



☞ THE BEACON LIGHT ☞

✝ MARCH/APRIL 2015 ✝

First Congregational Church of Riverhead

An Open and Affirming United Church of Christ

103 First Street Riverhead, New York 11901

Tel: 631-727-2621 ♦ Web: www.fccr.us

☞ PASTOR'S NOTE ☞

Dear friends and members of our church,

The grace and peace of our God to you --

Yesterday at long last I put my hands in the dirt. Finally the snow had receded enough from my garden for me to discover some remnants of fall. It was time for the forlorn and long forgotten friends to find a new home. I moved the once lovely and now winter-worn plants to the composter out back. There, away from the beautiful sunny rays, it felt about twenty degrees colder. Yesterday, I had my hands in the snow, too. I was considerably less thrilled about that.

Now, mind you, I don't totally dislike winter. The icy outdoors makes the warmth within all the more inviting. It has been a fine time for hearty stews and rich hot soups, a few good books, and the occasional fire. But seriously, I trust I'm not alone when I say, I'm over it. At least for this year.

Thank the Good Lord the warmer weather and flower-filled colorful days are on their way. This year it's particularly easy to look with hope to Easter and springtime: to the triumphant blast of the resurrection, to the bright white trumpets of Easter lilies, to celebrating "April that comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers" (Edna St. Vincent Millay) and to witnessing the return of "hallelujah" to our liturgical lexicon and lips. [Sidebar: hallelujah, also spelled alleluia, comes from the plural imperative of the Hebrew *həllēl*, "he praised" + *Yāh*, God. It means simply "Praise (you all) God." Because it is a festive cry, "hallelujah," along with weddings and even flowers and dancing in some Christian traditions, disappears in Lent.]

Of course, I am in good company with my fondness for spring, even among pastors. Perhaps the most eloquent of the clergy crowd on the subject is Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92), the best known English preacher of the latter half of the nineteenth century. He writes, in an "Evening Devotional" of April 24, words that resound with special meaning for me this year and so I share them with you:

"Sweet is the season of spring: the long and dreary winter helps us to appreciate its genial warmth, and its promise of summer enhances its present delights. After periods of depression of spirit, it is delightful to behold again the

light of the Sun of Righteousness; then our slumbering graces rise from their lethargy, like the crocus and the daffodil from their beds of earth; then is our heart made merry with delicious notes of gratitude, far more melodious than the warbling of birds and the comforting assurance of peace, infinitely more delightful than the turtle's note, is heard within the soul. Now is the time for the soul to seek communion with her Beloved; now must she rise from her native sordidness, and come away from her old associations. If we do not hoist the sail when the breeze is favorable, we shall be blameworthy: times of refreshing ought not to pass over us unimproved.

"When Jesus Himself visits us in tenderness, and entreats us to arise, can we be so base as to refuse His request? He has Himself risen that He may draw us after Him: He now by His Holy Spirit has revived us that we may, in newness of life, ascend into the heavenlies, and hold communion with Himself. Let our wintry state suffice us for coldness and indifference; when the Lord creates a spring within, let our sap flow with vigor, and our branch blossom with high resolve. O Lord, if it be not spring time in my chilly heart, I pray Thee make it so, for I am heartily weary of living at a distance from Thee. Oh! the long and dreary winter, when wilt Thou bring it to an end? Come, Holy Spirit, and renew my soul! quicken Thou me! restore me, and have mercy on me! This very night I would earnestly implore the Lord to take pity upon His servant, and send me a happy revival of spiritual life!"

Indeed, the good news is that spring is coming. The snow and ice will soon disappear (please, God). I wish for you a springtime of genuine revival, of smooth sailing in favorable breeze and soulful gardening in the fertile fields of life. Should you ever get to feeling like you could do with a little assistance, pop in and pay me a visit at church, or simply come sit in our sanctuary. Of course, a worship service always serves well as fertilizer for the soul – keep Sundays at 10am in mind. And please be sure to join us for Easter, either in the sanctuary at our usual time, or for our 6:30 sunrise service, at which communion will be served.

Peace, smiles, and a springtime of blessings and wonder to you,

-- Pastor Sean

☞ LENTEN MISSION ☞

Lent provides us with many mission opportunities. We are encouraged to give both locally and globally.

A joint project with our Sunday School last year proved so popular that it is being repeated. Lenten banks are being given out to all who wish to participate. The children and Sunday School teachers will then shop for food using the money collected. These groceries will go to the Long Island Council of Churches food pantry to help feed those in our own community who are hungry.

Our special UCC mission offering for Lent known as “One Great Hour of Sharing” will be taken on March 15th. Funds collected will address root causes that disrupt people’s lives and communities—those impacted by disaster, violence, or poverty. This project is one of our “Five for Five” special UCC missions taken throughout the year. Our church has always been very generous with its support.

The N.Y. Women’s Annual Conference being held this year at Watson Homestead the end of April also has a mission project for Church World Service. Hygiene kits will be collected from UCC churches throughout the state. A list of items to include in each kit is available in our church bulletin and will fit into a gallon zip lock bag. A \$2 donation for shipping is also needed. For further information about the conference itself, including registration forms, please see me or contact the church office.

For our mission committee,
Janet Sanford

☞ WORSHIP ☞

Our Ecumenical Services



Maundy Thursday, April 3 --
Service of the Word and Sacrament
Our sanctuary, 7pm

Good Friday, April 4 -
Solemn Service of the Word
Old Steeple Church, 7pm

May our God bless you with a holy journey from
the cross through the resurrection.

Happy Easter

**Easter Sunrise Service
of Word and Sacrament
6:30 - Grangebél Park**

**Festal Easter Service
of the Word
10:00 - Our Sanctuary
followed by our Breads of the World Coffee Hour**



Please place Easter Lily order by the end of March

☞ PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVANGELISM ☞

A Challenge Grant, offered by the Suffolk Association, was applied for in the hopes of having a Vacation Bible School for the week of August 17-21. It would be held from 9-12 each day and be open to all children entering Kindergarten -Grade 5. VBS would not be limited to the children in our church. There would be no cost to attend. We will keep you posted. The Committee hopes to meet soon to look at our brochure and plan for the year ahead. Suggestions are always welcome.

--Sandy Gruner

☞ PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY ☞

The prayer shawl ministry continues to meet and enjoy comradery and crocheting. If you would like to participate contact any of the following members: Bunny Burns, Nancy Daniels, Sandy Daniels, Pat DiScioscia, Ginger Duvall, Jane Jones, Fran Nill, Barbara Parsons, LuAnne Seaman, or Marion Stark.

☞ FELLOWSHIP/SOCIAL ☞

Coffee hour after church is a time to relax and visit with fellow worshippers. Volunteers are always needed to provide something to eat and prepare the coffee. The signup sheet is on the kitchen door in the fellowship hall. Plans are also in the works for a Sunday afternoon movie ("God Is Not Dead") on April 19th at 3pm.

☞ LADIES NIGHT ☞

The women of the church continue to meet on the last Thursday of the month, usually at Diggers. This is an informal get together and the participants vary from month to month. It is open to all and is a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know each other better.

Deedee Newcomb is our coordinator and sends a reminder each month so she can inform the restaurant of the approximate number who'll attend. If you would like to join us, please let Deedee know by phone (369-9379) or by e-mail (deedeenewc@aol.com)

☞ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS ☞

What a winter. We survived many snow storms, continued to chop ice off of the sidewalks and had frozen pipes and burst pipes in the office that flooded the basement. Thankfully spring is not far off.

We are waiting for the building condition report from Steward Preservation Services. After the building inspection preliminary findings have determined why the east wall is moving. The question now is to come up with a plan to deal with it. John Condon, a building engineer from Mattituck, has been contacted and is in the process of reviewing the material sent to him for his recommendations. You can be assured that the project is moving forward and whatever has to be done to make the necessary repairs will be done with God's help.

-- Ron Blake

☞ BREAD & MORE I.N.N ☞

Bread and More INN soup kitchen continues to serve a full dinner 3 nights a week, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, in the fellowship hall at 5:30 PM. An average of about 66 people have been served in the last few months. We had to close due to dangerous weather recently 3 times and in December 2 times during the heating oil to gas conversion. Donations of breads, bagels, rolls and desserts continue from Beach Bakery and Sunset Deli in West Hampton Beach and King Kullen and Blue Duck Bakery of Riverhead.

--Deedee Newcomb

~A HERO AMONG US~

You probably know Christopher Lull. He's that tall nice looking young man who comes to church now and then with his family –mom and dad, Carrie and AJ LaCombe; grandmother, Connie Lull; and siblings, Mathew and Peyton. Chris attended Sunday School right here as a child and was confirmed by Pastor Joan Finck during her tenure here as our interim minister. You may have seen the story in the local newspaper about the heroic rescue this past December when a man fell into the Peconic River from a dock in the parking lot.

Chris and two friends Izzy DePiero and Tyrek Highsmith, were walking along the river bank on their way to MacDonald's for supper one evening when they heard distress calls coming up from the river. Using their cell phones as flashlights, they located a man who had fallen into the water. Quickly they made the 911 call for help and attempted to pull the man out themselves. Their quick thinking saved a life that evening. They were told by medical personnel that five more minutes in that cold water could have changed the outcome dramatically.

The three friends were honored by a group known as Heidi's Helping Hands, named for Heidi Behr, a young Riverhead woman working as a volunteer EMT who was killed in an ambulance accident several years ago. They were also recognized for their heroism at a Riverhead Town Board meeting. Wouldn't Chris' grandfather (the late Jim Lull, Town Councilman,) have been proud!

--Janet Sanford

~THRIFT SHOP~

The Alley Cat Thrift Shop opened in February, however many days were lost due to inclement weather. A new schedule has been sent. If you did not receive one or were not included and you have time you can devote to this very important income generator for our church, please call Nancy Daniels at the church office – 727-2621. The hours for the Thrift Shop hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00AM – 2:00PM and Saturday 9:00AM – 1:00PM. If you don't have four hours to devote, that is okay. Coming in for a couple of hours and helping with the merchandise (i.e., cleaning, sorting, pricing, displaying), would be greatly appreciated.

~BENEVOLENCE TREASURER~

After many years of serving as our benevolence treasurer Don Wylie is retiring. In this role it has been his responsibility to receive and disburse all monies contributed to our church as benevolences. We are greatly appreciative of the wonderful job he has done.

Rebekah Wooten has graciously agreed to take on this position for the 2015 year. Thanks, Rebekah!

--Janet Sanford

❧ QUICHE FUNDRAISER ❧

Volunteers are needed to bake, prepare salads, take orders and deliver quiche. Wednesday, May 6 7:05PM for salad prep and Thursday, May 7 10:00AM for delivery. Call Collene Richardson if you would like to help and this will be your first time or it has been a long time since you have helped. The number is 631 722-4089. Please leave a message. The traditional helpers will receive reminder calls and/or emails from Susan Conrad.

❧ VISITATION ❧

The past several months of severe winter weather have certainly put a damper on our ability to get out and about. It's been especially difficult for our visitation committee members to keep up with our usual visits. Phone calls to keep in touch have been useful, but not nearly as satisfying as a face to face visit.

All of us are looking forward to warmer days with lots of sunshine. Our visits can then resume a more normal pattern. We are planning for the Spring/Easter visits, which is when we traditionally give a small colorful spring plant to those we call on.

As always, I remind you, if you are aware of someone who could use a visit or a card, please let us know. And I urge everyone to be extra thoughtful as these last days of winter come to a close, make that phone call to a shut-in neighbor, offer to pick up a few groceries if you doing some shopping, or offer a ride to church some Sunday. It will be much appreciated!

For the committee,
Janet Sanford

❧ CONCERTS ❧

Here's to the Ladies - With a Twist

On Sunday, March 1 we were treated to a concert by our own Jeff Wentz and Rusty Krantz. Rusty began by explaining that some of the best known songs from Broadway shows are often given to the female leads. The 'twist' was that now, Rusty was going to take on those much loved songs. With frequent costume changes and a running narrative on the place each song played in the show, we were entertained for the afternoon in our beautiful sanctuary. Jeff provided Rusty with perfectly executed accompaniment. As Rusty said, "The only lady he could not control was Mother Nature." A winter storm kept many away from the concert and the reception. CDs are available for \$5.00. Thank you to all who ventured out and to all of you who helped to make the reception a lovely ending to a wonderful afternoon. A third concert is planned for our church on Saturday, April 25th at 7:00pm when our choir and the choir from Mt. Sinai Congregational will join together for a concert of religious music. George Moravek will direct the joint choir. The concert will be repeated on Sunday, April 26th at 3:00pm at Mt. Sinai Congregational Church.

--Sandy Gruner

Excerpts from their March Newsletter:

LICCDonate.org

We invite you to visit our website at www.LICCDonate.org to make convenient cash contributions so we can buy food for our guests with dietary restrictions and Feed a Family of Four. If you donate through this website, we will do all the work for you, and the ever-increasing number of our guests with special dietary needs will be able to eat.

Michael Fairchild, who produced the half-hour "Faiths of Long Island" video for the Long Island Multi-Faith Forum has posted it on YouTube. You can see the video at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ncnn5pd6Gu4>

and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOsL0LaClgU>

April 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

One Year to Live: Living this Year as if it were your last

Based on Stephen Levine's powerful soul-searching book! \$10 lunch.

Led by Rev. Robert W. Gunn, Ph.D. pastor and psychotherapist

For more information, please visit www.uccsyosset.org

Please register in advance at 516-921-2240 or pastor.uccsyosset@gmail.com



EASTER LILY ORDER



Easter lilies may be ordered in memory or in honor of loved ones for Easter Sunday.

The cost of each plant is \$12. Please place orders by March 29.

Please fill in the information below and mail it with payment to the church at 103 First Street, Riverhead, NY 11901 or place the order in the collection plate. Please mark the envelope: "**Easter Lily Order**"

GIVEN BY: _____

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

(OR WRITE A DEDICATION OF YOUR CHOICE)

☞ SOME CHURCH CALENDAR ITEMS ☞

- Every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 5:30-7:00pm: *Bread & More/INN*
- Every Tuesday and Friday, 7:00pm and Saturday, 8:00am: *AA (English-language meetings)*
- ALLEY CAT THRIFT SHOP: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00AM – 2:00PM Saturdays 9:00AM-1:00PM (Volunteers particularly needed on Saturdays).
- APRIL 3 – Maundy Thursday 7:00PM our sanctuary
- APRIL 4 – Good Friday Old Steeple Church Aquebogue 7:00PM
- APRIL 5 – Easter Sunrise Service 6:30AM Grangebelle Park
Festal Easter Service of the Word, our sanctuary, followed by Breads of the World Coffee Hour
- APRIL 19-Sunday afternoon movie in the Fellowship Hall 3:00PM
- APRIL 26- Concert of Religious Music our sanctuary 7:00PM
- APRIL 27 – Concert of Religious Music Mt. Sinai Congregational Church 3:00PM
- MAY 7 – Quiche Fundraiser

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