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Living in Hope

Lent is upon us. The season in the Christian year where we take an in-depth look inside ourselves and as St. Paul says “work out our own soul’s salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). In today’s language a better translation might be “work out our own soul’s salvation with diligent care”.

Growing up, my Grandma Donnie Bell would remind us (often) that “we have no heaven or hell to put anyone in.” This gentle message was usually said to us when we were being judgmental or ultra-critical of another person without knowing the context behind their life situation. She would also remind us that we did not know what was going on in another person’s heart...therefore it was up to God to render judgment. As fellow sojourners on the way we too are to walk seeking grace from God.

Through these remaining days of Lent how are you to walk with God? How are you looking at the other? How are you connecting with The One Who Loves Us Best? How are you being transformed into the image of Christ?

What goals have you taken on as a Means of Grace? Are you fasting of things that have kept you disconnected from God? Are you seeking new and invigorating ways to connect with yourself and your neighbor alike?

Though these Forty Days of Lent historically have been a season of fasting from food and being in profound prayer, the challenges in our world today also reminds us that these days are also meant for action and justice. As you continue to visit the Climate Calendar that was created by the Wisdom Seekers, remember that we are CALLED to care for our planet. As you pray for the healing of the

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 02831

Worship via Zoom (see inside for details), Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday

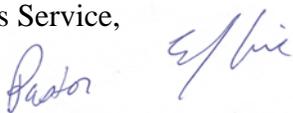
Phone: 821-8217 • Fax: 826-7787 • E-mail: office@sovumc.org • Web site: sovumc.org

Rev. Effie McAvoy

nations, remember that There Is a Balm in Gilead that makes the wounded whole. As you pray for our nation, remember that God is God of the Nations and is in control even when it seems like we are on our own.

This Lent let the never ending, ever-flowing, all sustain power of God’s gracious love move in you and through you. In turn, with this power, share this same love and grace with those whom you encounter in order that they too may become disciples of Jesus Christ.

In His Service,



UMCOR Special Sunday

UMCOR stands for United Methodist Committee on Relief and will be the focal point of a Special Sunday Service on March 14th. When watching disaster unfold around the globe, many of us feel the call to help but are at a loss as to what we can actually do. UMCOR Sunday is the day for congregations around the globe to help.

UMCOR offers aid in Jesus ’name to those who suffer, for example, hen tornadoes ripped through Oklahoma, when children in Zimbabwe lost parents to AIDS, and when a massive tsunami devastated lives in Japan. When the next crisis occurs, we will be prepared to respond.

Your gifts on this Special Sunday will help cover the operating budget of UMCOR, allowing them to funnel 100% of other donations received throughout the year directly to relief efforts.

UMCOR Sunday is where we come together to **help**.

If this mission speaks to you, please join us in giving to UMCOR. You can do so by check to SOV, on our website (<https://SOVUMC.org/give-now/>), or through the GIVE+ app. If you want to learn more about UMCOR visit: www.umcgiving.org/UMCOR.

“Greening OUR Valley”

Lenten Calendar

It’s not too late to save our planet, and though Lent may have started, it’s not too late to take the first small steps by implementing the suggestions on the Lenten Activity Calendar (copy attached to this email).

Soup and Soul

We are continuing the “green” theme with Wednesday’s Soup and Soul, viewing PBS’s “Age of Nature” and considering other ecological topics.

Garbage Decomposition

One of the themes of our Advent and Lenten Activities Calendars is the R’s of Refusing, Reducing, Reusing, Recycling, and Repairing, all meant to



reduce both the amount of energy we use and the amount of garbage we create. As you look at what you use (and often throw away) on a regular basis, consider how long it takes these household items to decompose.*

- Paper towel: 2–4 weeks
- Orange peel: 2–5 weeks
- Cotton cloth/rag: 1–5 months
- Milk carton: 3 months
- Aluminum can: 80–200 years
- Plastic bottle: 450 years
- Glass bottle: 1 million years

*These decomposition rates are estimates (no one has been around for a million years to see what happens to a glass bottle!), and will vary with temperature, moisture, soil composition, and other environmental factors.

Source: www.peacecorps.gov

Care for our planet: become educated, implement the R’s, and take care of our home.

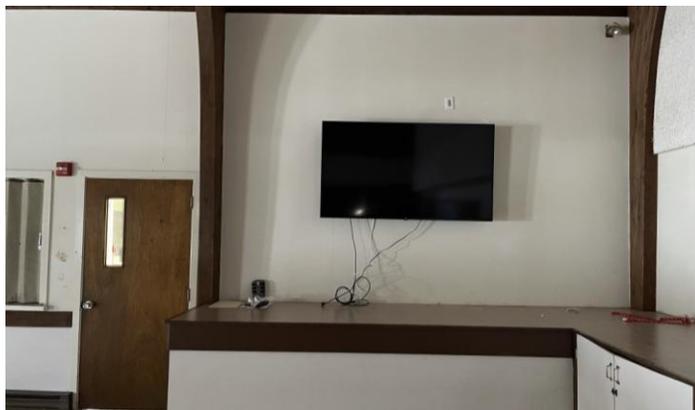
The Wednesday Wisdom
Seekers Study Group

Technology Update

Work continues on installing and connecting the items off our electronics wish list. The televisions are now mounted in the Sanctuary and Fellowship hall. The 180-degree camera and sound board have been installed. We are currently working on connecting all of the devices together. The hope is to have everything completed by late spring for us to go live and virtual at the same time. Watch for more updates as we continue on creating new and different ways for us to stay connected. Here are some pictures of the work so far.



Sanctuary televisions



Fellowship Hall television



Sound board

Keeping in Touch

Zoom Information

Unless otherwise noted, worship, church meetings, and other gatherings will be held via Zoom.

Meeting link:

<https://zoom.us/j/97102295116?pwd=amQrMU1IaFl1ZXJpZGtHMzJlVXVuQT09>

Meeting ID: 971 0229 5116

Password: 544806

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,97102295116#,,,0#,,544806# US (New York)

+13017158592,,97102295116#,,,0#,,544806# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

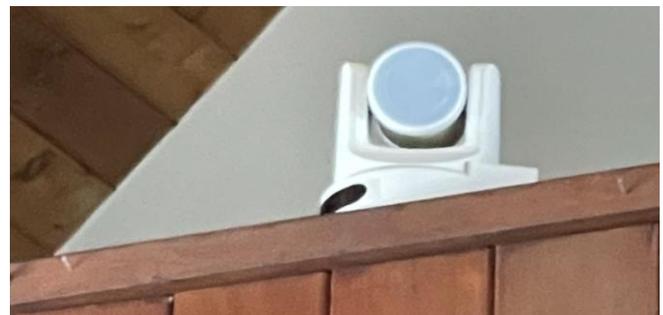
YouTube Channel

SOV now has a YouTube channel, where we will be live streaming weekly worship services and other special events. When you go to the SOV YouTube channel please push the subscribe button and then the alerts button to stay connected as new things are posted. Share this link with family and friends as we continue to look at new and creative ways of reaching out to others. If you have any questions feel free to contact Sandy Knapp/CLM (sknapp719@icloud.com). The link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq6OxG9rThiQ9GeUqekdEjQ>

Facebook Link

<https://www.facebook.com/shepherdofthevalleyri>



180 degree camera

Upcoming Events

Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)

During Lent, the WISH group will be using a Lenten study by Liz Curtis Higgs called "The Women of Easter." This study explores the stories of the three women, Mary of Bethany, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, who played a vital role in the life and ministry of Jesus, following in their footsteps as they journey with Jesus through Holy Week. WISH meets via Zoom on Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Participants are responsible for buying their own books, and all are welcome.

Soup and Soul

We will be continuing SOV's Lenten "Soup and Soul" tradition, virtually. Join us via the church Zoom link at 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. with your soup (or other dinner item) for a video viewing and discussion. In keeping with the "Greening OUR Valley" theme, we will be watching the PBS's "The Age of Nature." This documentary series asks whether newfound awareness of nature could bring about a new chapter in the human story over three episodes. While we've watched the first one, the videos are independent and you are welcome to join for the remainder.



- Understanding (March 3)—Explore how a new understanding of nature is helping us find surprising ways to fix it. From the Pacific Northwest to Yellowstone to Scotland, scientists, citizens and activists are restoring the environment, benefiting humans and animals alike.
- Awakening (March 10)— Discover why restoring nature might be our best tool to slow global warming. From Borneo to Antarctica, the resilience of the planet is helping us find solutions to cope and even mitigate climate change, providing hope for a more positive future.

We will be continuing our exploration of "green theme," with related videos, TED talks, and discussion of our planet and how to save it.

Lenten Worship

Our Lenten worship series is adapted from the Worship Design Studio's *Holy Vessels: A Lenten Season of Reflection*. This series explores the healing narratives of Jesus that tell the story of divine solidarity with human suffering and reminds us that Christ can make something beautiful from that which is seemingly broken. Upcoming topics include:

- 3/7—Stories (Mental Health)/Children's and Communion Sunday
- 3/14 Different Pictures (Intellectual Health)
- 3/21 Restoration (Environmental Health)

Easter Week

- Palm Sunday, March 28: Worship service live via Zoom, Facebook live, and SOV's YouTube channel at 10:00 a.m.
- Monday, March 29-Wednesday, March 31: Prayers and meditation uploaded to the internet each day.
- Maundy Thursday, April 1: Service of Tenebrae uploaded to the internet
- Good Friday, April 2: Service uploaded to the internet
- Holy Saturday, April 3: Prayers and meditation uploaded to the internet.
- Easter Sunday Sunrise Service, April 4: In-person and Zoomed from the SOV lawn at 6:00 a.m.
- Easter Sunday Worship, April 4: Worship service live via Zoom, Facebook Live, and SOV's YouTube channel at 10:00 a.m.

Music Notes



Our music ministry will continue, even without our former music

director. We are exploring how to use our choir members and church musicians in different ways, including integrating digital technology. If you have a musical (or digital) talent you'd like to share, please contact the church office. Our worship team will welcome your input!

Regular Events

Editor's Note: SOV has a number of regular meetings and events, listed below. Unless otherwise noted, these will occur via Zoom. All meetings and events are subject to current RI COVID regulations governing gatherings. If you have something you'd like included in this section, please email me at belllomb@cox.net.

Hannah Bell-Lombardo

- **Sunday Worship** – Sunday worship will continue to be held via Zoom. Pre-worship gathering starts at 9:30, worship starts at 10:00 a.m. The order of service will be emailed in advance. Please contact the office if you would like to be included on this email.
- **Sunday School** – Sunday School for Ms. Doreen's and Ms. Beth's classes will be held via Zoom at 11 a.m. on Sundays.
- **Communion Sunday** – Pastor Effie will be offering communion during worship via Zoom on the first Sunday of each month. If you would like to participate, you can pick up some grape juice and some kind of bread which she will bless during worship.
- **Knitting Ministry**—2nd Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. at the church, subject to COVID restrictions.
- **Women in Spiritual Harmony**—Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.
- **Wednesday Wisdom Seekers**—Wednesdays via Zoom from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
- **Men's Breakfast**—This group is on hiatus due to COVID. We will resume meeting when we feel its safe for our attendees. See the church website, SOVUMC.org for future

April
Circuit Rider
Information due
March 21

meetings.

Help Wanted

Project Outreach Food Unloaders

Project Outreach at Open Table of Christ is in need of some strong backs to help with receiving our weekly food delivery from the RI Food Bank on Tuesdays from around 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. You do not have to commit to a weekly presence. Unloading is done outside, and social distancing and mask wearing is practiced. If you can help, please contact Donna Faria at dffaria@msn.com or 401-828-5355

Project Outreach Snacks

As a token of appreciation, the board is providing snacks such as drinks, bars, finger foods, etc. to its volunteers. Help is needed bringing these snacks to the volunteers at around 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays. Please contact Donna Faria. 401-828-5355 or dffaria@msn.com, or Theresa Squire 401-647-1510 squirekt@gmail.com if you're interested.

Office Notes

Address Changes and Updates

Address changes (including email!) should go to Pam for the directory for 2021. Call (821-8217) or email (office@sovumc.org) the church office. She is also looking to update contact information on young adult family members.

Announcements and Prayer Lists

Please have your announcements sent to Pam no later than Tuesday for the following Sunday. Announcements should be brief (expanded versions should be sent to Hannah for the Circuit Rider.) Names for the Prayer List should also be sent to her with a notation for those who are long-term.

Zoom and Room Scheduling

Requests for use of the church's Zoom account should be sent to Sandy Knapp at sknapp719@icloud.com. Room schedules for small groups should be scheduled through Pam in the church office.

Caring and Sharing

Shepherd's Pantry

In winter we see an uptick in requests for the food pantry. We are trying to stock up on the staples, especially jelly, rice, soup, spaghetti sauce, canned vegetables. Toilet paper is always welcome as well. Gift cards to help out with things like milk, meat and other perishable items are always appreciated. Gift cards are always welcome. Thank you for your continued support of this vital ministry. You can drop your donations off under the overhang at the entrance to the Hope Room. Someone is at the church regularly to collect and distribute your offerings.

Shut-Ins

We have a number of shut-ins who could use a phone call, card, note, or delivery. Contact Pastor Effie or the church office if you can help.

Magazines Needed

Please save your old magazines. AJ, one of our church children, relieves stress by tearing magazines and needs more given the increased tension of these times. Please drop your magazines off outside the Hope Room door (where the food pantry bins are located). We will be sure to get them to AJ.

Social Media

Social media sites, such as Facebook, are becoming an invaluable way to connect with others during this time of self-isolation and social distancing. To join (even if only during the current situation), go to www.facebook.com/r.php, input the appropriate information, and click "Sign Up." Use the search function to find the Shepherd of the Valley page and follow what we're posting.

Save Your Pop-Tabs!

Keep saving your pop-tabs, putting them in the box in the kitchen. Sue Dyl recently brought two big bags to the Ronald McDonald House in Providence, and they were extremely grateful. Pop tabs can come from soda cans, energy drinks, soup cans, or anything with a metallic tab.

Youth News

Sunday School

Sunday School for Ms. Doreen's and Ms. Beth's class will continue to be on the church zoom starting at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday. Please check email each week for the project that week to be printed at home. We will be making palms and rain makers at home with the kids and having a recorded parade since we cannot do a parade in person this year. Keep an eye out in your email for how we will make this happen and start to save either your paper towel rolls and/or toilet paper rolls. Thank you!

In addition, please note that there will be no Sunday School on Easter.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation class will continue every Thursday from 6:30 to 7:30 via Zoom or in person (your choice) until May.

Kids' Sign Language Choir

The Kids' Sign Language Choir is back and will be rehearsing on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Church Council Minutes January 25, 2021

Church Council members present via Zoom included Lisa Marciniak, Barbara Walz, Beth Travers, Meg Davis, Sandy Knapp, Michael Knapp, Donna Gaumont, Howard Gay, Jay O'Connor, Loxi Ellingwood, Theresa Squire, Sue Dyl, John Lombardo, and Hannah Bell-Lombardo. Also present were Pastor Effie McAvoy and congregational members Rob and Marti Bower.

Sandy opened the meeting at 6:33 with a reading, "Be at Peace with Yourself." Corey Crovisier was added as the youth representative, and Mike Knapp as chair of Trustees.

Effie reported on the receipt of a \$2500 grant from the United Methodist Foundation to expand our digital reach, including an additional sound board,

cabling, the electrician, and other expenses. Effie thanked Pam Etheridge for writing the grant.

John presented the budget for the first quarter of 2021. The Finance Committee had approved it in December, based on data through November. We now have the 2020 actuals, and are very close to the projections with a few exceptions, primarily giving. Giving had been ahead of budget for most of the year, however the last several months has been below budget. Finance will be meeting in March, and John asked Howard to look at the numbers to see if he could discern any reasons for the shortfall. We ended the year with a \$12,000 deficit, and will use a portion of the PPP money (\$24,000 total) to make that up, ending the year with all bills, including Mission Shares, paid. The remaining PPP money will be held in reserve. 2021 budgets will be developed on a quarterly basis given the uncertainties of when we can resume in-person worship, and our ability to have any fundraisers. The in-person worship makes a difference because of higher utilities; fundraisers include the Scituate Art Festival (\$6,000, based on the average net of the last ten years), and a holiday fundraiser (\$2,000). John also noted that the quarterly budget is not just one quarter of the annual budget as many of our expenses are uneven over the course of the year, giving varies, and compensation depends on the number of pay periods in each month. We do know our Mission Shares and insurance numbers.

A question was raised about the Medical Assistance Fund. It is now funded as a budget item (versus out of Art Festival proceeds), but has not been in the budget for the last few years as we haven't had the money. The current balance is \$1,895.10 and the last request was made in March

of 2020. There were a total of three requests in 2020, seven in 2019, and two in 2018.

John moved that the first quarter budget be approved, Sandy seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

Sandy reminded the group of the leadership training on January 30th, asking council members to consider their goals for the church, and how their committee can help with the growth and success of SOV.

Committee reports were as follows:

- Loxi requested, on behalf of Outreach, for people to send cards or make phone calls to shut-ins. Sandy asked her for a list to distribute to the congregation. It was also suggested as a possible Sunday School or confirmation service project.
- Theresa is collecting new socks for the homeless for the month of February, all sizes, including children. There is a box outside the Hope Room.
- Mike reported that the Trustees have signed a contract with Arrest a Pest for the parsonage. Jerry Cosby is continuing to work on the parsonage and kitchen.
- John noted that he has the United Methodist Women's books to audit, and will be talking to Greg Thuotte about the Trustee audit.

Loxi closed us with a prayer. Meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Bell-Lombardo



Easter at Shepherd of the Valley

- Palm Sunday Worship – March 28, 10A via Zoom, Facebook and YouTube
- On-line prayers and meditation – March 29, 30, 31 & April 2
- On-line Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service – April 1
- On-line Good Friday service – April 2
- Easter Sunrise Worship – April 4, 6A via Zoom and on the lawn
- Easter Worship – April 4, 10A via Zoom, Facebook and YouTube