



Peace United Church of Christ

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The Tidings

April 2021



From the Pastor's Study • April 2021

It is hard to see stories that we know well with new eyes. Each year as we approach the beloved stories of our holidays, I try to take on the challenge to listen for what I haven't heard, to see what I haven't seen, and to let the old, old story have new life. That always means being willing to stretch and grow. The other day I was reading the introduction to a book by Abraham Joshua Heschel, a profound thinker and theologian. There were a couple of phrases that jumped off the page at me as I read. Heschel's daughter (also a theologian) wrote in the introduction how she remembered her father often saying: "God begins where words end." She then recalled an idea and phrase that her father loved that shows up frequently in scripture: "the beginning of wisdom is awe of God."

Heschel is one of those theologians who speaks from a place of great depth. Like many of his generation's prophets, early in his career his life was shaped by the rise of Antisemitism and Nazism. As he was abroad trying to secure visas for his family to emigrate with him to the United States (where he had received a teaching position at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati), WWII broke out and the rest of his family became victims of Germany's murderous Holocaust. Out of that tragedy and loss, Heschel's writings have always touched me through his powerful vision of a God longing to be in relationship with humanity. He intones words of awe, words that try to step out of their own way to make space for God's presence to claim us anew. He nurtures a relationship with God that moves beyond the words of the familiar story into transformative awe.

We are entering a second Holy Week that is being shaped by the pandemic. We are all carrying a weariness and grief in our souls from all the changes that we have experienced in the last year. We are longing for the return to something that we remember as being so much better and easier and more fulfilling than this present reality... and many among us are becoming impatient. That swirl of emotions may be as powerful a platform as we could be given for us to hear anew the witness of Holy Week. The whole story of our faith is one of moving beyond our expectations and beyond our narrow visions into that place where we might be startled by awe.

Hear again that journey through fresh ears shaped by our current reality: Palm Sunday's proclamations ring out with a people who are longing for the restoration of Israel. They are hoping to feel in their souls once again God's claim of them as the chosen people. They want to feel remembered as they struggle and complain under a continued Roman occupation. They struggle to see anything positive coming from those who are in power, instead focusing only on a narrative of victimization and oppression. There is even the sentiment that they are willing to rise up in opposition if Jesus just says the word and leads them. That is a narrative that has been familiar throughout history, the story of armed conflict and revolution, the story of might-makes-right, or power over another defines the victor.

Can you hear our story overlaid on that? Consider politics, or religion, or responses to the pandemic, and we can hear lots of language and positions that echo the expectations of the crowds on Palm Sunday. Now stop and listen! The relationship to which God calls us always

defies those expectations and pushes us beyond this expected narrative. By Maundy Thursday, we are remembering a new commandment that is offered even in the midst of a story of betrayal – Jesus commands those who would follow him to serve one another and to love one another as Jesus has loved them. It is a command that is easy to skip over until you hear it in a conflicted world. Heschel came out of the despair of the Holocaust to be active in civil rights and anti-war activities with a depth of compassion that responded to an invitation to relationship with God instead of bitterness or resentment. How do we hear that call this year when so much would divide us? Are we willing to gather at Jesus' table and get out of our own way so that we might be able to love beyond the framework of our expectations or certainties?

Of course, our story continues and by Good Friday our story is one that struggles with grief and the remembering that in the moment of Jesus' crucifixion and death it seemed like injustice and violence had won. In that moment, their savior and the antidote to the oppression of the world, offered forgiveness and grace from the cross instead of any words of uprising or revolt. The story sounds outrageous if we place ourselves at the foot of the cross with our hope shattered. Perhaps some of the people gathered remember those teachings of Jesus that promised a new future, but my guess is that most of them were tired of people telling them to be patient. Why should they have hope when it looked like nothing had changed? I listen in this moment in time to those who are tired of all that this last year has meant and I hear those same echoes - hope is spoken of but still unrealized. Patience is in as short supply as toilet paper was a year ago. At that cross this year we all are carrying an abundance of grief... but are we listening for the awe? How many heard the Prince of Peace uttering those absurd words of forgiveness in the midst of his looking like he was giving in to the torture of a government that they opposed? Can we hear beyond the words?

Perhaps if we can hear the ways that our story is woven into Holy Week's confused expectations, if we can lean into the uncomfortable demands, and awkward commands to love beyond what seems possible, if we can stand firm and not change direction or give up hope in the power of forgiveness and commitment to compassion, then maybe we can open ourselves to be touched by the awe of Easter. We are moving again toward that proclamation that God's love wins. Always. This is the message that was startling in the first century and that should still startle. Easter is the climax to a story that should leave us still wondering how we could have missed all the clues... Of course, we are so familiar with that story that we can too easily fail to do anything but hear the words. Our familiarity can prevent us from being struck by the awe that is beckoning to us from all around us.

Holy Week and Easter will look different again this year – but they have always looked different to those who are willing to see with new eyes and to allow themselves to be caught unexpectedly by a moment of awe. This has been a year... and woven into it have been lots of signs of love, hope, and promise in amidst all the struggles. May God bless each of us with the courage to open our hearts and let God's love startle us in some unexpected way this season. Perhaps God does begin where words end...

PASTOR ERIC

Worship Schedule for April 2021

We are now regathering at church with limits of 25% of capacity (50 worshippers in the sanctuary, worship leaders are in addition to that number). **With our increased capacity, we are discontinuing the sign-up for services – we'll see how that works.**

Service times are at: 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

We are continuing to require masks that cover the mouth and nose at all times, social distancing, hand washing/sanitizing, and all those other mitigation measures to which we have all become accustomed.

We will continue streaming all worship services to our YouTube Channel at "Peace UCC Kewaskum" or you can find a link from our website: www.peace-ucc.org or through our Facebook page. We are also now streaming all funeral services and posting those online.

We encourage everyone to please continue to act with care and caution. We have been trying to take all practical steps toward mitigation of the pandemic as a Congregation, and now is certainly not the time to stop trying to be a part of the solution. Get vaccinated when you are able, do your part in thinking about how your choices impact all of our community. Our commitment is to continue seeking to love our neighbors as ourselves!

The Church building is gradually reopening for adult classes and meeting in a hybrid fashion, but staff is still largely working remotely. Please don't hesitate to contact us and we will we try to meet any needs you may have.

Upcoming Worship Services – It is strange to realize that we have been living in our present reality as "church" for over a year. It was just as we had begun Lent that we needed to shift to worshipping Online. We will offer streamed options on YouTube of each of the various Lent and Easter services (we have been recording and livestreaming the early service each week, available any time after that on YouTube).

- **Palm Sunday** – There will be Palm Sunday services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. with the 50 persons per service limit in place. In addition, we will host a Palm Branch drive-thru on Thursday, March 25th from 10:00 a.m. – noon and again from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Pull up to the parking lot entrance of the church and receive your palm.
- **Maundy Thursday** – We will have a service at 7:00 p.m. with communion.
- **Good Friday** – We will have one service at 1:00 p.m.

- **Easter Sunday** – Peace Church will offer three services on Easter Sunday – April 4th. A sunrise service will start at 6:30 a.m., followed by an 8:00 a.m. service and a 10:00 a.m. service. No sign-up necessary. A limit of 50 persons per service is in place. Communion will be offered at each service. Online Easter services will be available on Peace Church’s YouTube site.

Sunday, April 4 – 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at **Peace Church - COMMUNION**
Easter

Exodus 20:1-17 • Psalm 19 • 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 • John 2:13-22

Sunday, April 11 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at **Peace Church**
Second Sunday of Easter

Numbers 21:4-9 • Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 • Ephesians 2:1-10 • John 3:14-21

Sunday, April 18 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at **Peace Church**
Third Sunday of Easter

Jeremiah 31:31-34 • Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16 • Hebrews 5:5-10 • John 12:20-33

Sunday, April 25 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at **Peace Church**
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 • Psalm 22:23-31 • Romans 4:13-25 • Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday! (Ages 1-18)

April 2 Joshua Weinreich (12)
 April 4 Zachary Butzlaff (9)
 April 10 Brooks Martin (4)
 April 16 Kenady Kivell (8)
 April 17 Hudson Gitter (5)
 April 18 Kolton Hauch (16)
 April 19 Tore Schemelin
 April 25 Derek May (16)
 April 29 Luke Pendowski (14)

Birthdays (80 years plus)

April 1 Shirley Reinders (84)
 April 5 Ron Rusch (86)
 April 9 Donald Sedgwick (90)
 April 13 Shirley Schlice (83)
 April 15 Robert Schrader (82)
 April 23 Allen Kuhn (94)
 April 25 Jim Reigle (95)
 John Wood (84)
 April 26 Cheri Hron (89)

Anniversaries

April 3	Zak & Katie Pendowski (17)
April 7	William & Jessica Loser (20)
April 7	Jason & Jamie Piittmann (20)
April 12	Scott & Cathy Stern (13)
April 14	Jacob & Jessica Manogue (3)
April 20	Brian & Deborah Butzlaff (25)
April 23	Tim & Kathy Danielson (44)
April 25	Pam & Alan May (23)
April 28	Joshua & Arielle Guillaume (3)
April 29	Ashley & Randy thurll (15)
April 30	Susan & Dan Chesak (33)

Events and Activities

Tuesdays at 10 am. - Lectionary group. Each week we will study the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact the church office. Each week we will study the scripture for the upcoming Sunday.

Adult Faith Formation continues:

First, third, and fifth Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall - We are wrapping up a study of the Book of Ruth. Stay tuned for the next offering.

Book Reading List for 2020 – 2021

The Peace Church book discussion group will be meeting Wednesday, April 7, 2021, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. to discuss the book "Educated" by Tara Westover. May Billman leads the discussion, and everyone is invited to contribute to the discussion. The selected books for May and June are "Ask Again, Yes" by Mary Beth Keane (May 5) and "Finding Chika" by Mitch Albom (June 2). The group does not meet in July or August. For more information, contact Lynn Rusch at lynnrusch@yahoo.com or by phone (262-306-4025).

Church Clean-Up

Date: Saturday April 24th Time: 9AM to noon

Place: Outside our church

Your help is needed to clean up all the winter debris around our church and get ready for Summer. We will be cleaning up the leaves around bushes, trimming bushes and possibly spreading mulch. Bring gardening tools (gloves, shovels, rakes etc.) All are welcome to help out!



Birthday Envelope – What is it for?

Have you ever wondered what the Birthday Envelope is doing with our offering envelopes? No, it is not a reminder to buy a cake for someone special. But it is a reminder that the birthday envelope offerings go to our SCHOLARSHIP fund. As you may know, scholarships are awarded to all who desire financial aid from Peace Church and wish to continue their education. Scholarships are renewable each year. So give generously!! Lost your birthday envelope? There is a scholarship section on the regular giving envelope, too.

Financial Reports

Financial Report February 2021

General Fund

Adjusted Beginning Balance as of January 31, 2021	\$ (3,766)
Receipts	37,689
Cemetery Transfer	0
Internal Transfer	0
Incr/Decr from Investments	0
Expenses	(\$26,414)
Ending Balance as of 2/28/2021	<u>7,509</u>

Benevolence Receipts

Souper Bowl	135.00
Dr. Albrecht Free Clinic	100.00
Kewaskum Food Pantry	50.00
Family Promise	200.00
Lenten Offering	90.00
Ash Wednesday Offering	225.00
Total Benevolence Receipts	<u>800.00</u>

Additional Information:

Project Balances as of 2/28/2021	
Church Kitchen Remodeling Project	13,442.00

Consistory Minutes

Peace UCC Consistory Meeting – February 9, 2021 Virtual Meeting via ZOOM and in-person

Members present: Paul Behring, Kathy Charland (Vice President), Karen Kletti, Tom Kolb, John A. Lemke (President), John C. Lemke, Becky Manthei, Clark Pearson, Roger Mertz (Secretary), Martha Wilson
Also present: Pastor Eric, Cathy Stern (Treasurer)

- A. Call to Order: 6:40 p.m.
 - B. Opening Prayer - Pastor Eric began the meeting with a prayer.
 - C. Approval of Agenda – Additions to Old Business – Kitchen update, Chili dinner and Blood Drive.
 - D. Approval of Minutes from January 12, 2021 meeting: Motion to approve by Martha Wilson second by Paul Behring and carried.
 - E. Financial Report – Treasurer Cathy Stern reported a good beginning to the year financially. Motion to accept financial report for January 2021 as presented and placed on file for audit by Martha Wilson, seconded by Kathy Charland and carried.
 - F. Pastor’s Report – A written report was submitted by Pastor Eric with the following highlights: Continues to reach as many members as possible in several ways. Peace will be offering a “drive-through” communion and ashes on Ash Wednesday as well as in-person service. Pastor is looking forward to welcoming more of the faithful to in-person services in the near future. The pack has been reserved for summer Sundays as a contingency.
 - G. President’s Report – John Lemke is asking for the Memorial Committee to recommend projects to be funded through the Memorial Fund. These projects would then be prioritized for future consideration.
 - H. Old Business
 - 1. Chili dinner to be held in parking lot on Ash Wednesday – February 17 from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. Thank you to those donations from the community: Thrivent - \$250; The Norbert – Pint containers; Brothers Restaurant – crackers.
 - 2. The Red Cross blood drive will take place in the parish hall on March 3, 2021 from 12:30 – 6:30 P.M.
 - 3. Kitchen update: Chairperson Karen Kletti reported that the Kitchen Remodel Committee is making progress, working hard to develop a plan for equipment and design.
 - I. New Business –
 - 1. Lenten/Easter Offerings are to be distributed evenly to these organizations: *Interfaith Caregivers, Kewaskum Community Pantry, Full Shelf Food Pantry, Heifer International, UCC Disaster Relief, Peace Church Habitat for Humanity*. Motion by Clark Pearson, seconded by Kathy Charland. Carried.
 - 2. Clark Pearson has been moved to a Trustee position. The Consistory still needs one more trustee and one deacon.
 - J. Committee Reports -
 - Faith Formation:** An email report was submitted by Gayle Van Ess.
 - K. Lord’s Prayer
 - L. Adjournment: 8:40 p.m.
- Next meeting is March 9, 2021