

THE CHURCH WINDOW



**MARCH
2021**



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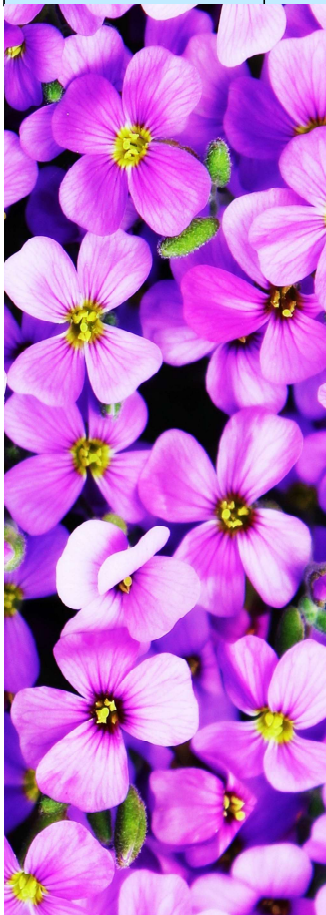
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FROM THE PASTOR'S KEYBOARD

Dear Ones,

During Lent, we symbolically enter into the wilderness, following Jesus and his own trip to the wilderness after he was baptized. Some people give up something for Lent, recognizing the importance of self-sacrifice or believing that, through privation, we can learn something important about ourselves and our community. Others use the time for meditation and self-reflection. The thing is that it feels like we've already been in a wilderness for the past year. We all have a litany of things that have happened to us or to the world that cause us to feel this way. We've all had to give up a lot this year already and we've had ample time for self-reflection. So do we really need to observe Lent, now of all times? I think we do. There's a difference between forced isolation, forced time for self-reflection, forced sacrifice, and the willing journey into the Lenten wilderness. I don't know about you, but I went into pandemic isolation kicking and screaming, and in this winter, I am chaffing against cabin fever. But Lent is something we're invited into by the Holy Spirit. It is the still small voice of our conscience, of our curiosity, and our love for God and our world that beckons us, speaking into our souls and saying, "Come, let's take a deeper look at who you are and what you believe, if you're willing." It's a sweet and gentle invitation that bubbles up from the part of ourselves that we hold so dear—our love of God and our faith. And this makes all the difference. So even though we know that Lenten journeys are hard, we might be willing to make this one. Since it's a different kind of wilderness journey and because of where the invitation comes from, it's one that we can joyfully and thankfully accept. And so, I invite you to join us on the journey together. Whether you choose to attend our Lenten worship and book study with Trinity Episcopal Church, whether you choose to worship with us every Sunday, exploring our Lenten theme, "Who Are We, As Christians," or whether you practice your own self-sacrifice and self-reflection activities, know that this is a worthwhile and important wilderness to explore.

Blessings, Pastor Laura



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Souper Bowl of Caring 2021 was a huge success, thanks to this great congregation and our super kids!

Thank you to Jackson, Mason, Allison, Will, Jack, Ben and Tim.

And to Tamara, Marcia and Pastor Laura.

They met the drive-by folks with cheers and smiling faces! Even though they were hidden behind their masks!

It was a cold day but the sun was shining and we were able to give the Grand Ledge Food Bank \$1,537.00!!

This money will go a long way to purchase food and help tackle hunger in Grand Ledge

Thank you all so much!

CONGREGATORS

Beloved Congregators,

Now that Lent has begun and Easter is fast approaching...and the first day of spring...we notice the days are getting longer! We've had frigid but gorgeous and frosty February mornings with diamonds scattered all across the snow as the sun comes up. Birds are beginning to chirp a spring song if you are fortunate enough to be out in the morning to hear! As more and more of us are getting vaccinated against Covid 19, our hopes are also springing toward the time when we will see each other face to face. We are a resilient group, are we not! Stay warm! As always, please be sure to get in touch with one of us if we can help you in any way! Our prayer is: Lift our worries from our minds and spirits, faithful God. Help us perceive your presence and activity in and all around us. Accept our gratitude for being with us through it all. Amen.

Jim (517.627.7968), Sandy (517.420.2121) or Charlene (517.281.5019)

BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Since our packing date in February was cancelled due to the weather, we have been asked to pack bags for Blessings in a Backpack on Wednesday, April 14, 2021. We will pack at 3:00 p.m. in room 310 at Sawdon School. As of the writing of this article, we are limited to 10 people packing. Packers will walk around the table due to social distancing requirements. Hopefully, the third time is a charm and we will be able to help the children of Grand Ledge.

Please let Fay Schroeder know if you can participate in packing on April 14, 2021 at either (517) 627-2727 or fschroeder4200@yahoo.com.



Due to the Coronavirus our *Free Little Library* will be temporarily closed until it is safe to reopen it.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Sara Gooley – 2nd
 John Campe – 2nd
 Beth Pung – 2nd
 Sue Mills – 6th
 Matilda Oatman – 10th
 Jim Hart – 11th
 Sandy Horn – 13th
 Katy Ramos – 13th
 Maxwell Bouck – 14th
 Elliott Bouck – 14th



Oscar Bouck – 14th
 Gary Cypher – 15th
 Hayden Nelson-Barnett – 15th
 Russ Marshall – 17th
 Josie Tanasse – 21st
 Lon Wilkinson – 23rd
 Emily Mai – 25th
 Allie Ramos – 26th
 Jack Kent – 30th
 Darlene Banks – 31st

If you would like your birthday included in the newsletter, please contact the office administrator at 627-2336 or office@grandledgeucc.org

Like the First Hint of Green

By Jennifer McGlothin

As the first hint of green begins to peek through the barren ground
 As that little sprig grows into a healthy stem
 As that stem grows into a stalk and forms a bud
 As that bud slowly opens with each new day
 To form a yellow daffodil
 Let us be, like that first hint of green, renewed by the warm of the sun's rays
 And ready to emerge with a new energy, ready to face the day.

Sunday Schedule for March 2021

Date	March 7th 3rd Sunday in Lent Violet	March 14th 4th Sunday in Lent Violet	March 21st 5th Sunday in Lent Violet	March 28th 6th Sunday in Lent Palm Sunday Violet
Text	Exodus 20:1-17 John 2:13-22	Numbers 21:4-9 John 3:14-21	Jeremiah 31:31-34 John 12:20-33	Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29 Mark 11:1-11
Head Usher	Tina Lamer	Jane Gilson	Karen Ramthun	Bruce Ramthun

Sunday Schedule for April 2021

Date	April 4th Easter White	April 11 2nd Sunday of Easter White	April 18 3rd Sunday of Easter White	April 25 4th Sunday of Easter White
Text	Acts 10:34-43 John 20:1-18	Acts 4:32-35 John 20:19-31	Acts 3:12-19 Luke 24:36b-48	Acts 4:5-12 John 10:11-18
Head Usher	Chris Cypher	Karen Ramthun	Bruce Ramthun	Kathy Burt

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Just as individual prayer time is very important to each of us, so is **prayer as a faith community**. We invite you to call the **church office at 627-2336** to notify the pastor of any prayer concerns you would like to share. If no one is available to speak with you, please leave a voicemail.

Health concerns: Pray for family and friends with health concerns and especially those who have contracted the Coronavirus.

Those who are struggling be it: financially, mentally, spiritually, individually, or collectively.

Those in a time of transition or turmoil.

Those who serve: soldiers, teachers, police officers, firefighters, counselors, public servants, our congregational leaders, politicians, and many more.

Prayer request: Please pray for those affected by the Coronavirus as well as all those on our prayer list: Pam and Jim P. , Ben B., Corey, Kaleb, Beth P., Doris B., Lili B., Kathy H., Cindy G., Carole S., Barbara N., Geri L., Robert E., Larry and Carol S., Jim H., Karen W., Anna C., Sandy S., Marty S, Maryann, Patricia R., Nicole F., Gary H., and Sarah B.

In being consistent with the HIPAA Law and people's privacy, we will only list individuals with their explicit permission and not use last names. During worship, please do not use personal identifiable information for others when asking for prayers.



COVID-19 INFORMATION

Please follow these links for accurate and up to date information regarding the Coronavirus:

<https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

The following link is for individuals experiencing mental and emotional health challenges during this time:

https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_99557---,00.html

INCOME & EXPENSE BALANCE SHEET

	Actual January 2021	Actual Year-to-Date	Budget Year-to-Date	Annual Budget
INCOME	\$ 8,305.30	\$ 8,305.30	\$ 11,309.50	\$135,714.00
EXPENSES	9,620.34	9,620.04	12,056.75	144,681.00
BALANCE	(\$ 1,314.74)	(\$ 1,314.74)	(\$ 747.25)	(\$ 8,967.00)

This year at the annual meeting, the congregation passed a negative annual budget. We successfully ended with a positive balance in the year 2020. Even though we are beginning the year with a negative balance for the month, this congregation can turn our finances to the positive by your continued pledges and donations.



EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

December 22, 2020

Call to Order

Moderator Rich Brown called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

This meeting was conducted electronically due to the Covid-19 virus distancing recommendations. Most members logged on to the Zoom website and some were connected by telephone.

Board Members present: Rich Brown, Anita Calcagno, Lynn Hart, Chris Clark, Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Charlene Avery, Pastor Laura, Kim Dible Glaser, Fay Schroeder, and Bil Turner.

Spiritual Reflection

Pastor Laura offered a prayer about Christmas week, and asked that we be helped to find peace, joy and harmony in the midst of all the stimulation.

Open Forum

No one was present for this item.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was accepted.

Action and Discussion Items

Pastor's Report

Pastor Laura reported that this month she has spent time on planning and leading the Advent and Christmas services, on Pastoral care, on the GLEAP drive-by event and on training with the new Office Assistant. She added her words of thanks to the Personnel Committee for their hard work and excellent choice on the new OA, Angela Spialek. She is also thankful for the work of all the Church Teams. She will be on vacation the week after Christmas. Sunday services will partly come from the National UCC and Michigan Conference office.

Monthly Financial Update

Fay reported that at the end of November we are \$6.4k in the black for the year, however there are some large expenses yet to be paid. Lynn reported that receipts for December are about \$10k with one Sunday remaining.

Employee Compensation

After discussion it was moved by Bil, seconded by Anita to give gift cards to Chad and Troy, \$500 and \$100, respectively. Motion passed. Cost of living raises were discussed for Pastor Laura, Brandon and Chuck. Moved by Lynn, seconded by Charlene to grant raises for those three in the amount of 3%. Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES (continued)

Pastor Laura's laptop computer

The laptop computer used by Pastor Laura has gradually developed multiple problems. The best solution is to buy a new one. Moved by Karen, seconded by Charlene to authorize Pastor Laura to spend up to \$1000 on a new laptop. Lynn reported that it is very likely that Memorial Funds may be available to underwrite this expense.

2021 Budget

The proposed 2021 budget was previously sent to all Board members electronically. Lynn reported that the pledges received to date now total \$122K+ with one or two pledges outstanding. After discussion, it was moved by Bil, seconded by Lynn to increase Chuck's compensation to \$7,000. This is based on the assumption of continued remote worship services. Motion passed.

It was also agreed to add back \$420 to the Pledged Missions line item. Changes were approved earlier in this meeting that will affect some employee compensation line items. Moved by Bil, seconded by Fay to approve the Proposed 2021 Budget as previously sent and as amended this evening. Motion passed.

Annual Meeting

There was a general discussion about the best way to conduct this meeting. It seems that a Zoom meeting is the best choice. It will be necessary to have 20 members in attendance in order to conduct business. We should all make every effort to attend, to have all members in our household attend and to encourage other members to attend. It is necessary to have the Annual Meeting announced on the two Sundays preceding the Annual Meeting Sunday, which is to be held at 12:30 on January 24, 2021.

Kim announced that Leah Horn and Karen Holcomb-Merrill have agreed to be Moderator and Vice-Moderator respectively.

New Business

No new business was presented.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM

The next Executive Board Meeting will be Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:30 PM. (Very likely a Zoom meeting)

Respectfully submitted,
Bil Turner, Church Clerk





MARCH 2021



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3 6-8pm Lenten Devotional with Trinity Episcopal 6pm AA 8pm AA	4	5 Office Closed	6 10am AA Women
7 3rd Sun in Lent 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	8	9	10 6-8pm Lenten Devotional with Trinity Episcopal 6pm AA 8pm AA	11	12 Office Closed	13 10am AA Women
14 4th Sun in Lent 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	15	16	17 6-8pm Lenten Devotional with Trinity Episcopal 6pm AA 8pm AA Pastor Laura Vacation Begins	18	19 Office Closed	20 10am AA Women
21 5th Sun in Lent 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship	22	23 6:30pm Exec Board Zoom Mtg	24 6-8pm Lenten Devotional with Trinity Episcopal 6pm AA 8pm AA	25	26 Office Closed	27 10am AA Women
28 6th Sun in Lent 10:30am Facebk Worship Service 12:00pm Zoom Café Fellowship Pastor Laura Vacation Ends	29	30	31 6pm AA 8pm AA			



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*Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God
by building an inclusive community
where uplifting worship and relevant messages deepen spirituality
and inspire acts of justice, service, and compassion.*

Mission Statement for First Congregational UCC

STAFF	EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS & BOARD CHAIRS
Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage Angela Spialek, Office Administrator Brandon Frost, Choir Director Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director Judy Nielsen, Organist Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist Sue Sackett, Custodian Nicole Finney, Nursery Care Provider Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus	Leah Horn, Moderator Karen Holcomb-Merrill, Vice Moderator Bil Turner, Clerk Fay Schroeder, Treasurer Lynn Hart, Financial Secretary Charlene Avery, Member-at-Large Kim Dible, Member-at-Large Lisa Reed, Member-at-Large Thea Oatman, Christian Education Chris Cypher & Kim Dible, Congregational Life Chris Clark, Christian Outreach