

The Messenger



A Newsletter of the
Genesee 1st Congregational, United Church of Christ, Inc.

May – June, 2020

Volume 15, Number 1

From the Pastor



By the Waters of Babylon
—there we sat down and wept
when we remembered Zion.

-Psalm 137

Don't get me wrong. I want to return to worship in our church building. I want to have an accompanist lead us in song and a bulletin producer take over that responsibility again. Indeed, it will be so good to see you all face to face again. I look forward to those days, but I have enjoyed the challenge of making worship relevant in such a time as this. I have appreciated a new way of connecting that I think might modify the way we do worship and could increase the ways in which we stay in touch.

Most of you have made changes in your lives to keep strong the ties of family and friends. A good number of you have signed on to worship online or via telephone. At this writing we have had three Sundays in a row where we have averaged around 60 in attendance. To my mind this is a sign that you aren't going to allow the crisis to rule over you. I think it also reflects an encouraging attitude. Faith, particularly the practice of faith, still holds relevance in your lives.

For me, I note that I am growing callouses on my fingertips! That's a good thing. It means that I am playing my guitar instead of just thinking about playing. Over the years, I have played my guitar out of necessity, playing regularly when I am the accompaniment for people to sing along. I have never set aside practice time sufficient to be an accomplished guitarist. Usually it has been the times when I am needed as a substitute for the church organist/pianist that I have been the most diligent in maintaining and developing my skills. "Thanks" to these times, I am needed to fill that role.

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VIRTUAL SERVICES – “The new normal”

There will be NO in-person gatherings at Genesee UCC for worship or other church activities including Executive Board, Deacons, Bible study, etc. In lieu of Sunday morning worship an online “Zoom” gathering has been set up. Here are the details

SUNDAYS, 9:30 AM - Genesee and Hartland UCC
Join us as early as 9 AM.

To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, click on the following link or copy into your browser.
<https://zoom.us/j/396301165> Password = 365422

You may also join by going to <https://zoom.us> and click on the “JOIN A MEETING” heading at the top of the webpage.

When prompted, enter:

- Meeting ID: 396 301 165
- Password: 365422

To join meeting by phone (Audio only)

- Call 1-312-626-6799 and enter when prompted:
 - o Meeting ID: 396 301 165
 - o Password: 365422

THURSDAYS, Lectionary Bible Study, 10 AM

-A study of the upcoming Sunday's bible passages

To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, click on the following link or copy into your browser.

<https://zoom.us/j/324446460> Password = 789656

You may also join by going to <https://zoom.us> and click on the “JOIN A MEETING” heading at the top of the webpage.

When prompted, enter:

- Meeting ID: 324 446 460
- Password: 789656

To join meeting by phone (Audio only)

- Call 1-312-626-6799 and enter when prompted:
 - o Meeting ID: 324 446 460
 - o Password: 789656

May – June – July

ushers and communions

We don't need ushers for Virtual Services. So, until we can open up our church for services, there is no usher list. We'll let you know, the Sunday we reopen, when you can start ushering again. Thank you.

Communion is normally served on the first Sunday of the month. There is also no communion until we can open up our church for services.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS in a "VIRTUAL" world

We can't pass the collection plate like in a normal church service. But you can still take advantage of your great, God given, opportunity to make an offering. Make checks out to "Genesee 1st Congregational, United Church of Christ" OR, if you prefer, just "Genesee Church." Send them to the church office – GENESEE CHURCH / W306 S5075 Church St. / Mukwonago, WI 53149-9732. Our treasurer, Angela, pick them up on a weekly basis. OR You can mail your check direct to Angela: Angela Williams / W956 Miramar Rd. / East Troy, WI. 53120.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH offering

On Pentecost Sunday, May 31, you will have the opportunity to give to the "Strengthen the Church" offering. The offering reflects the shared commitments of all settings of the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. This offering embodies the wisdom, "Together we grow stronger." Mark **Sunday, May 31** on your personal calendar and be prepared to give to this unique offering.

GENESEE CHURCH is a 5 for 5 church.

Give yourself and the church a round of applause. The Wisconsin Conference, UCC has just recognized Genesee Church as a 5 for 5 church. We have now joined the 80% of churches in the conference that are 5 for 5. What does this mean? We send in our support for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and we support the four(4) special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ: Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, The Christmas Fund and Strengthen the Church. Our support for the four special offerings. In 2019, amounted to \$230 ! Thank you for your financial support!

From the Pastor -- continued from Page 1

Some of you know the citation from the Psalms above. It is the first verse of a lament describing the mournfulness of the people of God at a time when they were taken by force to leave the land God had promised them as their possession for them and for their progeny. That promise seemed to be made null and void as a result of their being conquered. So, as the psalmist continues, they hung up their harps and wondered how they could sing "the Lord's song in a strange land." All that they valued was ripped away from them, and the psalm goes on with no hope that things will return to the way they were. The only response the psalmist can identify to these turns of events is an intense anger and bitter grief for what was lost.

Those of you who know the history of Israel, know that, though this psalm stops at expressing sorrow and outrage for their condition, this is not the final response to their disrupted world. Prayers of hope and psalms of trust in God, speak to aspirations beyond anger and bitterness. Long story short, the people of Israel, adapted to their circumstance. Ultimately they found a way to be faithful. They did return to singing their song to guide them in their present times.

Faith, is not the result of everything going the way we wanted. Faith hardly grows when there is nothing that changes. Faith is manifest in the ways people adapt, improvise and overcome. Faith only arises as a force, when it meets a new challenge and answers with new understanding that is deep enough for the people to "sing" again. Perhaps the "tune" will be different. Likely, some old "songs" will be irrelevant in these alien circumstances. Some songs will be adjusted to speak to the altered times.

So, we keep the faith today. We develop callouses. We sing new songs. We find new ways in which God is present and proclaim it in word and deed. These are not just trying times. These are "faith-ing" times. God bless us all. We will be the stronger for our faithfulness in these days.

Pastor Peter

e-mail: stmartpb@msn.com
(c) 262-720-6939; (h) 262-201-4033

Explore God's Word Daily

Copies of the devotional booklet: "The Upper Room" for May-June, 2020 are available at the church office. Call the church office at **262-968-3849** and the secretary will mail them to you. On every page is an inspirational reading and accompanying Bible verse for each day.

Notes from a Tunnel

“We’re going to get through this!”

In 1965, the country’s first rail-trail was constructed on an old railroad line: the Elroy-Sparta bike trail. Pedaling the 33 miles from Elroy to Sparta, you pass through the small, and quaint, villages of Wilton, Kendall and Norwalk. The main feature of the trail is its three tunnels. The first two are about a quarter mile in length. On a hot summer’s day their coolness offers a brief respite from the heat of the sun. The third tunnel, on the end between Norwalk and Sparta, is the “grand-daddy” of them all. As you approach the entrance, the woods around you climb to moss and fern-covered cliffs; and streams of water buffer each side of the trail. As you approach the entrance, the big wood doors, swung permanently wide open, guard the dark entrance. At almost ¾ of a mile in length (3,810 feet), even on a clear day the only light in this tunnel is a small, dim circle at the other end.

As you enter, the temperature drops and the air smells earthy. Finally, your legs are ready for a break – after pedaling a steady uphill climb for the last half an hour. You get off your bike, turn on a flashlight and start walking into the darkness. The only sound is your own footsteps, the click-click-click of your bike chain and – perhaps – the echo of others in the tunnel. The arched ceiling seems to close in on you as you walk toward the gradually increasing disc of light. After what seems like an eternity, you make a final step into blinding daylight – ready to mount your bike and ride on.

Built by the railroad, in 1873, engineers did not see a level route through these tall hills. So, they decided that the only way was to tunnel through them. Blasting through solid rock, with grit and determination, one can almost hear the distant echo of 150 years ago: “We’re going to get through this!”

It’s been several years, now, since I last rode the Elroy-Sparta trail, but the vision of being in a tunnel is, now, just as vivid as ever. In February of 2020, we – all of us – were presented with a threat to our livelihood, our sense of normalcy and, to some, their very lives: a worldwide pandemic known as Covid-19. It is like no other threat that our nation, our world has encountered. We are used to fighting, and defeating, enemies that we can see. Covid-19 is unseen, a microscopic size virus that, it seems so far, no conventional forces can defeat.

Not knowing where the enemy is hiding we are encouraged to wash our hands, wear masks and stay home. Restaurants are closed, venues are shut and the freedom of movement that we used to take for granted is now restricted. Only “essential” workers are being allowed to carry on, and nowhere is there business as usual.

We no longer inhabit the wide-open spaces, but we are moving through a tunnel. The walls are closing in. We are following the rules to preserve what normalcy is still left; all the while relishing the freedom we once knew. The only hope seems to be a dim light at the end of the tunnel. We pray for a vaccine that will defeat the enemy, knowing that it may be 12 -18 months out. The tunnel is long.

We are a people of faith. We do not stop walking forward. We walk through the tunnel, toward the dim, but ever growing, light. With the echoing stream of “Onward Christian Soldiers,” we move, ever onward, knowing that: “We’re going to get through this!”

Amen!

Scott W. Burdette, April, 2020

Events Calendar

MAY – JUNE – JULY

Listed here are the dates of holidays and events min May, June and early July. All dates are correct at the time of publication. The Thursday morning, 10 AM, Virtual Bible study is recurring. As such it is not listed in the calendar. Until further notice, the Executive Board and Deacons will be meeting virtually.

MAY

- FR 1 **MAY DAY**
- TU 5 **CINCO de MAYO**
- WE 6 Deacons – 1 PM
- SU 10 **MOTHER’S DAY**
- TU 12 Executive Board – 6 PM
- SU 17 Begin “Strengthen the Church” promotion
- MO 25 **MEMORIAL DAY**
- SU 31 **PENTECOST SUNDAY**

Receive “Strengthen the Church” offering

JUNE

- SU 14 **FLAG DAY**
- TU 16 Executive Board - 6 PM
- SA 20 **SUMMER SOLSTICE – 4:42 PM CDT**
Summer begins
- SU 21 **FATHER’S DAY**
Newsletter Copy due
- TH 25 63rd anniversary of the UCC

JULY

- SA 4 **INDEPENDENCE DAY**
- WE 8 Pastor’s Birthday
- SA 11 18th Annual Pig Roast and Luau (?)

Share your Acts of Kindness with Us

-by Rhea Whiteley

It's a great time to be a light to others and share positive messages to your neighbors, family and friends. And we'd like you to take a picture and share these messages with us!

Here's what we'd like you to do:

1. Write a positive message on a poster, rock, door hanger, sidewalk chalk, etc.
2. Take a picture and email it to Pastor Peter: smartpb@msn.com or Rhea: rhea@mikewhiteley.com.
3. We'll show your picture at our virtual church meetings and our next newsletter.

Here's some ideas for you:

Display a poster, stuffed animal or paint your front window.

Kindness Rocks-paint a rock and leave it by a mailbox, doorstep, driveway, etc. You can look at the Kindness Rock Project online for ideas.

Sidewalk chalk messages

May Day basket door hangers - for ideas go to: <https://www.skiptomylou.org/10-simple-may-day-baskets-to-celebrate-may-day/>

Let's lift everyone's spirits and share your Acts of Kindness with us. Thanks!

Now that you have time to clean out your closets . . .

Save your stuff for our fall Rummage Sale!

-by Rhea Whiteley

Our new 'normal' has given us more time to spring clean and let go of stuff we no longer need. Please save your good stuff in good condition for our Fall Rummage Sale at Genesee Church. As soon as we can open our doors again, we will let you know when we can accept donations. Thank you for supporting this fundraiser and the life of the church!

Congratulations Graduates

Capri Whiteley

– U. W. Madison, School of Journalism

If we have missed someone, let the office know (262-968-3849). Their names will be published in the July-August issue of the Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM

Take a moment to remember **Debbie Sayles Lyons**, sister of Ed Sayles. Debbie passed away on March 20, 2020. We keep the Sayles family, Ed & Diane, in our prayers during this time of their loss.



“Wash your hands and say your prayers,
Because Jesus and germs are everywhere.”

- Anon

BULLETIN BLOOPERS

The sermon this morning: Jesus Walks on the Water.
The sermon tonight: Searching for Jesus.

The agenda was adopted...the minutes were approved...the financial secretary gave a grief report.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It is a good Chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM. Please use the large double door at the side entrance.

The pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to the church secretary.

When parking on the north side of the church, please remember to park on an angel.

MESSENGER AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

If you are not receiving your newsletter via e-mail, and you have an e-mail address, send an e-mail to LTLBURD@aol.com and the secretary will get you on the e-mail list. Also, let us know if your e-mail address changes by sending an e-mail using your new e-mail address. Thank you for helping us save mailing costs.

A FINAL NOTE 🎵

The deadline for the July August, 2020 edition is Sunday, June 21. To submit an article, event information, or to receive your newsletter via e-mail, send e-mail to: LTLBURD@aol.com. Articles submitted in person need to be typed or written legibly.

Scott W. Burdette



Puzzle Changers

ACROSS

- 1 Chem., e.g.
- 4 Sheep's cry
- 7 Terre _____, Indiana
- 12 Electrified particle
- 13 Gallery contents
- 14 Baseball blunder
- 15 Pot cover
- 16 Designer Oscar _____ (3 wds.)
- 18 Door feature
- 20 Slugger Hank _____
- 21 Convent resident
- 23 Singer Frank _____
- 27 Consumes too much
- 30 Sprint
- 31 Engine part
- 32 Firstborn
- 35 Boxer Muhammad _____
- 36 Produce
- 38 Figured out
- 41 Hair styles
- 42 Weird
- 44 Knitter's stitch
- 47 Without purpose
- 51 River (Sp.)
- 52 Great fear
- 53 Bullring cheer
- 54 And so forth (abbr.)
- 55 Approves
- 56 Fisherman's tool
- 57 Cheer sound

DOWN

- 1 Fine fabric
- 2 Dime or penny
- 3 Jakarta's country
- 4 Spoiled
- 5 Precinct
- 6 Finally (2 wds.)
- 7 Wading bird
- 8 Sports site
- 9 Coffee server
- 10 Toddler
- 11 Historic time
- 17 Gotten up
- 19 Actor _____ Reynolds
- 22 "The Matrix" hero
- 24 Financial officer
- 25 Iron oxide
- 26 Initial stake
- 27 October gem
- 28 Wicked
- 29 Enrages
- 33 Was ahead
- 34 Hard candy
- 37 Light bulb inventor
- 39 Pass on
- 40 Lacks
- 43 Model _____ Macpherson
- 45 Pinup _____ Hayworth
- 46 _____ Ness monster
- 47 Stir
- 48 Annoy
- 49 "Cry _____ River" (2 wds.)
- 50 However

Genesee Church Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16			17					
18			19		20							
		21		22		23				24	25	26
27	28				29					30		
31							32	33	34			
35					36	37						
38			39	40				41				
			42				43		44		45	46
47	48	49						50		51		
52							53			54		
55							56				57	

Answers to previous puzzles In March-April Messenger

C	A	T	E	R		S	E	E		G	I	N		
A	G	I	L	E		A	R	C		O	N	O		
B	O	T	A	N	I	C	A	L		U	S	O		
		A	T	O	M			A	I	D	E	S		
D	I	N	E			I	R	R	I	T	A	T	E	
A	R	I	D			T	I	E	R	S				
D	E	C			T	A	P	E	S		S	A	N	
					E	A	T	E	N		P	A	R	E
A	P	P	A	R	E	N	T			O	L	E	O	
H	E	A	R	T				E	A	S	T			
E	S	P			A	T	T	R	I	T	I	O	N	
A	T	A			N	E	E			M	A	N	N	A
D	O	S			S	A	X			S	L	E	E	P

Sheep Search

→				
				↙
	↗			
				↖
			←	
SS		↖		↑

Shepherd Simon has seven sheep. One day, he took his sheep into a large rectangular field. A map of the field, shown at left, has been divided into squares. (1) Each sheep is in a unique square area. (2) Each arrow points to where a sheep is located. (3) No sheep is on a square with an arrow. (4) No sheep are in squares next to each other (vertically, horizontally or diagonally). (5) No sheep is in a square next to the shepherd (SS), vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Help Shepherd Simon (SS) locate his sheep.

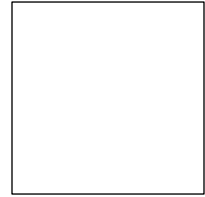
Answer to RABBIT HUNTING

EASTER SERVICE

SUNDAY APRIL 12 10:30 AM

GENESEE 1ST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, INC.
W306 S5075 CHURCH ST.
MUKWONAGO (GENESEE), WI 53149-9732
262-968-3849 www.geneseechurch.org

NEWSLETTER MAY/JUN 2020
TIME VALUE MAIL
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Virtual Worship
Sunday
9:30 AM

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