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February Calendar (See insert)

Musings from the Blue Couch

Dear Shepherd of the Valley friends and family,

Below is my pastor's report for the 2019 Church Conference. I want to offer you a bit of an update. As you will read, I talk about the financial issues that we have been facing. I am very happy to report that, because you have a huge taken the leap of faith and raised your pledges for 2020, you now have a balance budget which includes paying 100% of your mission shares! I am so proud to be your pastor! It has to be said that our fundraisers, both the Art Festival and the Appraisal Fair and Auction, are needed to make that budget balance. It's important that we continue to strive toward not depending on fundraisers. Ideally fundraisers would be used exclusively for our ministries. I know you can do it because I have seen how much you can accomplish when you are determined!

2019 Pastor's Report to the Annual Church Conference

The past year at Shepherd of the Valley has been filled with joys and challenges. We have been blessed to have two babies be born into our family. Lead by our family ministry coordinator our children continue to grow and thrive in their faith. They clearly know we are the people we belong to. We have some new friends who have decided to journey with us. Our small groups are still journeying together, growing in their faith and their relationships with God and each other. We are blessed to have Certified Lay Minister, Tom Senerchia, assigned to us and Sandy Knapp will be finishing her certification soon. Our ministries to Open Table, Project Outreach, our food pantry and Angel Tree ministry continue to be of service to

Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church Vision Statement

We are Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church, a multi-generational Christ community seeking to sing God's spirit into the world by inviting all, serving all, loving all.

Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church
604 Seven Mile Road, Hope, RI 0283
Hope, RI 02831

Worship and Church School
Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00-12:00

Phone: 821-8217 • Fax: 826-7787 • E-mail: office@sovumc.org • Web site: sovumc.org

Rev. Katherine Mitchell

God's people in need. Some of us have marched to stand for gun safety laws, climate justice and immigration justice. Linda Osborne has started a new small group to support our seniors with needs specific to them and our devoted outreach team continues to serve our shut ins.

While we have much to feel grateful for, we do have some very serious challenges. The issues related to our denomination have impacted our church. We are a proudly reconciling church and the decision of the 2019 General Conference was deeply painful. Some of our members are understandably struggling to discern if they can continue to maintain their connection with the United Methodist Church. But we have committed to holding on together in hope that something new will be birthed out of what has happened.

Our greatest challenge quite frankly is finances. We cannot continue to maintain our current budget based on our current giving and fundraisers. It is becoming harder and harder to get people to participate in our primary fundraisers which are not currently adequate. Although SOV is alive and spirit and ministry we need to have a very serious discussion about whether the church can continue at the current level of staffing. This is a painful subject for any church. My hope is that we can proceed from a place of hope and not fear. Just as families who are under financial stress grow in tension, often when churches begin to have these conversations people get scared and relationships break down. Let us lovingly discern what God is calling us to do together.

On a personal level, I continue to see my spiritual director and my covenant group. I have finally been able to build close working relationships with other local clergy. We meet regularly and have created an ecumenical Thanksgiving Day service. We are exploring ways to do ministry together. I want to express my appreciation for the support SOV has given me for my work with the District and the Conference. I feel called to be a mentor and support for other clergy. When you support me in that work you are having a direct

impact on the future of our church. Together we are doing kingdom work.

I feel deeply privileged to be serving Shepherd of the Valley. Thank you for partnering with me in responding to God's call to Sing God's Grace into the world, inviting all, serving all, loving all.

May you live fully and love wastefully,
Pastor Katherine

Stewardship Campaign: Thank You!

Our 2020 stewardship campaign has finished and the results are in. You made it a resounding success! You listened to what was needed to support Shepherd of the Valley, and responded generously. Most importantly, in 2020 our missions and ministry will be fully funded, thanks to you. Forty-one families increased their pledges and there were seven new pledges, yielding an 18% increase in giving. This means we will have a balanced budget for the first time in several years. With your show of support, we can continue to have a full-time minister. While the future of the United Methodist Church is up in the air, you have shown the Shepherd of the Valley stands strong.

2020 Budget

Attached please find the SOV 2020 budget, passed at an open Church Council meeting on January 12, 2020. The exhibit displays details for the 2020 budget including the projection for 2019 and actual 2018 data for comparison purposes. You will note that, thanks to the congregation's generosity, this budget is balanced. Your pledges represent over \$16,000 in additional revenues. Most other income is based on last year's revenues, with fundraisers calculated using an average of past years. Expenses are based on 2019, with no staff salary increases, and insurance and Mission Shares as provided by the Conference.

Electronic Funds Transfer

Electronic funds transfer (EFT) is an easy way to make your regular gifts to SOV. Simply fill out the form (available through the church) and your specified amount will be withdrawn from your checking account on a regular (weekly, monthly, etc.) basis. No more remembering your envelope, no more forgetting to bring a check, no more having to catch up if you've been away or missed a Sunday. EFT also helps the church's cash flow as we can depend on a regular income over the course of the year rather than the hills and valleys of cash/check giving.

EFT Reminder

If you give using electronic funds transfers and have changed your pledge amount, you need to complete a new EFT form. They are available through the church office or in the narthex.



**March
Circuit Rider
Information
Due
February 9**

Upcoming Events

Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)

WISH is going to do a Lenten study called "Give Up Something Bad for Lent" by James W Moore. The product description is as follows: "During the 40 days of Lent many people give up things they love. But what about going deeper and banishing bad habits such as envy, jealousy, apathy, gossip, and negative thinking - for good? In this 7-session study, Scripture verses, personal readings, reflection questions, and prayers empower you to make positive personal changes - once and for all!" The study will start February 26th. The beginning February we will be continuing with our study of the book of Romans. No special book (beyond your Bible) needed. WISH meets Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 at the church. All women are welcome!



Wednesday Morning Study Group

This group will continue with its "Living the Questions" study. This series, featuring thirty acclaimed scholars, theologians, and other experts, is designed to create an environment where participants interact with each other in exploring Christianity. This group meets at 11:00 a.m. in the Hope Room. All are welcome to join at any time, regardless of your background or level of Biblical knowledge.

Wisdom Seekers Evening Study Group

The evening study group meets Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Hope Room. We will meet February 5, 12, and 19 (the 26th is Ash Wednesday) and will be studying "Uppity Women of the Bible." This is a DVD-based series featuring Hebrew Bible professor Dr. Lisa Wolfe. She combines careful scholarship with humor and fresh insights for a lively and thoughtful discussion of some of the often-misunderstood women of the Bible, including Ruth, Esther, and Judith. No Bible knowledge is needed and all are welcome to join.

United Methodist Women (UMW)

The UM Women will meet in Thursday, February 20th at 11:00 a.m. There will be a short business meeting followed by a program that no one should miss, "An African Safari: What does Africa Look Like Today?" presented by Howard Gay. He will show slides of African wildlife and other surrounding areas from his family's recent vacation there. After the program we will have lunch (you are asked to bring your own lunch) dessert and beverages are provided. All men and women are welcome! If you have any questions, please speak to Howard or Regina.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is February 26th. Pastor Katherine will be holding an Ash Wednesday meditation at 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. You can come, be in prayer, and receive your ashes and go when you are ready.

Soup and Soul

Soup and Soul will be Wednesdays from March 4th to April 8th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We will gather for soup at 6:30 and our program will start at 7:00. This is a wonderful opportunity to center in the Spirit during the Lenten season. More details will be coming.

Family Fun Night

Family Fun Night will be Friday February 28th starting at 6pm. It will be Family Night In so come to the church to share a meal together and then stay for the fun! Hope to see you there!

Lisa Marciniak

Save the Date: Soup Luncheon!

On Monday, March 23rd, the United Methodist Women (UMW) will sponsor their annual Soup Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. There will be a variety of soups served with bread, dessert, and beverages. Tickets are \$8.00 and can be purchased from a member of the UMW or by calling the church office at 821-8217. They will also be available in Fellowship Hall after worship closer to the event. If you need further information, please see Barbara Walz.

Regular Meetings and Events

Editor's Note: Our church has many meetings, classes, and fellowship opportunities that occur on a regular basis. Please check the list below for the schedules of programs or opportunities you might be interested in. If you have something you'd like included in this section, please email me at belllomb@cox.net, call me at 944-9668, or leave a note in the Circuit Rider mailbox at church.

Hannah Bell-Lombardo

- Monday Morning Prayer Group: We gather for prayer in the Hope Room at 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.
- United Methodist Women (UMW): The UMW meets the third Thursday of each month at 11:00 a.m. Bring a bag lunch; beverages and dessert are provided. See the article in this section on this month's details.
- Knitting Ministry: The Knitting Ministry meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 in the library. Our projects include prayer shawls, baptismal shawls, premie and chemo hats, and sweaters for World Vision. Even if you can't attend the meetings, you can always knit at home. If you have questions, please call Sue Kizlinski at 401-527-8702.
- Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH): WISH meets Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. See the article in this section for our current study.
- Wednesday Morning Bible Study: This group meets Wednesdays at 11:00 in the Hope Room. See the article in this section for the current study.
- Wednesday Wisdom Seekers Evening Study Group: This group meets Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Hope Room. See the article in "Upcoming Events" for the current study course.
- Men's Fellowship Breakfasts: This group meets at the Phenix Square Restaurant at 6:00 a.m. February's meetings will be on the 7th and 21st. All men are welcome.
- Signing Choir: The Signing Choir practices at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays and perform the Lord's Prayer each Sunday plus another performance each month. All are welcome!

- **Family Sunday:** The first Sunday of each month is Family Sunday where our children serve as ushers, greeters, Communion stewards, and liturgists. If you have children who are taking part in the worship, please arrive by 9:00 a.m. so we can run through the bulletin and review our “jobs” for the day.

Help Wanted

Food Pantry

Do you like to shop? Clip coupons? If so, have we got the job for you! The Shepherd’s Pantry, our food ministry, needs someone to join our shopping team (or more than one “someones” are welcome!) Shopping can be done at your convenience. If you can help keep our food pantry stocked and ready for those who use this important ministry, please drop Pam or PK a note.

Fellowship Hour Sign-Up

Hosting Fellowship Hour is a great time to promote fellowship in the church. You don’t have to provide anything elaborate—just some goodies and coffee (and help/instructions are available for the coffee-making). Simply sign up on the list in Fellowship Hall.

Ushers

Ushering is a great way to make our members and guests feel welcome. New signup sheets are available for your use—sign up for the Sundays you’re available. No need for a weekly commitment.

Open Table of Christ

We have groups going to the Open Table of Christ on Wednesday and Thursday mornings to serve lunch to their food pantry recipients. If you can help (providing food, going to serve), please contact Barbara Bicknell.



Office Notes

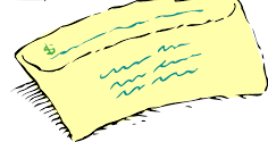
EFT

Reminder that if you would like to use electronic funds transfer, or have changed the amount you’d like withdrawn, you need to fill out a new form. They are available through the office.

Offering Envelopes

2020 offering envelopes are now available in the hallway. If you would like to receive a box, please sign up on the clipboard and the envelope fairy will magically bring you a set. Just a reminder, if you use EFT, you do not need a set of envelopes.

Offering Envelopes



Upcoming Event?

If you have an upcoming event or are hosting coffee hour and need supplies, please check what we have in the kitchen and storage area. If something is missing, let Pam know if we need to order something at least two weeks ahead of time.

Sunday Bulletin Announcements

Just a reminder that your announcements for the Sunday bulletin must be submitted to the office not later than the Tuesday before you’d like them to appear. Call the church office (821-8217), leave a note in the church office mailbox, or email office@sovumc.org. Thank you!

Church Program Drop-offs

Are you dropping something off for Open Table, the food pantry, or another mission project or event? Please put a label on your items/boxes so we can ensure they end up in the proper place. If you put it in the clothing closet (next to the sanctuary), please leave Pam a note so she knows it’s there.

New Email?

Be sure to let us know any changes in your email address so we can be sure any electronic communications reach you. Let the church office know of any email, phone, or address changes by email (office@sovumc.org) or leave a note on Pam’s desk.

Music Notes

Lent and Easter will be coming before we know it, and the choir, making a quick recovery from the its special Christmas music, is already starting to prepare for the Easter season. We, as always, welcome anyone who would like to join in with us! We rehearse almost every Sunday after the coffee hour. See you there. (And see the article below for the benefits of being part of a choir!)

Steven Haunschild



Music Matters

Research has shown that singing in a choir or playing a musical instrument in a band or orchestra has a variety of cognitive and psychological benefits. Psychologically, it can relieve depression, quell symptoms of anxiety, and improve overall mood and well-being. Physiologically, it has been shown to regulate heartbeat, lower blood pressure, improve stamina, and strengthen the immune system. (And you can achieve all this by joining Shepherd of the Valley's Adult Choir!)

There are benefits to musical experience throughout life. Those who had musical experience in their younger years demonstrated continued cognitive and neural benefits, which continued through life. There may be particular benefits for older folks. According to a study published in *Hearing Journal*, older adults without any musical experience improved processing speed and memory after just three months of 30-minute piano lessons and three hours of practicing each week. Musical involvement may even counteract negative effects of aging such as memory and hearing loss.

And those of you listening to our choir, don't despair. Even listening to music can lower stress hormones and provide other health benefits. Music can bring benefits to our lives in many ways and forms.

Caring and Sharing

Christmas Pageant Thanks

Thank you to our wonderful Sunday School teachers for making our Children's Pageant so wonderful! What a blessing to be able to put this pageant together every year and thank you to all the parents for getting their kids to church and rehearsals and to our kids as well and all of their hard work! Thank you to all!!

Lisa Marciniak

Angel Tree Thanks

Thank you to all who provided gifts and gift cards as part of our Angel Tree project. The generosity of Shepherd of the Valley families never ceases to amaze!



Socks, Mittens, Hats, and Gloves Needed

Theresa Squire will be collecting winter hats, mittens, socks, and gloves for Project Outreach, a ministry closely aligned with SOV. Look for the box in Fellowship Hall.

Shepherd's Pantry

Our food pantry continues needs all the basics, including boxes. We can use tuna, pasta, spaghetti sauce, cereal, fruit, soup, vegetables, and crackers. Since many of our clients have health issues, we can use healthier food options, including gluten-free and lower sodium/fat free items. Toilet paper is needed as well. And please save computer paper and similar sized boxes—they are perfect for our food pickups. Many thanks for your continued donations and cash gifts for the support to help our neighbors in need.

Shut-Ins

The Nurture-Outreach Ministry Team has a new shut-in list posted on the bulletin board next to the kitchen. Please think of these important members of our community and send them a card, or better yet, stop by for a visit. If there's anyone you know who needs a visit, let one of the team members or the church office know and we'll add them to the list.

Fellowship Hour Thank You

There is not a lot to say about how important fellowship hour after church is until you look around and see everyone visiting and connecting during this time. A special thank you goes out to all our Sunday Fellowship Hour hosts and hostesses who provide the goodies and make this time possible. All should step up to the plate and take a turn. Feel free to have a friend or family member help you out—volunteers are needed and help showing how everything is done is available.

Facebook

PK invites you to “friend” her on Facebook.

Save Your Pop-Tabs!

We are continuing to collect your pop tabs—there’s a box in the kitchen for them. These tabs go toward helping with food, supplies, and utilities for the Ronald McDonald House in Providence. The House provides a home-away-from-home for families of critically ill children. Without these donations, the House would not be able to provide for the families. Thank you for the tabs and if you have any questions about donations, please contact Sue Dyl.

Blood Pressure Measurement

We are able to check blood pressures in the office. Check with Pastor Katherine.

Church Council Minutes January 12, 2020

Church Council members present included Howard and Linda Gay, Barbara Walz, Jerry Crosby, Martha Ahern, Meg Davis, Lisa Marciniak, John Lombardo, Loxi Ellingwood, Tom Senerchia, and Hannah Bell-Lombardo. Pastor Katherine Mitchell was in attendance as were members of the congregation.

John called the meeting was called to order at 10:44 a.m. in the sanctuary. He noted that we were short about \$11,000 for 2019 Mission Shares, also noting that paying our full Mission Shares has

been a priority of our church. The Pastor’s Pension portion was paid in full. John recounted District Superintendent Andrew Foster’s remarks during our annual Church Conference that we needed to step up our Mission Shares payment in order to maintain a full-time pastor. Since our expenses are so lean, the only way to do this was to increase our giving. Our fall stewardship campaign was able to accomplish this, representing increased giving that allows us to balance our budget, paying Mission Shares in full. John thanked the church for its response to this challenge.

He briefly reviewed the 2020 budget (copy available on request). Expenses are similar to last year’s. Staff salaries for the pastor, sexton, secretary, and music director are flat. The insurance expenses and Mission Shares amounts are given us by Annual Conference. Utilities are based on the prior year, with the exception of electricity, which was unusually low last year due to a mild winter and is budgeted at a higher amount. For the Art Festival, he used an average of the last 10 years. Continuation of this effort, along with other fundraising efforts, is being coordinated by a new committee chaired by Sandy Knapp and Meg. It was noted that fundraisers should be used for mission projects and not to help balance the operating budget.

Congregation member Bill Flug commended the congregation as a group of committed people who understand SOV and did what needed to be done, noting that we need to do this again next year.

Jerry moved that the budget be accepted, Tom seconded, and the motion was unanimously passed. Katherine noted that it was a proud moment to be a pastor.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Hannah Bell-Lombardo

Shepherd of the Valley
United Methodist Church
604 Seven Mile Road
Hope, RI 02831

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
West Warwick, RI
PERMIT 1

DO NOT FORWARD—CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME VALUE—DO NOT DELAY

FEBRUARY, 2020 CIRCUIT RIDER

Lent



- Ash Wednesday Meditation – February 26th, 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 noon and 5:30-7:30 p.m. Come, be in prayer, receive your ashes, and go when you're ready.
- Soup and Soul – Wednesdays starting on March 4 through April 8 with soup at 6:30 p.m. and program at 7:00 p.m. Program details to be announced.