



**WHAT'S UP**

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**READING THE RECIPE HELPS**

Some of you may know that I am a huge fan of Netflix's The Great British Baking Show. If you've never seen it, it's a competition where amateur bakers are given three baking challenges every weekend for ten weeks. The one who does the best each week is named Star Baker, and the one who does the worst...

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goes home.

The second challenge is called the Technical Challenge. The bakers are all given the same ingredients, equipment and a pared-down recipe. They all have baking skills going in, but sometimes they have no clue what it is they're making or what it's supposed to look like. Sometimes they're required to make things they've never made before. Sometimes they don't know how to make the required custard, or jam, or meringue. The directions often just say, "Make the jam." Real helpful. They're supposed to just go on their own power and just wing it, and pray it comes out all right. Often, the results are a disaster.

For us as disciples, if we don't read the Bible, how are we supposed to know what to do, if we don't read about what Jesus has said and done? Are we going into this challenge with just our wits, and a pared down version of the Bible we were taught as children? Or should we go in connected to God, and reading the whole recipe (or at least the gospels)? Shouldn't we know what Jesus did and said? Shouldn't we understand the context and what it all means for us today? A lot of people think all we have to do is be "good" and "moral" and to do good things for people, and that's enough. Who needs the Bible, then? What do we need it for? Anybody can be good and moral and do good things for people. We don't need church for that. We need church to learn how to be in relationship with God, and how to follow Christ. For that, we need to read the whole recipe.

Which is NOT to say, "Oh, just do everything the Bible says, and you're fine." No. We will all read this recipe and interpret it our own way, just as each baker will make the dish differently. Some people's crême patissiere will come out great, and some will be runny. We, too, will come out with different beliefs and opinions about the Bible, and our understanding will not all look the same. And that's okay. The bakers always have a chance to bounce back in the Showstopper challenge if their Technical was awful.

We, too, always have a chance to bounce back when we have a bad day. God can always help us to rally when we're afraid, when our spirits are low, when we think we're doomed to failure. Reading the Bible, the gospels in particular, chewing on it, wrestling with it, talking it over with others, will only help us to understand more and more. It's also okay to ask questions. Not only okay, but imperative! Why do people think we should just take the Bible at face value? This is one complicated recipe. It would help if we understood what we're reading before we start baking, yes?

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**2021 CONSISTORY**

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## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

That's not to say you have to understand everything about the Bible before you can follow Jesus. Not at all. We'll never completely understand. In fact, the more often we read the recipe, the more we see and understand. But it helps to know more, to be in relationship with God, so that we know how we're called.

On Sunday, May 2, I will celebrate worship with you for the last time as your Bridge Pastor. It has been my absolute pleasure and delight to be among you, to witness your grace and caring, to learn so much about worship, preaching, theology, leading memorial services and technology! Oh, the technology! To know God's love among you has been an incredible opportunity and joy for me. I am so grateful for you all, but I must mention Charlotte, Donna, Mark, Laura and especially Jay for all of their hard work and dedication to St. James, and for the unending support and love shown to me. You will continue to be in my prayers, as the man holding the recipe book, Pastor Chuck, will offer new challenges for the new recipe you will be making – finding a new settled pastor. What does this recipe require? What ingredients do you need? Pastor Chuck will assist you in writing your own recipe – also known as your profile. As you do so, may you allow God (the master baker!) to lead you every step of the way in finding the exact right person to lead St. James into the future. Who does God want you to call? You will have all the time you need. On your mark. Get set. Bake.

With all my love and many blessings,  
Pastor Beth

## UNDIE SUNDAY



For Mother's Day, May 9<sup>th</sup>, we're collecting new underwear for woman, men, and children in need. Donations will be going to the Salvation Army Shelter in Pottstown and to Bethany Children's Home. Donations can be placed in the clothes basket, located in the Narthex, or in the weather proof container under the portico by the entrance to the Narthex.

## GREETINGS FROM YOU INTERIM PASTOR

Hi! My name is Charles Maxfield. You can call me "Pastor Chuck." I look forward to joining you in ministry at Saint James, as your interim pastor.

I grew up in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, went to Penn State and Lancaster Seminary, and have been an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ for fifty years. I have served churches in Maine, New York, Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania. I have also taught in colleges and written articles. I sense a special calling to training church leaders for ministry, and have taught courses for lay ministers.

I live in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, with my wife, Constance Lezenby, who is an architect, a spiritual director, and an active member of Qwynedd Friends Meeting. We both have children and grandchildren from a previous marriage. My two sons and four grandchildren live in North Dakota and Minnesota. Connie's three children and five grandchildren live in Salford and Landisville, Pennsylvania, and Fredericksburg, Virginia.

I expect to be at Saint James in Limerick on Sundays, and on Mondays, and other times as needed. You will need to inform me of pastoral needs; I will be available to talk with anyone by appointment.

The time that we will share together is unique. At some point we hope to be resuming activities that have been cancelled or altered because of the pandemic. With prayer and honest discussion we will seek to know the will of God as we move through uncharted territory.

May God bless our partnership in ministry.  
CHARLES MAXFIELD

## JOY IS...

It is so easy to become discouraged especially in times of uncertainty, and when we are challenged and anxious about problems or the changing world



around us. Sometimes we become distressed, get upset and give up being joyful.

We might agree that having joy in our life makes us feel good, helps us to be cheerful and fills us with a vibrant happiness. However, joy in its fuller, spiritual meaning of expressing God's goodness means much more. The ability to feel and show joy does not come from just the favorable situations of our human lives; it comes from God. Joy is a spiritual quality that lasts forever. We cannot lose joy anymore that we can lose God. We always have it! It is a deep-rooted inspired happiness.

The Bible tells us that that true joy comes from God and is ours forever. It transforms and regenerates us. In the old testament, Ezra and the Levites were translating God's Law so that the people could understand it. He told the people that "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). In the new testament, Galatians 5::22, Paul wrote in a letter that joy is a "fruit of the Spirit". Joy from God gives us an awareness of the presence of good. And, as Jesus prayed with His disciples, he said, "*I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. John 17:13*".

In a YouTube video, Matthew McConaughey his perspective of joy. He said that "happiness is a response to what happens to and around us, but joy comes from within." (Guideposts: Mornings with Jesus 2021)

Try this: *Write the word joy upside down in your nondominant hand. Hard but possible. Jesus taught that even when life is upside down, JOY is recognizable.*

May His Peace, Love and JOY be with you always!

## SCRIPTURES AND SERMONS FOR MAY

In John's gospel, Jesus shares his final thoughts with his disciples around the table at the Last Supper. This "farewell address" is reported in chapters 14 through 17 of *John*. On May 9 and 16 we modern disciples will listen to these words and reflect on what they mean to us today.

**May 9: John 15:9-17; 1 John 5:1-5 Chosen to Love**  
Jesus commands his disciples to "love one another as I have loved you." (v. 12) and later says "You did not choose me; I chose you." (v.16).

Are we Christians by our choice or by God's choice?

**May 16: John 17:6-26; 1 John 5:9-13 One in Christ**

Jesus prays to the Father for his disciples, "that they may be one." (V. 21)

What kind of Unity is Jesus talking about?

May 23 is Pentecost - 50 days after Easter, when the disciples gathered and the Holy Spirit empowered them.

**May 23: Acts 2:7-21; John 16:4b-15 What Does This Mean?**

What are the signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit?

May 30 is Trinity Sunday in the church calendar.

**May 30: Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17 Holy**

The Isaiah passage provides us with the outline of our worship service.

What does the word *holy* mean? What does it mean to us? What is *holiness*.

## May

### Birthday

1....Scott Swinehart  
10....Thomas Mogel  
13....Sarah Cibulsky  
13....Emily Hendricks  
13....Linda Kramer  
15....Nya May Myers  
15....Donna Pinto  
22....Robert Caldwell  
23....Michael Serina  
25....Clinton Starkey  
29....Susan Myers

### Anniversary

6....Peter & Adrien Cibulsky  
11....Carl & Mae Mogel  
21....Richard & Charlotte Fiedler  
23....Arthur & Melissa Gelwicks  
25....Jan & Patricia Dafina



Congratulations and best wishes from your church family!

## FROM TRANSITION TEAM

St. James Transition Team

Now that we have our interim minister, your transition team is responsible for filling out all the information requested by the conference on our church profile to begin the process of looking for a new settled pastor. We will need help from the congregation to answer many of the questions. Attached is a family questionnaire to gather information on our church families. If each family could fill this out and return it to the church by May15th it would be a great help. You can email it to [office@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:office@stjames-ucc.org), mail it to the church (Attn: transition), or drop it in the box in the narthex.

We would also like to schedule some small group meetings to gather other information. Perhaps we can do some bag-lunch meetings on Sunday after church. We will send out more information on meetings soon.

Please keep us in your prayers as we try to follow the right path and God's lead for the future at St. James.

### FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

#### COMPLETE ONE QUESTIONNAIRE PER FAMILY UNIT

Please take a moment to respond to the following confidential questions. Responses will help the Pastoral Search Committee create a Local Church Profile for our church. You may view the complete document on the national web site, [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org). This profile will be used to describe our church to potential pastors.

#### PROFILE OF CONGREGATION:

Age: list the total number of members in each age group that are in your household including yourself:

\_\_\_\_\_ 0-5 years      \_\_\_\_\_ 19-34 years      \_\_\_\_\_ 50-64 years      \_\_\_\_\_ 75 years or older  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-18 years      \_\_\_\_\_ 35-49 years      \_\_\_\_\_ 65-74 years

Education of adults in your household, list all adult members in your household including yourself:

\_\_\_\_\_ Did not complete high school      \_\_\_\_\_ Some college/vocational      \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High school graduate      \_\_\_\_\_ College graduate

Family units, check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ Couple with children at home      \_\_\_\_\_ Single  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Couple without children at home      \_\_\_\_\_ Single parent with children at home

What is the occupation of each adult in your household:

\_\_\_\_\_ Business      \_\_\_\_\_ Farmer/rancher      \_\_\_\_\_ Professional      \_\_\_\_\_ Tradesperson  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Clerical      \_\_\_\_\_ Laborer/  
    Manufacturing      \_\_\_\_\_ Student      \_\_\_\_\_ Other

What is the current employment information of each adult in your household

\_\_\_\_\_ Employed      \_\_\_\_\_ Not currently employed      \_\_\_\_\_ Retired

**PLEASE RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS YOU WISH**

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## PRAYER CONCERNS

For our friends Betty Wines, Heather Yates, Melissa Moore, Ellie Donofrio, Frank Miller, Joyce Swinehart, Sang Hi Crater *and others who are in long term care or unable to leave their homes. We pray for comfort, peace, healing, and companionship for each of them.*



For our friends Tabby, Peggy M, Sue, Jessica, Helen M, Irene S, Jay P, Carl, Jean S, Van S, JC, Michelle, Ken, Betsy R, Barry G, Sue J, Mildred, Charlotte F, Bobbie T, Bob M, Bonnie, Paul M *and all cancer survivors, we pray for treatment where it is possible and release from suffering where it is needed.*

For our friends Taylor, Baby Franklin, Tiffany S, Sue S, Manah, Judy O, Rita L, Ilene, Bob S, Gene, Bill *and others with ongoing health concerns and challenging life of God's presence through the support of our congregation.*

*Prayers for all veterans that are still suffering from PTSD and all other side effects from their service in the military.*

For the friends and family of Dennis Dempsy *and for all who grieve at the deaths of those they deeply love and dearly miss, we ask that they might know the comfort God offers through the community of faith as we surround them with our prayers.*

*Lord once again we come to you with thanksgiving for all the prayers you have answered. There are still many that we continue to pray healing for; you know each of them by name and know the healing that is needed for each one. We ask that you relieve their pain and discomfort and fill them with your peace. We pray for all that have lost loved ones and friends and that you give them your peace and comfort. We pray for peace for our world that we can learn to care and love each other as you have ask us to do. We pray for wholeness of mind, body and spirit upon us all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Please note that we will remove names on the prayer list after one month, except for homebound and hospitalized members. Let us know if you would like to add or renew a request by office phone or email.

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## PRAYING FOR ST. JAMES MEMBERS

Initiated by St. James Prayer Team, each Sunday two church families are being included in the Sunday worship prayer time. You are invited to include these members and their families in your prayers throughout that week.

### April

- 2 *William and Elaine Burnett  
Rugene and Robert Caldwell*
- 9 *Peter, Adrien, Jenna, Sarah Cibulsky  
Jennifer, Cody, Bret Clarke*
- 16 *Joyce Clarke  
Theodore (Ted) Conner*
- 23 *Jim and Dorothy Cossaboom  
Sang Hi Crater*
- 30 *Patricia Dalina  
Eleanor Donofrio*

# CALENDAR

## May 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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<b>2 Fifth Sunday of Easter</b> Worship Service 10:15 am In-person & via Zoom	<b>3</b> Boy Scouts 7pm	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9 Sixth Sunday of Easter</b> Worship Service 10:15 am In-person & via Zoom	<b>10</b> Boy Scouts 7pm	<b>11</b> Consistory 7pm	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16 Seventh Sunday of Easter</b> Worship Service 10:15 am In-person & via Zoom	<b>17</b> Boy Scouts 7pm	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23 Pentecost Sunday</b> Worship Service 10:15 am In-person & via Zoom	<b>24</b> Boy Scouts 7pm	<b>25</b> District AA 7pm	<b>26</b> Endowment 7pm	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30 First Sunday after Pentecost</b> Worship Service 10:15 am In-person & via Zoom	<b>31</b> Boy Scouts 7pm					

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## CONFERENCE & LOCAL NEWS

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### From the PSEC Racial Justice Initiative team

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We have gain heard the horror of three deadly shootings, this time at Atlanta area spas where eight people lost their lives. In the aftermath, many questions swirled around the situation, including the motive of the shooter and the treatment of the case by the Atlanta police.

The shooter, Robert Aaron Long, will face many charges as a result of his actions. However, the one most surprising to me was the verdict of his home church congregation that he was no longer welcome, he was no longer a member, he was expelled, he was too vile to be one of them.

These actions provoked many questions for us, as congregations and as individuals. Included in a short list are:

How would we react if Robert Aaron Long was one of ours? Would we be strong enough to keep our baptismal covenant with him and bold enough to extend our love to the families of the murdered?

Have we had tough conversations about racism, homophobia, and xenophobia? Have we cultivated a safe space for these types of discussions or is our space safe in the knowledge that we might never have these discussions?

Have we stated and re-stated that the Gospel message is one of love, and that violence is never the result of love.

Violence against Asian Americans increased nearly one hundred fifty percent in the past year. We have witnessed the boldness of hatred, that was once closeted, break into the open. It is long past time for congregations to have the hard talks, to examine and state their beliefs, to, paraphrasing MLK,..... bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive; bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience

and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

We encourage you and your congregations to find ways to have these hard conversations and find ways to stand with and bear witness to the stories of those who are struggling for justice.

- Raymond Edwards, Micah 6:8 F

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### PSEC Climate Justice Team and PSEC Churches Join Together to Make a Difference

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Maybe it didn't need the offer of a grant from the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference to spur them on, but seven PSEC churches have been awarded matching grants from the Climate Justice Team's budget for environment friendly projects this spring.

First UCC, Royersford will buy supplies for their raised garden bed used to educate youth about growing.

Immanuel Shillington will remove shrubs and replace them with pollinator and migratory-bird friendly plants, and use it as a teaching garden for their nature camps and preschool.

Peace in Zion will purchase seeds, and vegetable plants for their Monarch-butterfly attracting raised garden, and donate the yield to the local food pantry.

Ridge Valley will replace old light bulbs with efficient LEDs.

Salem Doylestown will replace aging spotlights and others with LEDs.

Falkner Swamp will renew their pollinator garden.

Trinity Collegeville will plant a no-till regenerative soil-method teaching garden.

With thanks to the Conference Consistory for offering the team a budget, we salute the churches who will plant, grow, teach, save, learn, and share the bounty with neighbors. We all benefit when communities of faith help preserve the environment!

- Rev. Marian Shearer and Rev. Karl Jones, co-chairs, Climate Justice Team

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May 2021 NEWSLETTER

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## Notes & Reminders

Materials for the May Newsletter are due on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

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### **RETURN TO COMBINED IN-PERSON & ZOOM WORSHIP**

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All Worship services are currently held at 10:15 a.m. combined in-person and Zoom.

**The Zoom information for worship is:**

Meeting ID: 979 4141 8754 Passcode: 742701

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799

**For Phone Zoom participants** \* 6 to mute and unmute yourselves.