

**PURPOSE
STATEMENT**

"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

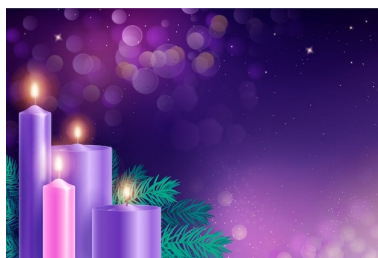
From the Pastor

April 2024—Volume 28—Issue 4

SEASONS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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.



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

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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 office@MLOJerusalem.org and the office manager will send you the link to join the hour-long meeting.”



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:

- Lt. Forrest A. Bogue, U.S. Navy, San Diego, CA, son of Amy Bogue & Forrest Bogue, and grandson of Olive Bogue.
- Petty Officer 3rd Class, USN, Noah Firmin, son of Mike and Anita Firmin, who is stationed in Yokosuka, Japan.
- 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.

Job 2:10

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

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 one-tenth 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 half 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 imminent 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. #

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)	3 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 10AM—3PM ART & FAITH WORKSHOP w/ PASTOR SONNY \$10 FOR LUNCH 11am—2pm Thrift Shop Open
14 9am—Bible Study with Pastor Thom 10am—Worship POT LUCK LUNCHEON—If you've forgotten to bring something, it's okay. Join us, as we specialize in loaves and fishes!	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 4—Youniss 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)				



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