

# On the Journey ... at St. John's

March  
2016

St. John's United Church of Christ  
538 E. Thomas St.  
Coopersburg, PA 18036  
610-282-3310

Volume 15 Issue 2

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## Reflections From Pastor Em

*As we prepare for the eight days of Holy Week—Palm Sunday through Easter—let us do so keeping in mind that we are “re-enactors,” that we are entering into the story of God-so-loving-the-world through the person and ministry of Jesus. As we move through these days we connect with*

- *our fickle nature and willingness to ignore and betray our friends*
- *our willingness to cave in to oppressive systems;*
- *awareness of the subtle authority of truth and how truth, by itself, does not always lead to change;*
- *preparation for the dark night of the soul;*
- *profound disappointment after hope has been diminished;*
- *the quiet presence of God, constant and indescribable companion.*

*And we finally affirm that nothing—“neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height, nor depth nor anything else in all creation—will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:38-39).*

Here at St. John's as we celebrate Holy Week:

**Palm Sunday** begins with a procession and the welcoming of new members.

**On Maundy Thursday, at 7 p.m.** we will hear Judas's anguished lament sung by a local artist. We will share the Last Supper and celebrate Tenebrae, the extinguishing of lights, entering into mournful remembrance.

**Friday and Saturday** we are encouraged to keep as quiet as possible.

**Easter** will find us gathered to rejoice with the reassurance that God did not abandon Jesus and will not abandon us.

So may we journey in faith,  
Pastor Em

*P.S. If you would like to order Easter flowers, please contact the church office by Thursday, March 3.*

**COME AND WORSHIP! 10:30 a.m.**

**March 6 - Fourth Sunday in Lent – UCC Women’s Week March 6-12**

Theme: *Embracing Love!*

Text: Loving Father and Two Sons Luke 15:1-3,11b-32

Come prepared to celebrate the women who have shaped your faith.

Hospitality in Fellowship Hall following worship.

**March 13 – Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Theme: *Something New*

Text: Mary anoints the feet of Jesus John 12:1-8

Pulpit Guest to be announced

Rev. John Binde, guest musician

Come prepared to welcome guest leaders

**March 20 – Palm Sunday**

Theme: *Into Jerusalem*

Text: The crowd greets Jesus in Jerusalem Luke 19:28-40

Welcoming of new members

Come prepared to wave a palm and ponder where the procession leads us.

**March 24 – Maundy Thursday 7:00 P.M.**

Come prepared to enter into the last days of Jesus’ life.

Celebration of the Last Supper

Tenebrae or Extinguishing of Lights

Guest soloist, Chris Egging, singing from *Jesus Christ Superstar*

**March 25 and 26 – Good Friday and Holy Saturday**

For private devotions at home, read:

Through the Red Sea Exodus 14:10-15:21

A new heart Ezekiel 36:24-28

Plea for God’s help Psalms 42-43

Paul’s good news for us Romans 6:3-11

**March 27 - Easter**

Theme: *Resurrection Joy*

Text: The risen Christ appears to Mary Magdalene John 20:1-18

Come prepared to celebrate new life!

**NEW MEMBERS TO BE RECEIVED MARCH 20**

If you are seeking St. John’s as your church home, please speak with Pastor Em about joining the membership of our congregation.

## **TWO OPPORTUNITIES FOR LENTEN EXPLORATIONS**

During this Interim Time, we are invited to join others in observing Lent. Our friends at Faith UCC invite us to a Wednesday evening study of “Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal,” based on the reflections of Pastor April Yamaski.

Our Lutheran and Moravian neighbors welcome us to move from church to church each Wednesday evening for a study of “Spiritual Openings.”

Details of each study are outlined below. Both begin with a simple meal and time of fellowship.

### **FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST “SACRED PAUSES”**

March 9 Confession and Forgiveness

March 16 Simplicity

March 23 Fun!

6:00 p.m. Covered dish dinner

6:45 p.m. Program

7:30 p.m. Depart in peace

### **ROTATING COMMUNITY SERVICE – “OPEN MY LIFE, LORD”**

March 9 Open My Heart, Lord – St. Paul’s (Blue) Lutheran Church

March 16 Open My Life, Lord – Friedens Lutheran Church

6:00 p.m. Light supper provided by host church

7:00 p.m. Worship

### **2016 Phoebe Institute on Aging Benefit**

March 10, 6:00 pm at SteelStacks, *101 Founders Way, Bethlehem*

We are invited to the 2016 Phoebe Institute on Aging Benefit at SteelStacks!

The evening begins at 6:00 pm and includes a performance by **Craig Thatcher and Nyke Van Wyk** with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, a seated dinner, and dessert. **Individual tickets are \$150.** This event presents the Grant Harrity Award for Exemplary Service to the Aging, named after one of our former pastors! This year the award will be presented to the Miller Family.

For more info, contact 610-794-5163

### **UPDATE: The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Worship Service**

March 13 at 4:00 pm at Dubbs Memorial Community Center,  
*457 Allen Street, Allentown*

Lehigh Conference of Churches invites us to worship led by Rev. James Forbes: “Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of the Lord” (cf. 1 Peter 2:9) Known as the preacher’s preacher, Rev. James Forbes is a spiritual leader with charismatic style and radically progressive opinions. Rev. Forbes once said, “If I don’t preach, I won’t be well.”

## FROM OUR SEARCH AND CALL COMMITTEE

After eleven months of training, the Search and Call Committee has received eight interested pastor profiles. The committee will be interviewing two of the candidates over the next three weeks. Say a prayer that the hand of God will send us the right pastor and lead St. John's for the years to come.

Grace and Peace,

John Ruby

*Search and Call Chair*

Susan Bortz, Sue Reiss, Glenn Kranzley, Darleen Musgnung, Tom Bamberger, Alice Eckardt, Jane Ticknor, Jerry Trexler and Lenore Bamberger

*Search and Call Committee Members*

## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Here is the ad for our new Minister of Transformation:

*St. John's UCC is looking for a fulltime pastor to succeed a pastor who retired after 27 years. **We are a church of doers** with a strong record of community leadership and accomplishment in community outreach. **We are proud of our music leaders** and make innovative music a part of our worship. **We are willing to try new things** and we want our next pastor to be knowledgeable in and comfortable with Transformational ministry. **We want the future of our church to be a bright one** of knowing and sharing the love of God through worship, fellowship and outreach. Our church is in Coopersburg, a borough of 2,397 that is the town center of a growing suburban area in the Lehigh Valley, near the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton PA. We have excellent public schools and eight colleges and universities are near-by, as are historical, cultural and entertainment attractions. Philadelphia, New York and Washington, D.C. all are within easy reach of Coopersburg.*

You can find this by going to [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) Then browse: "Ministry Opportunities" and search for "Penn Northeast Conference" Pastors who are interested apply by contacting Penn Northeast Conference, [www.pnec.org](http://www.pnec.org).

## MAUNDY THURSDAY GUEST SOLOIST

Actor, director and vocal musician **Chris Egging will be our guest soloist on Maundy Thursday, March 24 at 7 p.m.** singing the anguished lament of Judas from "Jesus Christ, Superstar!"

Chris acted in the ensemble for the PA Playhouse's production of "The Music Man." He directed "The Mousetrap" at Northampton Community College this past November. He is currently in rehearsal for a production of "Proof" to open April 15 with Global ImpACTORS Group. He received his MFA in Acting from the University of Houston, has lived, acted and performed in Washington DC and Chicago as well.

Many thanks to June Thomas for arranging for us to hear this fine soloist!

## **FROM OUR CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

Attendance at our Congregational Meetings is remaining consistent and above what it had been in the past. This is hopeful and encouraging news. It says there is a strong, core group of members, dedicated to the critical decision making process that is defining our future. Let's celebrate that! Many congregations lose members during times of transition. May we continue to bless each other as we reach out to the community around us.

The **Annual Report for 2015** is complete. You are invited to read each report and take a few moments to reflect on the many ministries that are on-going and rejoice at how many people have been served during this past year. It's quite amazing for this small, big-hearted church. Amen! Thank you to all who contributed to this important record of our activities in 2015.

The (long awaited) **Church Directory** is updated. This is an ever-changing document. Please review your information and send Carol an email ([sjcoopoffice@gmail.com](mailto:sjcoopoffice@gmail.com)) or call the church office ([610-282-3310](tel:610-282-3310)) if there are any corrections. We are also asking for your birthday, anniversary date, and an emergency contact name and information. Again, you may email or call Carol. This information is for office and Pastor use only and will not appear in the directory. Thank you for your assistance in helping us keep the information up-to-date.

Pastor Em presented the "2020 Vision" Report (copies available) during the Congregational Meeting. It was agreed during the September 20, 2015 Special Congregational Meeting that a progress report would be presented to the congregation at six month intervals. Here it is--the first reporting. Can you believe that almost six months have passed since our decision to move in the direction of transformational ministry?

As you "take in" the steps that have been completed and the ones that are yet to come, bring your hopes, concerns, questions out into the air with the spring breezes that promise bright new beginnings, and sometimes surprises. What's lying just beneath the surface that's waiting to be born? Place those hopes, desires, concerns and questions on the bulletin board outside the Sanctuary, and continue the rich conversation about our joined journey of faith.

Marlene Ruby, Church Council President

## **COB CORNER**

Want to be a part of the Community Outreach Benefit Team?

Contact: Debbie Loew at [debilo0405@yahoo.com](mailto:debilo0405@yahoo.com) or [610-349-1340](tel:610-349-1340) for more information.

Next meeting is Monday, March 4, 2016 at 7:00 PM at St. John's UCC.  
Come Join Us!

## **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING — March Mission of the Month**

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves us in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, we are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put us in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. We meet immediate needs and address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place. We hope to raise \$200 or more with this offering. Thank you for your generous contribution.

### **BETTY LOU'S PANTRY**

Betty Lou's Pantry is asking for a special donation to purchase a ham and a pie for a family for Easter. The suggested donation for a family is \$25; and any contribution you care to make would be welcome. The hams and pies will be given out on the two scheduled Saturdays in March.

If you are interested you may donate cash or write a check, putting "Betty Lou's Easter Donation" in the memo. There will be "Special Offering" envelopes available in the pews for this purpose. Simply indicate "Betty Lou's Easter" on the envelope and place the envelope in the offering plate. Someone from St. John's will deliver all your contributions to Betty Lou's Pantry.

If you will not be in church, you may write a check directly to Betty Lou's Pantry, P.O. Box 460, Coopersburg, PA 18036.

Thank you for continuing to support our local food pantry, which is reaching out to meet an ever growing need in our community.

### **“WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?”**

Lehigh Conference of Churches invites us to this panel discussion March 15 at 2:30 pm at Luther Crest, 800 Hausman Road, Allentown. Those on the panel will be Rev. Dr. Manfred Bahmann, Dr. William Jennings, and Rev. Dianne Kareha.

**SAVE THE DATE Saturday, April 9**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ**

**9 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

**at Northampton Community Center, Northampton**

## OPPORTUNITY FOR SENIORS –THURSDAYS IN MARCH-APRIL

Monica and Terri would like you to join them for an interactive, fun-filled discussion on aging well. Each participant will receive the “10 Keys” to Healthy Aging Resource Guide which contains the most up-to-date prevention guidelines available. The Lehigh County APPRISE coordinator will be addressing Medicare Preventive Health Benefits and will be able to answer questions about Medicare. Discussion takes place on Thursdays, March 10 through April 7, 10:30-11:30 a.m., right here at the Center. Classes are free. To register, please sign up with Nan or Sarah. For more info, contact Monica at 610-782-3618.

## LOOKING AHEAD

March	7	Girl Scouts 7:00 p.m.
	8	Search and Call Committee 7:00 p.m.
	14	Cob Team 7:00 p.m.
	15	Search and Call Committee 7:00 p.m.
	16	Search and Call Interview 6:00 p.m.
	21	Girl Scouts 7:00 p.m.
	22	Search and Call Committee 7:00 p.m.
	24	Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 p.m.
	29	Search and Call Committee 7:00 p.m.



**2016**  
**ROBERT K. CAMPBELL LECTURE  
ON CHRISTIAN UNITY**


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DUBBS MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTER  
457 ALLEN STREET, ALLENTOWN

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THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 4:00 P.M.

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 **Featuring Mary Doak, PhD**  
Associate Professor of Theology and Religious  
Studies at the University of San Diego

REGISTRATION REQUIRED | COST \$25

For more information and registration visit [www.lehighchurches.org](http://www.lehighchurches.org)

HOSTED BY THE LEHIGH CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

## CONGRATULATIONS

Jason and Tina Bortz

on the birth of their daughter

August Lynn

on February 8

**St. John's United Church of Christ  
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**[www.stjohnsuccoop.org](http://www.stjohnsuccoop.org)**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **OUR MISSION:**

**To know and share the love of God through worship,  
fellowship and outreach to the community.**



**MAUNDY THURSDAY  
MARCH 24, 7:00 P.M.**

**EASTER SUNDAY  
March 27, 10:30 a.m.**