.

Due to the pandemic, the need for volunteers grows daily as more older adults have a need for services. To learn more about Hearts and Hands, those who benefit from their services, and volunteering, please watch this video:

<https://vimeo.com/502655604>

Finance Update

The finances of Christ Church are sound and on track and we continue to meet all our expenses, including our Shared Ministries. Speaking of which, Pastor Daven received an email from our Conference stating that those churches who pay their full assessment for April will receive a credit of 50% of their obligation for the month of May - we plan to meet that criteria!

To date we have received the following for Special Offerings:

Human Relations: \$111

Blanket Sunday: \$263

We will receive a special offering on April 4 for Easter and on May 9, Mother's Day, we will receive a special offering for Golden Cross, which supports our local nursing homes, especially Beechwood.

Again, our thanks for your continued support of Christ Church!

~CUMC Finance Team

Try Cooking One-Pot Meals

By using one pot to cook your meal, you save on electricity, gas, and water, which reduces your carbon footprint and may even give you leftovers for the week!

Not cooking? On Earth Day (April 22nd) take a walk around your neighborhood and pick up trash or turn your lights out at 8:30 pm for one hour. It all helps!



CUMC and the Reconciling Ministries Network



Please stay tuned to the weekly emails and the Caller for information about upcoming in-person and Zoom meetings relative to Christ Church becoming a "Reconciling Congregation," and joining the RMN. RMN works to advance justice and inclusion for all LGBTQ people in The United Methodist Church and beyond. Becoming a Reconciling Congregation would enable our Church to outwardly express our love and acceptance of all. If you have questions, please contact Brad Loliger at bradloliger@gmail.com.



CUMC Identity Team - Questions to Ponder

A small team has been meeting over the past few months to discuss the identity of our Church, so we better understand ourselves, tell our story to the community, and invite others into our community. Over the next few weeks, we invite you to ponder the following questions:

- **Why does Christ Church exist?**
- ***Other than the people, why do you come to Christ Church?***
- **What would you nurture in our Church to see it through to the future?**

A fillable Google Docs form will be sent out in the weekly email. Team chairs will also be discussing these questions with their groups. We look forward to your responses as we take stock of where we've been, where we are, and as we imagine what the future will hold!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Caring Communities and “Creation Continues”



The UM Book of Discipline defines a Caring Community as a congregation with a focus on mental health ministry. Mental Health is described there as a state of well-being. It's described as a state in which the individual becomes conscious of his or her own abilities. Mental health is described there as the realization of one's true identity as a being created and conceived in the image of God (Genesis 1:27,) a being inseparable from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39.) How shall ordinary congregations become these, called for, mental health focused, “Caring Communities”? To help us think about an answer to that question, Fritz Kunkel's book “Creation Continues, A Psychological Interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew” takes the reader on a remarkable and helpful exploration. He helps the reader to see more clearly how the resurrection power of Christ can be traced like a rainbow in the rainstorms of life, through all our own trials, challenges, and crises, and everyone else's too. Kunkel's book takes us on a tour through Matthew's Gospel showing us how people and their crises are part of God's continuing creation. Kunkel shows us how in God's Creation, described in Genesis, we can see Jesus anew, and how we see ourselves anew too. Kunkel's book is empowering and important for those who now find themselves in a struggle, or who are called to minister to those in crises.

In seven 15-20 minute reflections (which will be available on our YouTube channel: **CUMCAmherst** beginning in May), explorations of the seven parts of Kunkel's book based on the Gospel of Matthew will be offered by Dr. David Pliss. Kunkel's skillful writing will help us see in a dynamic understanding of the Gospel the internal experiences of the early Christians as if they were our own. The reflections will show how Kunkel gets the reader to identify with everyone in Matthews's gospel: with Peter, Thomas, or even Judas. We'll see how the dynamics of the outer drama in Matthew are transferred to the reader's mind. Reflection will be offered on how reading Matthew's Gospel dynamically we can see how the trail doesn't lead down to failures and annihilation as it seems. Instead the persecution and crucifixion of Jesus become illuminated. Every event, every sentence which seemed at first to be introducing a new threat or danger, inching us closer to

crucifixion, now is seen in its creative power and its value for final victory. The reflections will offer a view of redeeming creation, yours, mine and everyone's, hopefully making that redemption become more visible as the dynamics of Matthew's Gospel begin to work within our minds, too. We'll reflect with Kunkel's skill of how death is still real, the cross no illusion. No avoidant idealism and cheap grace or spiritual mumbo-jumbo is allowed. The gate to resurrection life is still the tomb. Yet the tombstone becomes transparent. The light appears in darkness. The grave opens beyond space and time, and our Spirit finds eternity. With Kunkel's direction we discover the outer journey is not the whole picture, and see how so much of life's struggle takes place within us. Slowly we learn that caring communities come from ordinary congregations because being mere followers of Jesus is not enough. Creation continues and we're a part of its movement, passing through the crises of our lives in the light of Matthew's Gospel. As a Caring Community, we can learn to help others in times of trial to pass through the crises of their lives too, to become the integrated persons and the Beloved Communities God would have us be.

Children's Ministry

The Children's Ministry Team is planning a family/church community event to create garden flags for the CUMC Celebration Garden to celebrate **Earth Day** and God's creation.

WHO: Families with children, grandparents, grandchildren, friends

WHEN: **Sunday, May 2 after worship, 11am - 1pm**

WHAT: Bring your creative ideas for images and text. Templates will be provided along with various colors of flag material. Adhesives, scissors, and other materials will be provided. Bring your own sketches for a flag to take home. Flag holders are provided for the CUMC flags and families should purchase their own holders.

WHERE: Crafts Hall - Wear your mask and work at socially distanced tables. Finished flags for CUMC will have a designated location. Families will take their completed flags home.

RESERVATIONS: Please contact the Church Office if interested in participating so the CMT can have enough materials available for everyone.

