

The Disciple



The Good News of St. John soars like an eagle!

*St. John's United Church of Christ
Allentown, Pennsylvania*

Volume 22 Issue 10

March 24, 2021

Bad News, Good News

In the days following Good Friday and Easter, two of the disciples of Jesus were on the road that leads to Emmaus. Puzzling things were going on that they didn't understand. Their Master had been crucified like a common thief. They in turn had scattered like frightened sheep. But now there were reports that Jesus was not dead at all. Reliable sources told them that he had appeared to some of their most trusted friends. Was it real? Was he really alive? The disciples were troubled and afraid. Should they believe the good news or the bad news?

And that's our dilemma, isn't it? Do we believe the good news or the bad news? The good news is that Christ is alive. The bad news is how little impact that event is having in the world today.

There is a growing sense that in the midst of our great affluence, our impressive military power and our technological prowess, at heart, we are a sick society. We don't have the political will to what is theologically just. We don't have the will to provide quality health care for everyone, quality education for every child, quality long term care for every aging person. We are terrified to examine the issues of privilege giving centuries of oppression.

That is when I begin to feel like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. On one hand, I know the good news of the risen Christ. On

the other, the bad news of the world surrounds me. And it is easy to be fearful and “troubled of heart” as were those two disciples that day.

But don’t miss the incredible hopeful twist in this story. The twist is not that the disciples recognize the risen Christ. That happens later. The twist is that in the midst of their tragic, mournful, troublesome walk home, Jesus comes to them. This is good news. Jesus doesn't wait for them to find him. Jesus comes to them.

That is the same in all the Gospels. Jesus comes to the disciples behind closed doors. Jesus comes to the one who is filled with questions and doubts. And Jesus comes to the two who could think of nothing else to do than hang their heads and walk home.

And Jesus comes to us as well, in the midst of our trouble, our disappointment, our anxiety, our terror.

The picture we have in the New Testament is of a God who pursues us so that God may show us the way. Christ comes to these two disciples. They do not recognize him, but it is he who takes the initiative. He walks with them and interprets Scripture for them.

How do you live the good news when surrounded by the bad news? The disciples on the Emmaus road tell us two things. First, participate in the Lord’s Supper. We will know that Christ is present with us in a mysterious and marvelous way as we break the bread and share the cup together. And second, we don’t have to hunt around to find where God is hiding. We only need to look around to discover that Christ walks by our side.

By Rev. Dr. David H. DeRemer, Interim Minister

Our Ministry with Central Elementary School

Our Ministry with Central Elementary

March 2nd *Read Across America* a Huge Success

We received the following letter from Anant Agnihotri, the Community School Coordinator at Central –

Central Elementary School's students, teachers and staff would like to thank you for volunteering to read at our annual Read Across America event on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. It was an amazing day at our school and one that our students and staff will remember and cherish for a long time.

We had a huge response, and this was our biggest Read Across America Event ever. We had readers volunteering from not just the Lehigh Valley, but from all over the world. We had an organization who promotes reading thru their dogs. This just shows the power of our community, there is always an opportunity to connect with one another and spread happiness in these tough times and our event showed just that.

Mr. Agnihotri said that there have been about 30 readers in past years, but, this year, there were 130 volunteers reading to Central's classrooms! Thank you to Nancy Kramer-Moyer and Wendy Williams for representing St. John's in this event, demonstrating our support of the critical task of teaching young children to be readers. It has been shown that children who have not learned to read by the 3rd grade, will struggle with their education. Everyone involved on March 2nd had a fun day of reading.

This month, we are continuing to give toward the purchase of:

- basic school supplies needed by each child, while they are learning from home

and

- winter jackets (as I write this, we are facing another week of cold, winter weather) or

lighter, spring jackets or sweatshirts. The teachers and administration at Central know which children have a greater need.

To donate, either send a check into the church office, marked *Central School Supplies* or *Central Jacket*, or go to our website and click on the *Donate* button. Listed under Central Elementary, you will find a column for *school supplies* and another for *jackets*.

A huge “thank you” to everyone who has or is contributing!!

April Special Mission Offering

Our Special Mission Offering for April is the **Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank**. Remember when we were holding services in the building. Those containers in the Narthex marked “Food Bank” were one of the ways along with volunteering that we supported the Ecumenical Food Bank throughout the year. Well, the pandemic has stopped these opportunities, but it hasn’t stopped hunger. In fact, it has made it worse. In many ways the Ecumenical Food Bank needs our support more than ever. That is where April’s offering comes in. It is our opportunity to support this vital ministry to those in need in our own neighborhood and to do our part to alleviate hunger. By so doing, we will be responding Jesus’ command in John to “Feed his sheep”.

During April won’t you please prayerfully consider supporting this important ministry by including a donation designated for the Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank with your weekly offering by whatever means you may use? Thank you.

Pastoral Care during our Interim Time

Allan Kramer-Moyer will be providing pastoral care for our members during this interim time. If you have a request or know of someone who requires pastoral care, please call him at home 610-434-0534 or text him on his cell phone 484-695-4108.

Important Dates:

April Worship

Check the church webpage for any YouTube Worship link

Holy Week

March 28 – Palm Sunday

11:00a.m. YouTube worship

April 1 – Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m. Holy Communion YouTube worship

April 2 – Good Friday

7:00p.m. LIVE ZOOM worship

April 4 - Easter Sunday

11:00a.m. Holy Communion YouTube worship

April 11 - Guest Speaker

April 18 - Belief and Faith

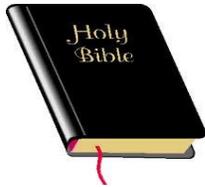
1 John 1:1–2:2; John 20:19-29

April 25 - Under the Dome

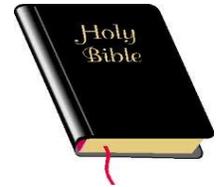
Gen 1:1-19; Luke 9:37-43

ADULT FORUM RETURNS! (ZOOM— style) on April 25, 2021

The last Sunday of each month will be designated for Adult Forum Bible studies, beginning at 9:45am and ending at 10:30am. Claudia will email a ZOOM invite for these sessions. If you have any questions about logging on to ZOOM, contact Claudia (610-433-0146).



Lectionary Readings for April 2021



April 4 – Easter – Acts 10: 34-43; Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; John 20: 1-18

April 11 – 2nd Sunday of Easter – Acts 4: 32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1: 1-2:2; John 20: 19-31

April 18 - 3rd Sunday of Easter – Acts 3: 12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3: 1-7; Luke 24: 36b-48

April 25 – 4th Sunday of Easter – Acts 4: 5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3: 16-24; John 10: 11-18

April 2021

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April 21 – Sarah and Mike Shaw

*Celebrating
Anniversaries
this Month*




2 – Gary Gumlock
4 – Cindy Dannenhower
5 – Courtney Fillman
8 – Richard Brensinger
14 – Julius Pyle
15 – Wendy Williams
16 – Susan Fegley Charles Gillenwater III
18 – Cindie Penzes
19 – Megan Van Ingen
20 – Judith Guhl
24 – Loretha Jenkins
26 – James Saylor
29 – Mia Phillips
30 – Judy Garrigan

					1  Maundy Thursday SERVICE 7pm service	2 Good Friday  7pm service	3
4 11am Virtual Worship  12pm Fellowship	5 Easter Monday  Church office closed	6 7 pm Elders	7 9am Prayer Call	8	9	10	
11 11am Virtual Worship 12pm Fellowship	12	13 7 pm Consistory	14 9am Prayer Call	15	16	17	
18 11am Virtual Worship 12pm Fellowship "Belief and Faith"	19	20	21 9am Prayer Call  Administrative Professionals Day	22	23	24	
25 Adult Forum 9:45am 11am Virtual Worship 12pm Fellowship "Under the Dome"	26	27	28 9am Prayer Call	29	30		

Visit us at www.stjohnsuccallentown.org

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