#### <u>PURPOSE</u> <u>STATEMENT</u>

"We are disciples of Jesus Christ committed to making a difference in the community and in the world through service and invitational outreach."

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# The Messenger

First United Methodist Church, Chatham

#### From the Pastor



Most of us are familiar with at least some of the Christian spiritual seasons; Advent (sure, coming of Santa Claus) and Lent (coming of the Easter bunny), but what comes along between? Here is a brief, and more serious, chronology.

Advent—four weeks prior to Christmas—time of preparation.



**Christmas**—season after Advent. Focus on the birth of Christ.



**Ordinary Time**—between Christmas and Lenten seasons.



#### April 2024—Volume 28—Issue 4

**Lent**—six weeks of preparing to celebrate Easter.



Easter—50 days of celebrating the resurrection and preparing for the Holy Spirit's descent.



Additional Ordinary Time—focus on Jesus' life and teaching.



These seasons of the spirit are the basic worship and teaching times of our faith, ministry and mission. They are guides for us as we move through each calendar year. Hopefully, our faith increases more and more as time goes by.

May these seasons be within your mind and heart!

Pastors Thom and Sonny



# Global Ministries: Help for the Gaza Strip Population

"The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries is doing all it can to support people in the Gaza Strip who are suffering because of the conflict between Hamas and Israel. Palestinians are unable to move across checkpoints, buy or sell food. They face the constant threat of harassment. "In the face of so much loss — the **28,000 men, women and children lost in Gaza, Muslim, Christian and Jewish lives**—our hearts are breaking,"

said Roland Fernandes, the top executive of Global Ministries and UMCOR." But it is believed that God is with those who suffer, and we are a small part of a much larger effort to work for peace in the region.

"As Israel's bombardment and ground invasion against the Gaza Strip approaches its sixth month, Palestinians experience the loss of their jobs, and they face a constant threat of harm and harassment, not because they are anywhere near Gaza, but because they are the Palestinians within reach. Amid the scenes of overwhelming death and destruction, by God's grace, small miracles happen each day. Amir, a Palestinian youth, finds it nearly impossible to cross the Palestinian/Israeli line to get to his school in a safe way. Yet, his school, community, and United Methodists giving through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) created a way for him to continue his education. *Hope Secondary School* opened a remote learning station in his neighborhood and provided him with an electronic tablet and a place where wi-fi still works. In this way, Amir has been able to rely on the safety of his own community and continue his education – a small but important miracle for him and other students.

"NO NEWS IS NOT GOOD NEWS: Gaza is bound by the Mediterranean Sea its entire west coast, and an Israeli fence more than 37 miles long on its east side. All crossings into Israel but one, at Rafah (closed much of the time) in Cairo, Egypt, have been closed by Israel. Rafah is where hundreds of trucks wait in line for a chance to cross the border into Gaza to provide emergency aid. Food, water and medical supplies go unused until something happens to stop the bombardment and allow drivers to complete their mandate to deliver aid. Just as nothing gets into Gaza, nothing and almost no one can get out. Even news is sparse because of communication blackouts, lack of electricity and fuel, and because more than **82** journalists reporting from inside Gaza have been killed.

"The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East (UNRWA) has had its shelters in Gaza bombed and reports **152 of its workers have been killed** in the current crisis, more than in any other crisis in the world. On January 26, in a case for genocide brought against Israel by the South African government, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague ordered Israel to stop its military actions that have caused so much death and destruction, allow complete, unhindered humanitarian access, prevent and punish 'direct and public incitement to commit genocide,' and preserve evidence of atrocities.

"The world is struggling with what to do to stop the genocide. "There is a growing call around the world for an immediate cease-fire as a necessary first step. The only time since Oct. 7 that any hostages have been released was during the humanitarian pause in November, which saved lives. Palestinian prisoners were released, **but since Oct. 7**, **more than 6,300 Palestinians have been detained, often without charge**. The message to us from families of hostages was: 'release all for all' – all hostages for all Palestinian prisoners."

"UMCOR, like other humanitarian agencies, finds it difficult to get relief into Gaza. A long-time Global Ministries' partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) of the Near East Council of Churches, has staff in Gaza that have been working with what they have, but they, like 90% of all Palestinians in Gaza, have been displaced. An emergency grant to provide 14,000 people with emergency food rations made it to the DSPR in Gaza early in the conflict.

"A Methodist Liaison Office has a way to help Methodists hear directly from Palestinians in the Holy Land through a weekly online gathering every Wed. at 1 p.m. ET. Send an email request to <u>office@MLOJerusalem.org</u> and the office manager will send you the link to join the hour-long meeting."

New England Conference UMC, UM Catalyst Weekly Newsletter, March 2024



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO Diane Kennedy—4.04 Ann Barlow—4.04 Jeanne Kuzirian—4.09 Roz Coleman—4.11 Nancy Bischoff—4.11 Elaine Trexler—4.13

#### APRIL 2024 VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

PLEASE NOTE A CHANGE: GREETERS ARE NOW ALSO USHERS—THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE TO FILL ALL THE SLOTS. THE OFFICE OR MIKE FIRMIN WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS.

- Apr 07 Greeter and Usher—Jan Lovewell Elevator Operator—Bruce Wynn Liturgist—Jay Thompson Coffee Hour Hosts—Mike Firmin and Kim Smith
- Apr 14 Greeter and Usher—Bonnie Freitas Elevator Operator—Myron Kellberg Liturgist—Alan Kuzirian POT LUCK LUNCHEON
- Apr 21 Greeter and Usher—Ruth Norman Elevator Operator—Jay Thompson Liturgist—Karen Goggins Coffee Hour Hosts—Suzanna Nickerson and Tom Sharkey
- Apr 28 Greeter and Usher—Jay Thompson Elevator Operator—Mike Firmin Liturgist—Keith Bradley Coffee Hour Hosts—Bonnie Freitas and Ruth Norman

If you have a conflict, please feel free to change with someone else and let the office know.

#### SERVING IN THE MILITARY

The following members of the military are associated with our church:

<sup>°</sup> Lt. Forrest A. Bogue, U.S. Navy, San Diego, CA, son of Amy Bogue & Forrest Bogue, and grandson of Olive Bogue.

<sup>°</sup> Petty Officer 3rd Class, USN, Noah Firmin, son of Mike and Anita Firmin, who is stationed in Yokosuka, Japan.

<sup>°</sup> Pvt. Jacob Stewart, grandson of Elaine & Roger Trexler, stationed at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia.

# Psalm 31:9-10, 14-16

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away....

But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

# <u>Job 2:10</u>

Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?

## Good and Bad

What if love does not hand out stuff, good or bad, but is simply present in all things?

Without judging, can I receive it?

What if nothing happens "at the hand of God," but everything is in the hand of God?

Without judging, can I receive it all?

What if things, like rain, are both good and bad, and neither, but simply are?

Without judging, can I receive them?

What if good and bad are so wrapped up in pleasant and unpleasant that we can't tell very well?

Without judging, can I receive everything?

What if my life is neither good nor bad but wondrously full of pain and pleasure, and the presence of God?

Without judging, can I receive it? I open my hands.

~Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light;* Conference prayer submitted by Claire Piddock, CLM, Fairfield Center UMC, Maine

#### Godly Play by Pastor Sonny

"Earth School" Excerpts from *Earth Gospel* by S.H. Poore

"Remind yourself every morning or evening to be a student. Everything that happens in your day is helping you to learn. Look at your day as a class. Were your classes in anger, suffering, jealousy, illness, compassion, lust? As we all know, the list can be endless.

"The universe is your tutor, your classroom is your life. Everything that happens in your life is part of your own curriculum. Yes! You can ignore the classes—take them over, learn from them, and pass them on. Sooner or later, you will graduate.

"Your choices are yours alone. By becoming aware of your emotions, you wake up emotions and become a student of Earth School, in which there are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of experiencing failures, as much as a part of the process of successes.

"Lessons are repeated until they are learned. Your life is a canvas and your choices are the painters. In Earth School, you always get what you want. Your subconscious rightfully determines what energies are experienced and how they are applied.

"There are no victims in Earth School, only students. No right or wrong. But there are consequences. Remember—everything you need to know, you will find within yourself.

"Thoughts are forms/things and words are forms. A thought is energy/light that has been shaped by consciousness. Energy continually flows in and through you. You give that energy form with your thoughts, your feelings, how you behave, your actions, and the way you live your life.

"A person creates their own reality with their intentions. With spiritual faith, our heart and mind open, you are guided in your search for personal truth. Faith is the spirituality of life. This is what makes your spiritual path possible—an open heart and mind.

"Now we can discover more about today and what it means to humanity. We are individual expressions of infinite beings/sources/infinite consciousness. We are here to experience life.

"Each of us is a unique being, and our purpose on earth is to experience life from our own perspectives. We are the eyes and ears, protectors of the earth. (Read Genesis 1)"

"Only about 10% of the earth's population creates the bulk of our greenhouse gasses. That's the folks earning over \$38,000 a year.

"As Christians we are encouraged to get our value from God's love, not what we own or wear. But the pressure to consume in our society is great. Everything from million-dollar advertising campaigns to the dopamine hit that makes us feel so good when we buy something, predisposes us to spend on new things.

"To truly fight climate change, we have to reduce our use of energy...energy that it took to create and ship the product. Good questions to ask before making a purchase:

1. Do I really need this item or is it an impulse buy? Would Christ be honored by my spending?

2. Is it in my budget? Are frivolous purchases keeping me from tithing?

3. Can I find it used or free and find it locally [from Thrift stores, re-sale shops]?

4. [When buying,] recycle or reuse shipping boxes.

5. [Are you buying from] reliable climate fighting organizations?"

Kim Hornung-Marcy graduated from Yale Divinity School in 1980 and served in campus Ministry at the University of Rochester, then UMC parishes in Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont. She retired in 2020 to focus on fighting climate change.



POT LUCK LUNCHEONS: TO THOSE WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN TO BRING SOMETHING FOR POT LUCK—IT IS MORE THAN OKAY TO COME. "WE SPECIALIZE IN LOAVES AND FISHES."

#### FAMILY FOOD PANTRY AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CHATHAM

Our mission at First United Methodist Church, Chatham, is to provide comprehensive food assistance to those in need of support and to encourage long-term support if needed.

NO OUTDATED FOOD SHOULD BE DONATED. Monetary contributions are also welcome. You may contribute by sending a check to the church office (put FUMC Food Pantry on the memo line), mailing it to 16 Cross Street, Chatham, MA 02633, or putting it in the Sunday offering. Hours of Pantry Operation, which is located in our Thrift Shop, are: Wednesday thru Saturday, 11am—2pm. For more information, please contact Pastor Sonny—508.241.4982.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE: The Impossible

*"We now have to do the seemingly impossible."* Greta Thunberg, *The Climate Book* 

For the next several months, this column will focus on the following: *Lessons from the Pandemic [to apply to climate change], Practical Utopias, People Power, Changing the Media Narrative, Resisting the New Denialism,* and *A Genuine Emergency Response.* 

# *Lessons from the Pandemic* by David Wallace-Wells. "...we have not defeated nature or escaped it but live within it..."

"In early December 2019, just weeks after 2 million climate strikers gathered around the world to protest the business-as-usual beginning of the COP25 conference in Madrid, the first human case of SARS-CoV-2 was registered in Wuhan. In January, as the World Economic Forum in Davos tried to rebrand itself as a 'climate conference', the first deaths were recorded.

"In February, as the world outside China began to panic about the 'novel coronavirus' and the way it might threaten and upend the lives of many millions, 2,718 people died globally of the disease. That same month, approximately 800,000 died globally from the effects of air pollution produced by the burning of fossil fuel. By early 2022, after two years of disease, the *Economist* estimated that more than 20 million had died globally, making Covid-19 one of the seven deadliest plagues in human history.

Because of the pandemic, the world was distracted when unbelievable disasters took place) i.e. "...twice as much land burned in California than ever before; zombie fires in Siberia melted permafrost which buckled a power plant which deposited 17,000 tons of oil into a local river; a million people were displaced by floods in South Sudan; hundreds were killed by flooding in Western Europe; wildfire and mudslides from flooding blockaded Vancouver; and 90 mph winds powered an urban firestorm in suburban Denver, flames surging from house to house through subdivisions."

"If we could discern the lessons of the pandemic for the future of climate action, what would we see? Above all, that the pandemic extended an invitation for once unthinkable ambitious action, which the world as a whole then disastrously failed to take. An unprecedented pandemic response [could also have] been directed towards the challenge of warming, animated by a truly global spirit and motivated to alleviate the inequitable burdens of those most affected. When climate scientists talked about a need for a World War II-scale mobilization to avoid catastrophic warming, the response initiated by Covid-19 by virtually all world leaders was what they had in mind. These leaders enacted a social and economic transformation like this in just a few months. "The pandemic illustrated that sudden change was no longer unrealistic, it had actually happened...demonstrating at least the possibility that a whole-society effort could be mobilized in response to an imminent threat." But there was government reluctance world-wide to apply this mobilization to decarbonization.

Think of what could be, if we did that! A team of researchers including Joeri Rogelj of Imperial College, London, determined that if they had just onetenth of Covid-19 stimulus spending for decarbonization for each of 5 succeeding years, **[it]** "would be sufficient to deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement to stop global warming at a level well below 2°C the total cost of a green transition would be <u>half</u> of what was spent on stimulus in 2020..."

In the United States, there were two colleagues in Congress who spoke about decarbonization, and even though that rhetoric turned out to be empty, "...it suggest[ed] the possibility that the unprecedented collective action and public intervention made necessary by the pandemic may not mark a one-time shift—and indeed that some of that new willingness may come climate's way soon. "Anything we can do, we can afford,' John Maynard Keynes declared in the midst of World War II. The pandemic [was a reminder] of that principle; with climate change, the world might hope to actually enact it."

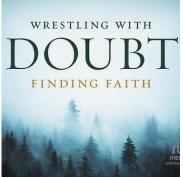
The pandemic was humbling, teaching us that we respond when we "...perceive an imminent and immanent threat," but the pandemic also had negative lessons. "The first is, the longer we wait, the more we lose...we learned in the first months of the pandemic, [that] delays of days can be catastrophic, and actions that may prove sufficient in week one are hopelessly inadequate by week three."

We've ignored climate change warnings for a long, long time and let emissions stockpile into the atmosphere. Another "lesson we've learned is that success in one country is not enough...today, climate disparities represent an immoral horror. The United States is responsible for about 20% of all global historical emissions whereas sub-Saharan Africa has produced about 1%"!!!!!!

We can definitely do better by caring more and taking courageous action. #

### THE READING ROOM

# ADAM HAMILTON



# "Does your faith make room for questions?

"Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know?

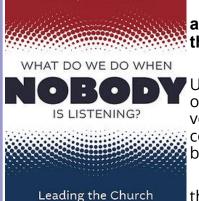
"Often we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God.

"In *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, author and pastor Adam Hamilton discusses some of our most significant sources of doubt and shows how a steady trust in God can emerge from them. You will delve into questions like: "Does God exist? How can I know?" "Is the Bible true?" "Why do prayers go unanswered?" Hamilton approaches these

sources of doubt with honesty and insight, drawing on the rich wisdom of the Bible, Christian tradition, and his experience walking with thousands of people on their spiritual journey.

"Whether you're a longtime Christian or someone brand new to faith, this book will lead you to a trust in God that is unafraid of hard questions. Wrestle with doubt and find faith—belief and trust, not certainty; mystery rather than simple answers."

by the Publisher



in a Polarized Society

Foreword by ADAM HAMILTON

#### "A trusted senior statesman (Robin Lovin) in Christian ethics and ministry addresses the crisis of political polarization threatening the existence of the church." Foreword by Adam Hamilton

"Polarization and political gridlock have been the norm in the United States for decades. As that reality seeps into every aspect of our society, churches find themselves not only affected, but often at the very center of the conflict. Rather than remaining places of inclusive community and generous dialogue, our sanctuaries have too often become ground zero of the culture wars.

"What can [we] do to restore the church's witness to the unity of all things in God—especially when it feels like members of the congregation would rather position the church's identity firmly on one side of the political spectrum or the other? And how can [we] maintain peace while

speaking the truth on important social issues--without either alienating parishioners who disagree or resorting to inane bothsiderism?

"Widely respected pastor and ethicist Robin Lovin offers sage counsel in this helpful book, arguing that, to resist the trend of polarization in our church, we must rediscover how the gospel teaches us to understand ourselves, our neighbors, and the purpose of politics.

"In part one, Lovin provides an overview of the situation in which we find ourselves, showing how polarization developed over recent decades and how, in both our society and our churches, we have adapted to division as the norm. In part two, he considers how Christians can shape a different response by learning to listen—to the Word of God, to the world, and to those who are not usually heard.

"With questions for discussion and reflection aligned with the content of each chapter, **What Do We Do When Nobody Is Listening?** provides an accessible roadmap for navigating out of the morass of polarization into a brighter future of church unity during election seasons and beyond."

by the Publisher

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# APRIL 2024 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices)	<b>3</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	4 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	5 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	6 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
7 9am Bible Study with Pastor Thom 10am Worship and Holy Communion	8	9 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices)	10 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	11 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open 5:30—Finance and Trustees	12 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	13 <b>10AM—3PM</b> <b>ART &amp; FAITH</b> <b>WORKSHOP w/</b> <b>PASTOR SONNY</b> <b>\$10 FOR LUNCH</b> 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
<ul> <li>14 9am—Bible</li> <li>Study with Pastor</li> <li>Thom</li> <li>10am—Worship</li> <li>POT LUCK</li> <li>LUNCHEON—If</li> <li>you've forgotten</li> <li>to bring some-</li> <li>thing, it's okay.</li> <li>Join us, as we</li> <li>specialize in</li> <li>loaves and</li> <li>fishes!</li> </ul>	15	16 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices) MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	17 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	18 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open 5-7 LGBTQ Adult Group	19 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	20 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open 12—3 Laura Fiore memorial service followed by refreshments in Fellowship Hall
21 9am Bible Study with Pastor Sonny 10am Worship	22	23 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall 10:30am—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices)	24 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	25 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise 9:30am— Meditation Group 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open	26 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open <b>4—Youniss</b> wedding rehearsal	27 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open 4—Youniss wedding
28 9am Bible Study with Pastor Thom 10am Worship	29	30 8:30—9:30am Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall. 10:30am—Noon Faith Study in Peace Room (by the offices)				



First United Methodist Church 16 Cross Street Chatham, MA 02633