



PeacePress

Official Peace Church Newsletter
A Global Mission Church



The mission of Peace United Church of Christ is to reach our community for Christ, develop disciples, and empower all people for ministry.

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PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

by Pastor Tom Warren



As we look to our annual Rally Day celebration, perhaps it is important to acknowledge that while we have much to celebrate, we do so in a time which temps us not to celebration, but to lament. Much is amiss in our nation and the world.

While I write, absolute chaos is reigning in Afghanistan. Lives continue to be lost and many people are asking, after 20 years of engagement there, what was it all for? Our Covid-19 pandemic, which we thought was settling down, has surged back to life with the Delta variant. This surge includes the sad politicization of masks and vaccines. There have been over 450 Mass shootings this year alone, all while hundreds of wildfires have scorched the western United States as rivers dry up and rain falls, for the first time in history, in Greenland. There is, indeed, much to lament. More and more people are suggesting that we are in an existential crisis.

Increasingly, the therapeutic community is sounding the alarm for people to pay attention to their mental health. All that is happening in our nation and around the world is making people depressed, and in some cases unstable. We ignore this at our own peril. Luckily, we have spiritual resources which can be helpful during these times.

First, the Book of Lamentations is a biblical resource that was a response to the despair and loss that ancient Israel experienced at the hands of Babylon in 587 B.C.E. Lamentations is expressed grief, pain, anger, despair, and ultimately, renewed hope among the people of Israel. Indeed, almost at the center point of the book there are these words: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him (Lam. 3: 22-24)."

Second, a traditional practice of the Israelites during times of pain, loss, and lack of faithfulness, was to repent and put on sackcloth and ash. Perhaps a most familiar story illustrating this tradition comes from the Book of Jonah. God calls Jonah to go to the city of Ninevah and call the people there away from their sin and back to faithfulness. After Jonah's word, "the people of Ninevah believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone great and small, put on sackcloth and ash (Jonah 3: 5)." Repentance was a powerful private and public act.

So, I want to invite the members of Peace Church (and your friends!) to come together for a Service of Lamentation on Thursday, September 30th at 7:00pm. We will use this time of worship to express our grief over the many tragedies that are engulfing our land and the wider world. We will engage in confession and repentance, pray to God for forgiveness, healing, and wisdom, all while reaffirming our faith in God and in the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. As part of this service we will take up an offering of hope dedicated to a local, national, and international situation of pain and loss.

Please make plans to join us for a Service of Lament.
Pastor Tom

A NOTE FROM ELISABETH



Questions - choices - decisions! Life is full of them.

Questions remain about the safety of singing in church. With the current surge in Covid and the Delta variant, properly wearing masks seems to still make a lot of sense particularly if trying to sing. I heard one minister recommend singing very softly while also wearing the mask. Sounded like good advice.

It's an understatement to say the pandemic has created a lot of changes and challenges, and we need to assess where we are. Think for a moment about the pre-pandemic choir. Quite a few choir member changes have occurred in the last year and a half - for several reasons. Some things just won't be as they were before.

In Isaiah 43 God tells us He is doing a new thing - and we also need to think in new ways completely under His leadership.

As I wrote last month, our hymnal is a tool for worship and prayer. I found a great hymn in our hymnal that I had never heard before on page 465 entitled We Are Called to Follow Jesus by Jim and Jean Strathdee. I am planning to use it for the offertory in the service on September 12. Please follow and meditate on the words during the offering (and I'll probably put a reminder in the bulletin). It was written in 1978, but is so applicable for today.

Questions - choices - decisions call for prayer and listening for the voice of God.

MISSION OF THE MONTH: CROP HUNGER WALK

The 41st annual Greater Greensboro CROP Hunger Walk on October 3, 2021 is a 5K (3.1 mile) community event that raises funds to fight hunger. The walk is one of the largest CROP Hunger Walks in the nation. Twenty-five percent of the funds raised goes to Potter's House Community Kitchen at Greensboro Urban Ministry, with the remaining funds going to Church World Service to meet human needs, foster self-reliance, and disaster relief worldwide.

Participate as a walker or sponsor a walker. Contact Russ Haver, team captain, or sign up at the CROP Walk table in the Narthex. Please make checks payable to Greensboro CROP Walk. To make a secure online donation or to register as a walker online go to <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/greensboronc> and join the Peace United Church of Christ team.

CROP T-shirts are \$6.00 each to be paid when the order is placed. Donations are turned in to Russ Haver or Cindy Spillers to be deposited in the CROP Walk account.

SHERRI KLUTTZ ALBUM RELEASE

After a long wait Sherri Kluttz' new album "By God's Grace" has been released and there are copies available for \$8 in the church office. The album features classic gospel songs along with some more popular folk songs mixed in. Pastor Tom and Abigail Miller-Warren are also featured in a couple of the songs. If anyone wants a signed copy Sherri can be reached at 336-209-5048 or by email at kluttz5562@gmail.com. Congratulations Sherri!!

RALLY DAY 2021

It is time to mark your calendars for Rally Day 2021! On Sunday, September 12th we will gather for worship at 10:45am. This worship service, depending on the weather conditions, will be either at our outside altar or in the Fellowship Hall. Part of this Rally Day will include children's activities, a congregational luncheon after worship, followed by a very important Congregational Meeting (see Pastor's Perspective).

We hope everyone will be present with us for fellowship, special worship, fun, food, and important conversation as we look to our future. Join us!!



HANDS-ON UPDATE

Hands-On needs help,



Recently, some visitors have expressed an interest in helping with pillows for Hands-On. This is very exciting news since we have not had more than 7 attendees at our in-person sessions and as few as five people. Understandably, there are circumstances that have caused several regular members to be absent.

So, on Wednesday, Sept. 15, if you are not obligated between 1:00 and 2:30, please come join us in the Fellowship Hall and help out. Stuffing pillows is not hard, and we have lots of space to socially distance. It is also good to share in this effort for a common goal.

Call Theo at 336 299-0644 if you need more information...or just show up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- There will be a COVID-19 vaccine clinic held in the fellowship hall from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM on Thursday, September 9th.
- The Consistory will meet in the Narthex on Sunday, September 12th following the congregational meeting.
- Hands-On will meet on Wednesday, September 15th from 1 - 2:30 PM.
- Rev. Tom will be on the Appalachian Trail from Friday, September 17th through Sunday September 26th.
- A Service of Lament will be held on Thursday, September 30th, at 7 PM in the Sanctuary.

CALL SOMEBODY

The following article appeared in July and August of 2020....about 18 weeks after the pandemic started. It has now been nearly 18 months! and we need to reach out now more than ever. Only about 22 people are consistently at church on Sundays. Others, with good reason, are not having the opportunity to see church family members.

While you are sitting at home, missing all of the things you used to do, let's add something to the mix. Why don't you just pick up the phone and call someone from church and let them know you care? This is the basis of PeaceCare... Connect, Communicate, Care. Some people are already doing it – some via USPS. We applaud this and would love to get more people on the bandwagon. Cards are great, but many people are truly home alone, and that voice on the phone makes their day.

This is a wonderful opportunity to let to get to know some people you don't know very well. It is the chance to touch base with those you do know. It is the chance to call someone on our concern list. They have extra burdens right now, and some of them would love just a phone call.

Please don't say, "I don't know how to do that". Here is how:

1. Make the call
2. Identify yourself and say you attend Peace UCC
3. Ask the person how they are doing
4. Address issue or make small talk
5. End the call; feel good about it

It is that simple. Do it today. Then try one call a week. All you need is a phone and a church directory. It's a way to cure the COVID blues!

UCC Is a Church of the Firsts....Again!!

By Rev. Brooks Berndt
Minister for Environmental Justice

The UCC prides itself on its historic firsts, and our recent General Synod gathering continued that tradition as the UCC became the first mainline Protestant denomination to affirm and declare that nature has rights. For those who are unfamiliar with the rights of nature movement, the focus of the resolution may at first blush sound like the off-the-beaten-path concern of a few environmentalists, but it is not. The global movement for the rights of nature has become a significant force over the last 15 years. Ecuador has embedded the rights of nature in its constitution, while other nations such as Bolivia and New Zealand have made significant strides to acknowledge the rights of nature. In the United States, there have been locally enacted laws recognizing the rights of nature, and notably, the Ho Chunk Nation enshrined the rights of nature in its constitution.

Indigenous environmental leaders have frequently been at the forefront of the movement with Winona LaDuke of Honor the Earth and Tom Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network being key proponents in the United States. For Christians, affirming the rights of nature is especially significant because it is a central part of decolonizing our faith. Too often, misguided conceptions of "dominion" over nature have gone hand-in-hand with a conquer and plunder ethos that treats nature as something to own and exploit. At its heart, the rights of nature movement replaces such worldviews with both an affirmation of our interconnectedness with nature and a recognition that the rest of nature inherently deserves to flourish and thrive. Truly caring for God's creation requires this fundamental outlook. With gratitude to the Rev. Robert Shore-Goss for authoring the resolution and the New Hampshire Conference for spearheading it, let's celebrate this critical advancement in our faith tradition.



- September 11th – Joe Small & Amy Williams
- 13th – Desmond Smith
- 15th – Cynthia Bowen & Tom Warren
- 16th – Annette Green & JoAnn Vockel
- 18th – Roberta Bowman
- 19th – Kathryn Virgilio
- 20th – Sue Brittain
- 21st – Kenny Savage
- 22nd – Sylvia Lippard & Doris Yeattes
- 23rd – James Leszinski
- 30th – Alexandra Dodd

FINANCE UPDATE

Quick Look of Finances as of July 30, 2021 (Treasurer's report is posted in the church hallway on the bulletin board)

Account #	Account Name	Period Activity	YTD Balance	Annual Budget	Annual Budget Remaining
Offerings					
4001	Pledges	9,495.00	60,475.00	107,081.00	46,606.00
4003	Loose Offerings	5.00	378.00	250.00	(128.00)
4004	Initial offerings	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
4006	Non-Pledge Offerings	1,480.00	9,323.75	37,102.00	27,778.25
4007	Sunday School	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
Total Offerings		\$10,980.00	\$70,176.75	\$144,583.00	\$74,406.25

April 2021 Offering Income	May 2021 Offering Income	June Offering Income
\$9,204.00	\$11,290.00	\$9,655.00

	Period Activity	YTD Balance	Annual Budget	Annual Budget Remaining
June 2021 Income Total*	\$11,685.70	\$127,716.67	\$164,683.00	\$81,600.77
June 2021 Expenses Total	\$14,971.07	\$106,271.39	\$196,284.00	\$120,201.30
Income-Expenses	-\$3,285.37	+\$21,445.28	-\$31,601.00	

CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE FRIENDS OF THE LAVASTIDA CENTER

Santiago de Cuba, August 19th, 2021

Dear friends, Our greetings to you who bless us with your friendship. In the midst of present circumstances it gives us much joy to be able to communicate with you. The crisis generated by the pandemic of Covid-19 extends beyond what was previewed and that makes us begin to reestablish communications that help us so much and not wait for this stage to conclude.

In our experience at the same time that the situation becomes more difficult, we confirm that the mercy of the Lord is new each morning (Lam. 3:23). And we ask the Lord to preserve us with a message of hope that validates our Christian faith in all times, places and circumstances.

We have received several offers of assistance to our country in the midst of the threats and attempts to our survival and we are very grateful. We also greatly appreciate the assistance that in diverse forms hands and hearts of different countries have united to show their solidarity.

As in other countries the pandemic in Cuba has had awful resurgence, but our close and extended family keep in health with the sadness of dear friends that go away caused by the terrible malady. Please receive our expression of friendship and the desire of our family that the Lord will be for you "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble..." (Psalm 46:1).

With our love as always,
Elmer and Gisela and family.

