

# Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ

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

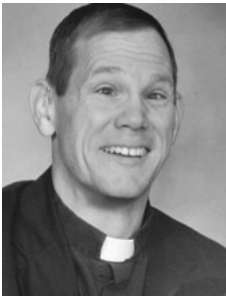
Jonathan Riedel, Pastor



## The Churchmouse



May, 2021



### Orthodox Easter

*"But (the angel) said to (the women), 'Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised. He isn't here. Look, here's the place where they laid him.'"*

Mark 16: 6 CEB

It is a date I have often passed over as I fill in my planning calendar. Orthodox Easter is not something my church has any concern about, if only because the date of Easter is one of the items we share in common with the Roman Catholic Church. I read somewhere about the differences between the Gregorian (Western) and the Julian (Eastern) methods of determining when Easter must fall, but found the math confusing and, frankly, irrelevant. After all, the point of Easter is the occurrence of the Resurrection, not which Sunday it falls on. My ignorance of the mechanisms of the dating system reveals my greater ignorance of the Eastern side of Christianity. My first college roommate was Serbian Orthodox but spoke little of his faith. During my drives throughout our great country, I have happened upon cathedrals with onion domes and vivid icons; I have even stopped to admire the artwork, but, apart from being haunted by the piercing eyes of Jesus in many of those paintings, my curiosity did not urge me to explore further. My Christian history professors, when prompted by questions about Eastern Orthodoxy, asked us to pay more attention to the Reformation instead. I have stopped at the Jam Pot, a bakery run by Orthodox monks outside of Eagle River, MI, and considered buying one of their introductory texts on Eastern Orthodox to add to my library, but I did not.

I suspect that, as a pastor trained in Western theologies, this is not surprising. The East and the West split a thousand years ago. Most of us in seminary spent more time with Augustine and Aquinas than we ever did with Gregory of Nyssa, Irenaeus, Origen, and Basil the Great. We explored the complexities of post-Enlightenment thinkers and liberation theologians long before we looked carefully at the cryptic writings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, who championed the monastic movement and urged us to adopt a simpler life. But looking over my fragments of memory and through the small selection of Orthodox writings I have accumulated over my ministries, I see much I need to pay attention to.



Orthodoxy has long lived with being a minority faith. They have competed with Islam and with Communism and found ways to accommodate and to prevail. They have focused more on the building up of communities than on the shoring up of individuals, which has given many of their churches resilience in ways that Protestants often do not fathom. Despite services in tongues few in their American congregations still speak, despite claiming strong ethnic ties in our obsessive melting pot, they still attract followers, even from the ranks of disaffected Roman Catholics and Protestants. They have balanced independence and cooperation without resorting to having a pope or fragmenting into competing denominations. Jesus' death on the cross, for them, is not a legal matter, the settling of God's need for justice in the presence of our wrongdoing. Instead, the Cross and the Resurrection are acts of God reforging community where it has disintegrated, of cleaning the tarnish off of the image of God that exists in every one and of restoring everyone to their God-given beauty and wholeness. Jesus was acting as a healer in his death and his resurrection, just as he had in his earthly life. The work of the Church, therefore, is the work of building communion, of bringing their people back into a place where they can get better and, in turn, can help other people get better as well.

For Orthodoxy, faith is not merely an assent to a stated doctrine. It is a life-journey aimed at a closer walk with the Divine. Baptism, Holy Communion, prayer, and marking the ancient Israelites' and early Christians' journeys through study of the Bible are methods of making that journey possible. It is a wandering that takes all of our lives to realize and it is our relationships with others, whether they be living people we come to know and love or the rich and meditative literature of the saints who have gone before us, that propel us onward, hold us in place so we can learn something deeper, or impede us so that we may have to restart our walk from another direction. The icons, so familiar to those who have walked through art galleries and modern Russian Orthodox churches, are ways of reminding us that God's spirit is present in our everyday world. They are fragments of Spirit, so to speak. They remind us of God's careful eye and God's eternal caring for us. They are not idols, as some Protestants might want to suggest, but are compasses that focus our attention to God all around us.

It is unlikely that I will observe Orthodox Easter. I am much too Protestant to break with Western tradition. However, the date reminds me that there is more to Christianity than what can be contained within my own narrow denomination. There are more riches to be discovered about Jesus and Jesus' love than what can be confined by my present knowledge. Seeing the date on my calendar might move me to pull my collection of the Desert Fathers and Mothers off of my shelves and discern what a simpler life might look like. It might urge me to pray deeply so I may see God more clearly, love God more dearly, and follow God more nearly. It might even remind me to study the pictures of Jesus we've accumulated around my sanctuary and ask if they tell all we need about the One who lived, died, and rose for us. It will be an extra Easter well-spent. .

The Rev. Jonathan D. Riedel-Pastor,  
Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ





## Pick a Topic Sermons/ Ask a Question Sunday

Pastor would like to hear from you about which topics you would like Pastor Jon to feature during his *Pick a Topic* sermons or *Ask a Question Sunday*.

If you have a suggestion, you can call Pastor at 652-6624, or e-mail him at [revjdriedel@gmail.com](mailto:revjdriedel@gmail.com).

## Outsiders in the Bible Phone Classes

The Bible is full of outsiders, one who fell out of the favor of the popular people, who do not fit in and do not even bother trying. Many were rejected by their fellow countrypeople and faced the travails of prejudice and exclusion. Yet God has a place for them in God's vision. Let us journey with some of these outcasts and discover how God's radical inclusivity can broaden our lives and challenge us to love ever more widely. Here is our gallery of outliers.

May 04-Hagar  
May 11-Rahab  
May 18-Esau  
May 25-Tamar

This is the new contact info for the Tuesday noon class. Use the Chicago phone number and Meeting ID instead of the freeconferencecall numbers. We need to fix some sound difficulties. This Zoom info will be the info needed to connect to the Tuesday noon class for the next 20 weeks.

Pastor Jon



## Treasurer's Report

March 16, 2021 to  
April 15, 2021

	Income	Total Exp.
March 19	\$1,605.00	
April 3	1,595.00	
April 5	1,850.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,050.00</b>	<b>\$6,929.05</b>
<b>Difference</b>		<b>(\$1,879.05)</b>
 <b>Phillips Fund</b>		 <b>\$176,708.38</b>
 <b>Family Fund</b>		 <b>76,039.17</b>
 <b>Compassion House</b>		 <b>\$350.00</b>

Thank you to everyone who is supporting our church and its programs.

Dawn Anderson, Treasurer

## Deadline for the June Churchmouse

Please send any information or articles you would like included in the **June Churchmouse** to the office by **Wednesday, May 26**.

You may e-mail information to:  
[Churchmouse@newaygoucc.org](mailto:Churchmouse@newaygoucc.org)  
or leave a hard copy in the office.



## Thank You. . .

These are some of the “Thank You’s” we received from various organizations we have supported in the last year. The one below is from the Michigan Conference The United Church of Christ.

*On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Michigan Conference United Church of Christ, we wish to express our sincere thanks for your church’s faithful support of Our Churches Wider Mission giving in 2020 and also your church’s support of the four special offerings of the denomination — Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing and the Christmas Fund, and to any of the various directed gifts on a national, state or local level.*

*A summary of your giving is:*

*Our heartfelt thanks to your church for their financial support of the mission and Ministry of the United Church of Christ.*

### **From St. Mark’s Episcopal Church**

*Thank you for your donation to support Vera’s House and your continued support!*

From Church World Service:



**Church World Service**

*Dear Friends:*

*Thank you for your generous contribution, which we appreciate more than ever in these challenging times.*

*Your compassionate support is helping impoverished communities develop clean,, reliable water sources. Working with farmers to continue to put food on their tablers, even in the face of uncertainty. And providing food, water, shelter and other necessities to families struggling to rebuild their lives and livelihoods in times of crisis.*

*I have seen the resilience and resolve of the people and communities we assist. And I have been deeply moved by the generosity of people like you, who give hope and opportunity to people in need, here in the U.S. and around the world.*

*May God bless you for your kindness.*

*Rev. John L. McCullough  
CEO President Emeritus  
Church World Service*



# Spring

## Word Search



Test your word-hunting skill with this springtime word search.

### WORD LIST:

FIND ALL THESE WORDS IN THE PUZZLE  
(THEY CAN BE ACROSS, DOWN, DIAGONAL, FORWARDS, OR BACKWARDS):

A	N	I	M	A	L	S	B	U	G	S	S
C	A	T	E	R	P	I	L	L	A	R	P
B	E	S	A	N	M	A	E	V	B	E	R
D	I	J	D	O	E	F	N	U	Q	N	I
F	P	R	O	I	I	D	M	T	R	I	N
P	L	L	D	L	K	B	R	A	A	H	G
T	B	O	D	F	L	A	I	A	I	S	T
C	K	L	W	E	E	N	T	G	G	N	I
E	I	T	B	E	B	E	E	E	Z	U	M
W	D	E	V	O	R	Q	D	V	P	S	E
C	E	U	W	J	Y	S	D	E	V	Z	H
Y	L	F	R	E	T	T	U	B	R	X	J

**ANIMALS**  
**ANT**  
**BIRDFEEDER**  
**BLOOM**  
**BUGS**  
**BUMBLEBEE**  
**BUTTERFLY**  
**CATERPILLAR**  
**FLOWERS**  
**GARDEN**  
**PETAKIDS**  
**RAINBOW**  
**SPRINGTIME**  
**SUNSHINE**  
**WILDLIFE**



Remember to be kind to all the creatures who come out in the spring!

# May, 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2 Worship Svc. 10 am  Grand West Assoc./UCC Spring Mtg. 3 pm via Zoom	3	4	5 Admin: 10am Via Zoom	6	7	8
9 Worship Svc. 10 am by phone & Zoom ZOOM	10	11	12	13 Worship & Pastoral Care 9:30 am via freeconfer- ence call	14	15
16 Worship Svc. 10 am by phone & ZOOM	17	18	19 Council 10 am via Zoom	20	21	22
23 Worship Svc. 10 am by phone & ZOOM	24	25. 4:00 pm Mission & Social Action Conf. Call (978-990-5000 then 283560#)	26	27	28	29
30	31					







# Mother's Day

Second Sunday of May



APPRECIATION  
BEAUTIFUL  
BREAKFAST  
CANDY  
CHARMING  
COMFORT  
DEVOTED  
FLOWERS  
FORGIVING  
GIFTS

GUIDANCE  
HUGS  
JEWELRY  
JOY  
KISSES  
LAUGHTER  
LOVE  
MATERNAL  
MOM  
MOTHER

NURTURE  
PERFUME  
PROTECTIVE  
SHARE  
TELEPHONE  
TENDER  
THE BEST  
WARM  
WISE





## Wednesday Prayers over the Phone

Starting Wednesday, May 5, we will have prayers over the phone. Meet at 7 p.m. each Wednesday for a time of meditation, a sharing of what has brought you joy and what concerns you the most, and a time of open prayer.

To join us, please call 978-990-5000 then 283560#.



## Birthdays in May

3 - Charlie Johnson  
15 - Stan Mercer  
16 - Ken Bell  
17 - Marcia Eager  
21 - Allen Raterink  
26 - Don Cornell  
28 - Jessica Thompson  
28 - Jullie Jenuwine Otto  
30 - Clair Shively

## Anniversaries in May

7 - Bud & Marilyn Spaulding  
14 - Brecken & Michael Masser

## May Worship Schedule on ZOOM

May Worship Schedule-Services will be a combination of in-person and Zoom services. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84864699096> or call 312-626-6799 then 848 6469 9096. Those who wish to be outside may gather on the grass by the speakers, the front parking lot, or under the covered walkway. Social distancing, face masks, and bringing your own chair required.

### 5/2 - Communion

John 15: 2-8  
*"Abiding in Love"*

### 5/9 - John 15: 9-17

*"Friends Together"*

**5/16 - Ask A Question Sunday** - all questions must be submitted in advance via email, phone, or in person.

**John 17:6-19**

### 5/23-Pentecost

Acts 2: 1-21  
*"Where is the Spirit?"*

### 5/30-Trinity Sunday

**John 3: 1-17**  
*"A Different Sort of Trinity"*

