

Worship Helpers for March

USHERS:

4: Dick & Gloria Winters
11: Deb Burton & Judy Cook
18: Deb Burton & Judy Cook
25: TBD

SOUND SYSTEM



Ken Bell

FELLOWSHIP TIME:



4: Julie Otto
11: Jane Porter
18: Fund Raiser for Emily Holderman
25: Deb Burton & Judy Cook



Birthdays in March

1: Don Strohpaal
11: Noah Voshel
21: Audrey Eno

Fund Raiser for Emily Holderman

There will be a Lunch Benefit for Emily Holderman, given by Jane and Jeanne, on Sunday, March 18, 11:15, following worship, in the Fellowship Hall.

There will be a variety of soups, salad, dessert.

Freewill offering.

Worship Schedule

3/4-Third Sunday of Lent

Communion

John 2: 13-22

“Lenten Journalists’ Series on Jesus-What?”

3/11-Fourth Sunday of Lent

John 3: 14-21

“Lenten Journalists’ Series on Jesus-Where?”

3/18-Fifth Sunday of Lent

John 12: 20-37

“Lenten Journalists’ Series on Jesus-When?”

3/25-Palm/Passion Sunday

Mark 14:1-Mark 15:47 from J.B. Phillips “The New Testament in Modern English”

“Lenten Journalists’ Series on Jesus-For Whom?-The Last Week of Jesus’ Life”

3/29-Maundy Thursday-7 p.m. Worship Service

Communion

John 13:1-17, 31-35

“Lenten Journalists’ Series on Jesus-How?”

3/20-Good Friday-7 p.m. Worship Service

Taize Choruses and Scripture Readings

Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

432 Quarterline • Newaygo, MI 49337 • (231) 652-6624

Jonathan Riedel, Pastor



The Churchmouse

March, 2018



A Long Week

*“The crowds answered,
‘It’s the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’”*

Matthew 21: 11 CEB

What Christians call “Holy Week”, the stretch of days between Palm Sunday (where the crowds mentioned above eagerly claimed Jesus as the prophet they had all been waiting for) and Easter (the day Christ came back to life after a horrendous and unjust death) is a long week indeed. Think of what we have to take in as Monday turns to Tuesday and then to Wednesday until the week empties itself out. He was celebrated in a parade by many who wanted to make him the one who would liberate the people Israel from the Roman Empire. He rejected that appointment but angered both the civil and religious authorities by removing salespeople from the temple courtyard. These merchants were exploiting the poor’s desire to please God by generating profits over over-priced birds and Jesus was having none of this. The authorities then conspired to trap and then execute him to avoid the wrath of Rome. They convinced one of his close associates to betray him. We can condemn Judas all we want but each disciple would end the week by abandoning or hiding from Jesus. On Thursday, knowing that his time was short, he gathered his disciples to celebrate the Passover, the great commemoration of how God freed Israel from Egypt’s slavery.

But this meal was different. The bread, rapidly-made and flat, the bitter herbs, and the wine were present, all meant to be symbols of Israel’s journey to a new land and to freedom. The lamb bone, however, was missing. This bone, representing those who gave themselves to gain Israel’s future, showed all gathered what the cost of God’s hope is. This is where Jesus showed his final purpose. He would be the one who died for all of them, the one who took on all their missteps, all their purposeful wrongdoings, all their omissions, the one who would die to make them right. No one else would have to die as a sacrifice. Not then. Not ever. The human balancing act of sacrifice to make things right was over. So he said this truth loudly and clearly so his followers would understand. But they did not and I suspect, at times, we still do not. Then he spelled out how this would happen and how painful this action would be. It would involve betrayal. Denial. Abandonment. False trial and conviction. Crucifixion. Burial in a borrowed tomb. His followers certainly did not want to hear that and we still do not.

That pain, abandonment and loss are the heart of Good Friday. It was what Jesus prayed to be released from and to have the courage to accept in his agonized prayers in the Garden of

(continued from page 1)

Gethsemane. The weight of all of this is what rendered him mostly silent during his trials with the Temple leaders and with the indifferent Pilate. This is what he carried up the hill we call "Golgotha". But there is so much more than that.

The more is what we call forgiveness. That sweet mercy bled through his prayers begging God to forgive his executioners because they did not know what they were doing. It flowed through the gentle way he gave his mother a new home once it was certain Jesus had no way of caring for her. It stretched out in the generous welcome he offered his fellow cross-bearer, the thief who rose to his defense even though his guilt sank in him deeper than nails. Forgiveness is the final word. This business of revenge, harsh justice, and retribution was over. All of this is, in Jesus' own words, finished.

The wisdom of our church fathers and mothers give a day, a Holy Saturday, to think about this. A day of rest even though we are sitting in the stillness of a graveyard. But then there is Easter, God's final 'no' to death, pain, violence, boiled-over anger, revenge, hatred, famine, flood, disease, and all the other forces that negate life. Though historians will argue about the circumstances of the events of Easter, what remains is a simple fact: the tomb was empty. Something happened.

Something emerged alive enough to inspire many generations centuries later. Jesus' message was no longer confined to a long-ago time and place, but its vision of freedom, its vision of inclusive love, and its vision of death-defying aliveness changed the very fabric of our world. Because of it, captives have found freedom from their chains, prisoners have become caregivers, the blind and the deaf become voices of liberation, the poor and the forgotten have become leaders. Jesus' life, death and rebirth have tipped our societies' morals and values upside down. The victim becomes the leader, the rich sink into poverty, and the slave becomes the guide to how must live in order to be truly free.

This is much for us to grasp, yet alone understand. That is why many churches take this week one day at a time. Some even have special services for each day of this week, though many settle for worship, solemn and joyful, on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. I would suggest that it is not enough to bounce from Sunday to Sunday; to comprehend the depth of Jesus asks of us to walk the palm parade, sit at the table for the Last Supper, gather on the hill below the Cross, and stare in wonder at the empty tomb. Only then do we come close to figuring out what earth-changing words and actions God, in God's love, pulled off.

It is a long week, but it a week worth experiencing day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute.

The Rev. Jonathan D. Riedel
Pastor, Newaygo Congregational UCC

Kids Klub Worship Thru Art

How do we worship God through our work, our hobbies, our music, and our art?

Kids Klub met every Wednesday night in February for "Worship Thru Art". At 5:15 p.m. we had 15-19 kids, and about the same number of adults, gather for supper in the Fellowship Hall. James O'Banion, a recent NHS grad and college student, provided guitar music and discussion before and during supper.

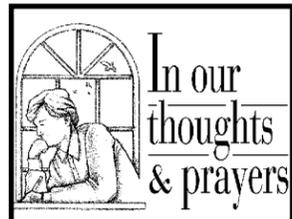
At 5:45, the kids packed into vans and trucks to head downtown Newaygo to Studio 37 Arts and Culture Center for instruction by local artists in different art mediums. The children painted a spring scene on small canvases the first Wednesday. Next, they drew a creature on paper before making the same creature with modeling clay of different colors. About half the group then returned to church for the Ash Wednesday Service.

The third Wednesday, the children went with Sherry in small groups to the Sunday school room to review the Easter story through the Stations of the Cross. After supper, they went to Studio 37 to paint an Easter mural which now hangs on the altar in the sanctuary.

On the final Wednesday, the children participated in different creation stations at Studio 37, with some of them graduating to the BrushWorks side of the studio doing more advanced art work.

While the children were at the art studio, Pastor Jon worked with the adults left at the church, cleaning up and having a parenting discussion.

Thank you to all who provided food and drink; all who helped set up and clean up; and thank you to our church which financially supported this children's program.



Al, Carolyn, Conrad Jr.,
Fred & Lucas, Maxine, Carolyn S. and
Marcia S.



Sunday Morning Stroll
through the Bible

9:00 am

We are continuing our study of the
Prophecy of Isaiah. Bibles are provided. Bring
your questions.

March

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Men's Breakfast at NUMC at 8 am
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
		Adult Bible Study Noon & 7 pm	Worship & Pastoral Care 9:00 am Admin 10 am	Circles Meal	Good Friday Service 7:00 pm		
		Adult Bible Study Noon & 7 pm Sewing 10-4	Churchmouse Deadline	Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 pm			
		Adult Bible Study Noon & 7 pm	Council - 7:00 pm				
Emily Holderman Fund Raiser after church							

Tuesday Adult Study Class- noon and repeating at 7 p.m.

For the next two and a half months, we will be taking a snapshot view of some of the most important thinkers of all time. Based on the series "For Armchair Theologians", we will devote a Tuesday class to each thinkers' life and major ideas. We meet at noon and again at 7 p.m. Here is a schedule of who we will be talking about:

- 3/6-Augustine
- 3/13-Aquinas
- 3/20-Luther
- 3/27-Calvin

Women's Bible Study will meet Tuesdays at 10 a.m.starting in April.



Canned Goods for Food Pantry

We are continuing the collection of Canned Goods for the food pantry. There is a special need at this time of the year. There will be a box under the coat racks in which to put your donations.

Thank You

Deadline for the April Churchmouse

Please send any information or articles you would like included in the **April Churchmouse** to the office by **Wednesday, March 28**.

You may e-mail information to: churchmouse@newaygoucc.org or leave a hard copy in the office.



Treasurer's Report

January 16 to February 15, 2018

	Income	Total Exp.
Jan. 21	\$ 935.00	
Jan. 28	3,251.00	
Feb. 4	1,091.00	
Feb. 11	1,790.00	
Total	\$7,067.00	\$5,407.65

Difference **\$1,659.35**

Phillips Fund	\$180,810.06
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Thank you to everyone for your generous and faithful giving. What a great new year we are entering.

Dawn Anderson, Treasurer

Pick a Topic Sermons



Pastor would like to hear from you about which topics you would like Pastor Jon to feature during his *Pick a Topic* sermons. If you have a suggestion, you can call Pastor at 652-6624, put a note in the offering plate, or email him at

revjdriedel@gmail.com.

Easter Memorial Garden

The Worship and Pastoral Care Commission invites the congregation to participate in our Easter Memorial Garden by bringing an Easter plant (excluding Easter lilies due to allergies) for Easter Sunday Worship. We suggest tulips, daffodils, daisies, mums or hydrangeas instead of lilies.



You may bring them on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday (putting them in the fellowship hall), or Easter Sunday before the service. Write your name and the person you are honoring on a half sheet of paper with the heading "Memorial Garden" and put in the secretary's box by Gloria's office door. These names will be listed on the screen for Easter. (Be sure to put your name on the pot of your plant so you can identify it to take it after the service)



NCUCC will serve our next Circles meal on Thursday, March 22. Food donations must be to church by Wednesday, March 21. Food donations needed for this meal are garlic bread, salad dressing (1,000 Island and Ranch), Jello, brownies, canned fruit, vanilla ice cream.

If you would like to donate food, there is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall with quantities needed. Money to help purchase food is also greatly appreciated. If you would like to help cook, serve or clean up, we can always use your help.

Thanks,
Gloria

Pastoral Relations Committee Update

"Why have a Pastoral Relations Committee? A Pastoral Relations Committee acknowledges the importance of the healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation. Such a committee aids a church in following Paul's instructions: "Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." (Galatians 6:2, 10) (Reprinted from the booklet on Pastoral Relations Committee by the UCC Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team)

You have not recently heard from your Pastoral Relations Committee, so we thought we would remind you that we still exist and are still functioning for the welfare of Pastor Jon and for our congregation, to enhance their mutual ministry, to resolve unfruitful conflict, and to assist the church in its mission and ministry.

We try to meet with Pastor Jon 4 to 6 times per year or more often if needed. We have closed meetings in order to give Pastor Jon the privacy and confidentiality that is required in order for us to function properly. If anyone has a concern please contact one of our committee members:

Dorothy Bos (231) 652-4846;
Holly Matthews (231) 519-5816,
Don Hills (231) 854-0116) or
Julie Jenuwine-Otto (231) 689-3052.

We will voice the concern without identifying the person, if you wish. All concerns are kept in strict confidence between us and Pastor Jon.

Emily Holderman Needs Our Encouragement

This true warrior has been battling Stage 5 kidney failure for over 2 years. Emily is only 33 years old. She is physically disabled and unable to do work. This little family has been trying to survive (literally) on less than \$500 a month Social Security Disability. Who could do that? Not many of us gracefully.

Even with those financial strains, Emily has managed to remain debt free. She is raising a very helpful 9 year old son Keegan. They are currently living with my family. Without her own transportation, she is solely relying on rides from friends and family to all her medical appointments and to dialysis three times a week. All of this while she is just trying to stay alive.

Emily needs a simultaneous pancreas and kidney transplant. While her insurance will pay for the transplants, if she makes the transplant list or finds a kidney on her own, there are high costs. The costs associated with before and after transplant for both the donor and the recipient are unpredictable.

Financial costs NOT covered by insurance can be the following: lost wages for the donor, co-pays, travel and recovery expenses, housing costs (if transplant takes place away from home - currently this combined transplant is done at Mayo in Wisconsin), vitamins and healthy supplements and food.

Raising money to help cover these costs through fundraising is how friends, family and community members can help support Emily's hope for a transplant! We have a few fundraisers in the works already, including a pop can drive, a Memorial Day flower sale at NCUCC, T-shirts coming soon! A local event company, Mi Personnel will be organizing a benefit dinner and silent auction this summer. Thank you for taking the time to consider contributing to one of these fundraisers!

Together we are #EncouragingEmily!
Sincerely Thankful,
Torey Grunwell (Sister)

Crushing Cans For a Kidney!



All proceeds are being raised to help with the ongoing expenses occurring while Emily Holderman is waiting for and then recovering from a transplant. Many hospital visits, Doctors appointments and Dialysis treatment 3 days a week. Emily is fully disabled and unable to work. She is raising a 9 year old son and currently living with family without transportation. All while just trying to survive! This is an easy way we can help them!

We are collecting cans and bottles the month of March, Kidney disease awareness month!

We pick up every Saturday afternoon! Or whenever is convenient to you. Call or message me at (231) 519-1029.

Collecting Cans really goes a long ways! It's not even March yet and we are at almost \$300! Thank you for all your support! Emily has been in the hospital now 3 days. Her oxygen is low so they are supplementing. They are now having difficulties controlling her blood sugar. Possibly from her infection. Keegan is here with us. He is such a good kiddo! Thank you for #EncouragingEmily We will be out collecting cans all week!



Keegan & Emily Holderman