



WHAT'S UP

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Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11: 28-30

For my Continuing Education time last month, and in preparation for Lent, I went in for a “spiritual

tune-up.” I recently participated in my first ever silent retreat, for four days at St. Raphaela Center in Havertown. No talking or devices for four days. I was nervous for a number of reasons. For one thing, I’m almost never quiet. At home, I chatter to myself constantly and/or have music playing. The only time I try to be quiet is when I am trying to listen for God. I was also nervous because they told me not to bring any devices. I had nightmares imagining the nuns taking away my phone. “But I need it for my alarm!” I’d whine in desperation. “We told you to bring an alarm clock.” Finally the still, small voice said, “Just go and buy a clock. Then you won’t be anxious anymore.” So I broke down and bought a small clock. No phone, and no talking, for four days. Gulp.

I learned a number of things during the retreat. First, that not talking or having my phone handy wasn’t nearly as hard as I thought it would be. When you’re in a small room with nothing to do except read, pray, meditate, sleep and exercise, it’s not that hard. No distractions. I was able to meditate all morning each day, and write in my journal whatever came to me. I also brought several books, but I really only read one – *Finding Meaning, the Sixth Stage of Grief* by David Kessler. An amazing book, which became an offshoot to learning more about myself and my own challenges around grief.

I also learned that distractions at home are a problem for me when it comes to giving God my *full attention*. Jesus and I brainstormed ways that I could eliminate a number of these distractions. Now that I’m home again, I’m working on putting those plans into action, including getting some noise-cancelling headphones. That’ll help!

Most of all, I was a little concerned because God and I don’t communicate the same way we used to. As I mentioned in a recent sermon, God used to communicate with me at first in ways that were unmistakable to me, like being hit over the head with a sledgehammer. But as my spiritual director has pointed out to me, maybe I’m not drinking milk anymore but am being fed solid food. What I learned on my retreat was that God is definitely still speaking, but that my

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CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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distractions have been holding me back from being fully present. In this retreat, I was able to be fully present. I also learned that faith is not just the conviction of things unseen, but also of things not felt. It truly is okay to simply be present with Jesus and feel like nothing is happening. Just because we don't feel him doesn't mean he isn't there.

It just goes to show how difficult, but how worth it, it is to live in the Way of Jesus. When we eliminate distractions and give God our full attention during Lent, when we embrace the secret rewards of living a life with Jesus, we will know joy, peace, grace, comfort, strength and love in spades. Jesus shows us this Way, if we are willing to put distractions aside and give God our full attention. Come and see.

With love in Christ,

Pastor Beth

CHURCH FUNDRAISER:

Recipes Needed for St. James Cookbook

Women's fellowship is gathering your favorite recipes to make a St. James cookbook as a fundraiser for the church. The cookbook will include your favorite recipes for beverages, appetizers, main dishes, side dishes, desserts, cookies, and any other foods.



The plan is have the cookbook ready for the 2023 holiday gift giving season. We will need to start collecting recipes now through June to allow time to assemble the cookbook in time for the holiday season.

Please bring your recipes to the church and drop off in the designated box in the Narthex or email the recipes to Linda Kramer at Lindy13QARA@msn.com.

If you have any questions or would like to assist with the cookbook, please contact Kristen Serina or Linda Kramer.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



On March 19th, St. James will recognize "One Great Hour of Sharing" with a mission moment and request or donations.

OGHS is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries.

CONSISTORY MEETING

February Consistory Minutes:
Election of Officers

- Rich Fiedler - President
- Bob Walters - Vice President
- Kristen Serina - Secretary

Consistory

- Supply pastor is needed for April 16
- Community Days-St James is interested in having a presence in the Royersford and Limerick Community Days
- Financial Best Practices Webinar-Consistory recommends that the Treasurer and Financial Secretary attend on February 28.
- Lay Leaders Convocation - April 15-It is a full day of worship at Trinity and Zion in Pottstown from 8:30 am to 3 pm and the cost is \$40, or \$20 without lunch.
- Narthex rental-There is a yoga group expressing interested in renting the narthex on Tuesday evenings.
 - Additional Microphone for music-A new microphone will be purchased to help improve the sound quality of the music for live streaming and video recordings.
- Screens in the sanctuary-There was a recommendation to purchase a second screen for the other side. Bob Walters will research what the cost is.

Respectfully submitted, Kristen Serina

PRAYER CONCERNS

For our friends Betty Himes, Heather Yates, Melissa Moore, Sang Hi Crater, Joan Rosen *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 Van S, Michelle, Ken, Betsy R, Sue J, Charlotte F, Bobbie T, Paul M, Chet M, Dottie, Bonnie, BJ, Diane, Ric F, Sharon R, Linda S, John K, Jessica, Tabby, Karen, George N, Marianne K, Karen, Carl H, Phil, Nancy B, Ginny, Patricia S, Dodie S, Ralph B, Carol T, Kork M *and all cancer survivors, we pray for treatment where it is possible and release from suffering where it is needed.*

For our friends Fred R, Joan R, Nancy B, Clara S, Barb, Joyce K, Jim M, Stephanie B, Todd L *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.

Lord, we come to with praise and thanksgiving. We thank you for the prayers that you have answered and the healing you have given for those we have prayed for. We ask for your continued healing of those that are still struggling with health issues. We pray for comfort and peace for those that have lost loved ones; that their loved ones are now with you. We pray for health and wholeness of mind, body and spirit upon all your children. 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.



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.

March

- 5 *Donna Pinto*
Ken and Diane Raspen

- 12 *Joan (Ide) Rosen*
Joy Rubeo

- 19 *Richard, Amy, Liesel and*
Zachery Sarfert

- 26 *Dianne Savitsky*
Keith Schell

CALENDAR

March 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Midweek Study 1pm G/P Men's Bible Study 12 pm	2 G/P Session 7pm	3	4 Men's Breakfast 8:30 am
5 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am	6 Boy Scouts 7pm	7 Mission Committee 7pm G/P Women's Bible Study 7pm	8 Midweek Study 1pm G/P Men's Bible Study 12 pm	9	10	11 Fellowship Dinner 5 pm
12 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am	13 Boy Scouts 7pm	14	15 Midweek Study 1pm G/P Men's Bible Study 12 pm	16 G/P Session 7pm	17	18 Consistory Retreat 9-12pm
19 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am Worship Committee 11:30am	20 Boy Scouts 7pm	21 G/P Women's Bible Study 7pm	22 Midweek Study 11am G/P Men's Bible Study 12 pm	23 Endowment 7pm	24	25
26 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am	27 Boy Scouts 7pm	28 AA District Meeting 7pm	29 Midweek Study 1pm G/P Men's Bible Study 12 pm	30	31	

CONFERENCE & LOCAL NEWS

TURKEY AND SYRIA EARTHQUAKE APPEAL



The devastating earthquake on the border of Turkey and Syria is shattering news and adds to the challenges of the war in this area for over a decade. Your donations through the UCC will be deposited into the International Emergency fund designated for “Turkey and Syria Earthquake Response”. Your generous financial support will be used by our partners in the areas of greatest need, for relief and long-term recovery

Checks can be made out to St James UCC, with “Turkey and Syria” in the memo section, or you can donate online at: support.ucc.org. Under “Designate your gift,” press the down arrow and select Turkey and Syria Earthquake Relief.

CEMETERY PLOTS AT LIMERICK GARDEN OF MEMORIES.

About 40 years ago, two members of St. James purchased a total of 250 burial plots in Limerick Garden of Memories to be given to members of the congregation and their families who were in such need. Nothing has happened to these plots for the intervening 40 years. These plots can only be returned to the cemetery; St. James gets no income. If you have use of these plots and are interested in learning more, please contact Margie Schweitzer at 610-495-1988 by March 31, at which time the deeds will be released back to the Garden of Memories.

Even God Rested (Solitude) Kim Thomas

Solitude is the twin sister of silence. One can experience silence without solitude, but one cannot experience solitude without silence. While silence is about quiet, solitude adds to the dimension of away-ness. As we take time to withdraw from people, the concentration of spiritual awareness can be amplified in silent solitude.

You can build an attitude of solitude in the midst of people, but the most rest-producing solitude is what we experience when we cease from crowds and come away. Even Christ took times to withdraw from the crowds so he might reconnect with the Father through times of prayer. His time in the desert, in preparation for his ministry, was truly a time of spiritual reopening as he affirmed and reaffirmed the truths of God. And at later times, after he and the disciples had been ministering to crowds, the Gospels tell us that he took time to withdraw and pray.

But it isn't enough just to come away. This is not just about “me” time. For the feast of solitude to become the ripening process of being, we will need to immerse ourselves in the presence of God. There is common misconception that solitude is simply about emptying ourselves, or that it is about isolation and alienation. Nothing could be further from the truth. Solitude is not a time of emptiness- it is a time of fullness. It is fullness that does not disappoint, a filling that overflows with contentment and refreshment. Solitude transforms isolation with the realization that we are never alienated and alone if we are believers walking in faith. Solitude is a concentrated time of quiet withdrawal when we peel back the curtain of alone, and we find the loving heavenly Father who delights in our being in his presence.

St. James United Church of Christ
321 South Limerick Road
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March 2023 2022 NEWSLETTER

Notes & Reminders

Materials for the March Newsletter are due on March 16th, 2023.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

I know these are difficult times for many of us with the prices of food increasing and other prices going up on other things.

It has been difficult for many to sign up for food items needed and help to assist in feeding. We have one more month that we have signed up for in April, but it seems to be unsure if we will be able to do this.

I understand and if we cannot, I want to thank everyone who has helped in this mission project.

Charlotte Fiedler

MARCH

Birthday

1....Melissa Gelwicks
4....Amy Sarfert
5....Cynthia Valerio
8....Diane Raspen
21....Evelyn Phelen
23....Bret Clarke
24....Richard Fiedler
26....Charlotte Fiedler
31....Patricia Dalina



Congratulations and best wishes
from your church family!