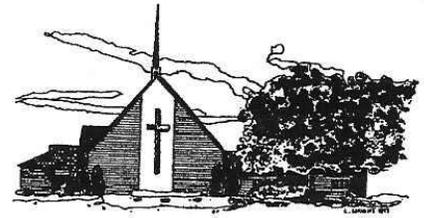


The Circuit Rider



Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church

April, 2022

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Living in Hope

Spring has arrived! The days are longer and getting warmer! We are celebrating opportunities of engagement with one another and we are getting ready for Easter...my FAVORITE holiday of the Christian year! In Psalm 100 we are called to make “a joyful noise” to God. We are called to “worship the Lord with gladness; to come into God’s presence with singing”. In the dawning of new spring days, how many of us awaken to the sounds of birdsong? For me, it is a reminder that the Earth is God’s temple...not just my heart...not just the worship space that we gather in...but the whole planet.

One of the things that I love most about Easter is the promise of new life...new beginnings...new understanding. Crocuses pop out of the ground with their winding green arms. Tulips stretch for the dawning sun...pushing dirt away as they are rebirthed with vibrant colors of purples, reds, yellows, and pinks. This new life is also made manifest through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! we are offered opportunities to engage with God in new and beautiful ways. We are given the chance to seek relationship and empowerment from with the Holy Spirit. AND with these “new” things we are strengthened to live lives that are filled with beauty and grace.

Yes, dear friends, spring is here! Easter is coming. New life is available for us all. May the light of Christ shine in and through us so that new growth and blooming may be bountiful in not only our lives but also in the lives of those we encounter.

In His Service,

Pastor Effie

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, 10:00 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. Effie McAvoy

Holy Week and Easter at SOV

- Palm Sunday* - April 10, 10:00 a.m. including the Children's Parade of Palms.
- Children's Easter Egg Hunt - April 10, following worship (bring your own basket)
- (No Soup and Soul on April 13th)
- Holy Thursday Service - April 14th, 6:30 p.m., Hope Room
- Digital Holy Thursday Service led by Rev. Dr. Hope Luckie - April 14th, posted at noon on Facebook and YouTube
- Good Friday Service - April 15th, 6:30 p.m., Hope Room
- Digital Good Friday Stations of the Cross - April 15th, posted at noon on Facebook and YouTube
- Easter Sunrise Service* - April 17th, 6:00 a.m., front lawn
- Light breakfast (coffee, donuts, Danish, etc.) - April 17th, after Sunrise Service
- Easter Worship* - April 17th, 10:00 a.m.

*Services live-streamed on SOV's Facebook and YouTube

"Giving Up" for Lent Reminder

In March, we offered the option to "give up" something for Lent by giving: a 10% increase to your regular gift, the price of that daily cup of coffee, your spare change... anything that makes giving a spiritual practice reminding us of what Jesus "gave." Even if you haven't done this on a regular basis so far, there's still time. Between now and Easter, think about how you can prayerfully give. In giving to SOV, you will be supporting our mission shares which go to local, regional, national and international UMC missions and ministries. Make your gift by writing a check to SOV or by using the Lenten Fund on your Vanco account. Thank you for thinking about the Giving Option for this Lent this year.

Easter Flowers

For the first time in two years, we will celebrate Easter together in person and via streaming. We are asking for your help to fill the sanctuary with perennials that will be used on Easter morning and then used to help beautify the church grounds. Please drop off your perennials between April 10 and 15 by the Hope Room doors. You may also contact Sandy Knapp to offer the plants in memory to a loved one. The names will be added to the Easter bulletin. Please let us know who the flowers are in memory of and who they are donated by when you drop them off. Questions? Contact Sandy Knapp at sknapp719@icloud.com or at 860-617-5804



Upcoming Events

Fellowship Time

A regular Fellowship Time is back! Come for food and conversation. Because we are still in a time of Covid, there are some precautions we must follow.



- Please do not use the kitchen door as an entry or exit if you are not a host. We must continue to limit the number of people in the kitchen at any time.
- A Fellowship Host will serve your food item.
- Please refrain from congregating around the food table. Once you have received your refreshments, move away from the table to engage in conversation and fellowship.
- We will not always have food, but you are welcome to gather in Fellowship Hall after worship to chat and connect.

If you are interested in hosting Fellowship Time (someone will show you how to make coffee; food can be store bought), sign up with Minister Knapp.

Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)

WISH will continue their Lenten study through April 13th, and then return to their *Wesley Bible Study* on 1-2 Peter and Jude. This study integrates scripture readings, contemporary commentary, quotes and hymns from John and Charles Wesley, brought to life through creative and engaging questions and activities.

WISH meets via Zoom on Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. All women are welcome, even if you have not previously joined us.

Soup and Soul

Our hybrid (in-person/Zoom) Soup and Soul continues through April 6th with our discussion of the book *Good Enough* by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. We meet for a light supper of soup, bread, dessert and fellowship at 6:00 followed by the study at 6:30.

Wednesday Wisdom Seekers

Starting April 20th, the Wednesday Wisdom Seekers will continue their course on the *History*

of Christianity in the Reformation Era. This course is designed to take you inside the minds of those who supported the Reformation and those who resisted it, covering Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and “Radical” Protestantism.

We meet on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. All are welcome and there’s no need to have done a prior study, or even the start of this one.

Seniors Reunited

I am feeling a need for us to convene again! How I have missed you all. My thoughts center around an opportunity for us to share all that has been happening to us over the past one and a half to two and a half years. It has been so long! As we welcome spring and the unveiling (unmasking for many), new reflections and hopes abound. Let’s share and give each other ideas.

We will be meeting on April 11th at 10:00 a.m. at the church. This meeting is open to all seniors who wish to participate and is not limited to those who attended the Aging Well seminar so long ago. This is an open group with new discussions. It will be exciting to have new ideas and perspectives.

If you are interested, please send me an email at lrohella@verizon.net or telephone me at 822-2011 by April 4th. Leave a message and your call will be returned.

United Methodist Women (UMW)

The United Methodist Women will meet on Thursday, April 21st from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Hope Room. Our program will be “Center your Spirits.” All women are invited to attend. You are welcome to bring a lunch.

Bake Sale!

The United Methodist Women will hold our annual Mother's Day Bake Sale on Sunday May 8th after church in Fellowship Hall. We are asking for volunteers to bake whatever you enjoy baking. This is our fundraiser for Camp Aldersgate scholarships. There will be a signup sheet in Fellowship Hall or contact Barbara Walz at barbw146@verizon.net or 647-0638. Thank you for your support.

Scituate Earth Day

Join the Scituate Earth Day Cleanup event on Saturday, April 23 from 9A to noon. Please see the attached flyer.

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

- **Sign Language Choir**—Rehearsals will be held Sunday mornings at the church before worship from 9:30 to 9:50.
- **Sunday School**—Sunday School will be held during worship on all but the first Sundays of the month. Children will attend the first part of service with their families before being dismissed to class. Sundays, they are welcome to stay remain in the sanctuary for the service. The nursery will be available for the littlest ones.
- **Communion Sunday**—Pastor Effie will be offering communion during worship the first Sunday of each month. If you would like to participate remotely, have some juice and some kind of bread or cracker which she will bless during worship.
- **Youth Group**—This group meets monthly and is open to those in middle through high school. See “Youth and Family Ministry” for details.
- **Knitting Ministry**—The Knitting Ministry meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1:00 at the church, subject to COVID restrictions. See additional information on this ministry in this edition.
- **Women in Spiritual Harmony**—WISH meets Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.
- **Wednesday Wisdom Seekers**—This group meets Wednesdays via Zoom from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We'll start again after the Lenten season on April 20th.

- **United Methodist Women**—The UMW meets the third Thursday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **Men's Fellowship Breakfast**—This group meets at 6:00 a.m. at the Phenix Square Restaurant. We will meet on April 8th and 22nd.

Youth/Family News**Palm Sunday Parade**

There will be a parade during church service on Palm Sunday for the kids! Each kid will get a shaker or two to shake and shout and celebrate

Easter Egg Hunt

There will be an Easter Egg Hunt after church on April 10th. Please bring your own basket/bag (we will have extra if needed) and meet in Fellowship Hall with your adults after worship.

Family Fun Outing

Keep an eye out for a fun family outing during April vacation, hopefully bowling! This will be for the Youth Group and our younger kids and their families and friends.

Family Sunday

The kids will be staying in church the first Sunday of the month for Family Sunday. There will be no Sunday School that Sunday, although the Nursery will be open.

Youth Group

The Youth Group will meet once a month for planned activities. Keep an eye out in the circuit rider as well as your emails for each month's activity. (See above note about bowling activity.)



Ministry of the Month: Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Here's an excerpt from the September 2012 *Circuit Rider*:

All men are invited to partake of warm fellowship, guided conversation and good food at Men's Breakfast which meets every other Friday at 6:00 a.m. at the Phenix Square Restaurant in West Warwick. Come and join the conversation.

Yes, we've been meeting every other week for a decade or more, with only a brief hiatus during the pandemic. We've developed a close relationship with Brenda, proprietor of the Phenix Square Restaurant. So much so, that a half dozen of us continued to donate to her the cost of our meal (or more) even when we couldn't meet. This helped her to survive during those difficult months for small businesses.

Topics of discussion (often from a study guide called *The Wired Word*) range from current events to shared readings, always in the context of the challenges of men of faith in this complex world. Howard always comes prepared with a prayer that centers us before ordering Brenda's good food. Sometimes we don't have to order because she has each of our favorites memorized.

Here are some examples of topics we have discussed at Men's Breakfasts:

- What does the United Methodist Church say about racism? 06/26/2020
- A brief review and discussion of *The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West* by David McCullough. 07/19/2019
- Last week, the iconic traveling Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus announced its final performances. 01/20/2017
- Churches Offer Vigils, Prayer Services and Open Communion During Election Process. 11/11/2016

- Study Finds Nearly 90 Percent of Americans Have Prayed for Healing. 05/20/2016

Though the hour is early, we always look forward to this shared fellowship with good friends. We'd love to have more men join us and share in the fellowship. Watch the *Circuit Rider* for dates. In April it's the 8th and the 22nd. The decade old invitation above still stands. Hope to see you there!

Help Wanted

Communion Help

Starting May 1st we will be having weekly communion. Linda has faithfully for years prepared the elements before service and then disposed what was left. We are asking for a few people to help on a rotating basis to help with this ministry. Training will be provided. Please contact Sandy Knapp or Linda if you have any questions. Sandy can be reached at sknapp719@icloud.com or 860-617-5804.

Fellowship Hosts

Hosts are needed for the reinstated Fellowship Time after worship. We'll show you how to make the coffee; all you need to do is bring some goodies (can be store bought) and be there to serve them. If interested, contact Sandy Knapp per above.

Community Garden

Our community garden provides fresh produce for the food pantry. As spring arrives, we need help with planting, weeding, harvesting, and all that a garden entails. If interested, please contact the church office.



Worship Information

Note: With the purchase of an air purifier for the sanctuary and changing CDC guidelines, we have revised our worship guidelines. Please note that these may change again as circumstances warrant. While Covid cases are on the decline, we are not out of the pandemic yet.

- Worship is in-person, guidelines and safety permitting. No reservations are required.
- The church building will open at 9:30 a.m.
- Masks will be required only if you are not vaccinated or have an underlying health condition that requires one. Of course anyone who chooses may wear a mask. Please don't judge those persons who are masked—we do not know everyone's story, nor is it any of our business why persons choose to mask or not mask. Please be kind to one another.
- There are no printed bulletins—words and music are projected on the screens at the front of the church. You are welcome to print out and bring your own bulletin.
- Fellowship time will be held after worship. Come join us for conversation and connecting. Food and coffee will be available at least the first Sunday of each month.

Worship will continue to be streamed on YouTube, and Facebook using the links below:

- YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq6OxG9rThiQ9GeUqekdEjQ>
- Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/shepherdofthevalleyri>

Continuing Covid Precautions

The new air purifier is portable and can be used in Fellowship Hall for larger church gatherings, Sunday School/Youth events, etc. The Hope Room has central air circulation. When this room is in use the system must be turned to "On" (not "Automatic").

Music Program

Due to a shortfall in our budget, we have had to reduce our expenditures on our music program and be creative in how we offer music for worship. We are blessed to have Delbert Collins as Interim Music Director, playing live the first Sunday of each month and on holy Sundays, directing our choir, and recording hymns, intros, and other special music. Our choir will perform live the first Sunday of each month starting in May and for holy days such as Easter and Palm Sunday.

Office Notes

Church Event/Fundraising/Missions Calendar

We now have a master calendar to coordinate events, mission projects and fundraisers. Let Pam know your important dates as soon as you make them to secure your slot.

If you are collecting items or sponsoring a fundraiser, PLEASE let the church office know so your efforts are coordinated with and don't overlap other projects and fundraisers.

Address Updates

If you're new to the church, have moved or gone south for the winter, or gotten a new phone number or email address, please drop Pam a note (office@sovumc.necoxmail.com)

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

“Getting to Know You”

The Hospitality Committee is starting a new column in the *Circuit Rider* starting next month, "Getting to Know You." As we gather to worship together in person, we will be highlighting one or two people or families each month. Please contact me if there is a member you would recommend to learn more about or if you would be willing to share your story. Thanks, Sue Dyl

Ukrainian Relief

Here are some charities that are making an immediate impact on the crisis in Ukraine:

- UMCOR: UMCmission.org
- Advanced Project World Central Kitchen: WCK.org
- Chef Relief Team Global Giving: Ukrainian Crisis Relief Fund
- United Nations: Ukraine Humanitarian Fund

Trustee Breakfast Fundraiser

The trustees want to say a big THANK YOU for all of you that came to have a wonderful breakfast, while supporting the trustees in their efforts to maintain the church and the parsonage. (And thanks to all the trustees and their helpers who set up, cooked, served, and cleaned up a delicious breakfast!)



Mission Shares Thank You

Thank you for your increased support of our connectional covenant through your Mission Share giving. Significant ministry within our conference and around the world is made possible as each church fulfills the covenant... When one joins a United Methodist congregation, one becomes a member of the total United Methodist connection, and when you join the journey of United Methodism, you help make mission and ministry real!

Rev. Dr. David Calhoun
District Superintendent

Outreach

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

Socks, Mittens, Hats and Gloves Needed

The UMW will be collecting winter hats, mittens, socks and gloves for Project Outreach, a ministry closely aligned with Shepherd of the Valley. A large box will be placed in the narthex of the church. Thank you for your support!

Save Your Pop-Tabs!

Keep saving your pop-tabs (soda or soup cans, etc.), putting them in the box in the kitchen, for the Ronald McDonald house in Providence.

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 bring your old magazines to the church. We will be sure to get them to AJ.

Food Insecurity

If you know of someone who is experiencing food insecurity, we can help! The only requirement for access to our food pantry is need. Food pick-up is usually on Wednesdays, but other arrangements can be made if needed. Food allergies and issues are accommodated. Call the office for sign-up.

Shepherd's Pantry

Thank you for your continued support of the Food Pantry. We need soup, pasta, and pasta sauce. Gift cards to help with things like milk, fruit, and meat (or cards that can also be used for gas) would be greatly appreciated. Running low on boxes too! Computer paper boxes are the ideal size.

Social Media

Social media sites, such as Facebook, are a way to connect with others in your communities. To join, 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.

Church Council Minutes: February 28, 2022

Church Council members present via Zoom included Mary Hunter, Mike and Sandy Knapp, Beth Travers, Sue Dyl, John Lombardo, Barbara Walz, and Hannah Bell-Lombardo. Also present were Pastor Effie McAvoy and congregational members Rob and Marti Bower.

Sandy called the meeting to order at 6:34 where we started out by sharing our joys and concerns, including special prayers for Ukraine.

Minutes of the January meeting were unanimously approved.

Effie described updated Covid protocols. We have purchased a portable air filtration system for \$240 using money in the Worship budget that will circulate the air in the sanctuary for the worship time, and can be moved to Fellowship Hall for gatherings there. (Note that the Hope Room already has its own system.) The system is due to be delivered 3/7, and we will be able to be unmasked once it's here.

Effie also brought us up to date on the music program. We are working within the approved budget using Delbert Collins's services as part-time organist (live once a month and on holy days such as Palm Sunday and Easter; recorded otherwise), soloist, and choir director. Delbert has asked that any choir members commit to twice-monthly rehearsals plus warm-ups before services. The choir will perform live once a month. Effie asked us all to support these modifications to our program, and to be clear about why we're doing this if anyone should ask.

She also noted that Annual Conference is the week of 6/8, and that she will be attending in person. We should learn this week what the status of General Conference is; Effie is a delegate. There will also be a Jurisdictional Conference this summer to elect a new bishop.

In committee reports:

- Communications: The Communications Committee (Effie, Sandy, Pam, Rob, and Hannah) have been meeting to look at how to improve our communications, both with our congregation and the larger community. The committee is currently looking at how to make the website more user friendly and at vendor options.
- Family Ministry: Lisa was not present but submitted the following report on Youth and Family Ministries:

Sunday school is back in person! The goal is to have the back room of the Fellowship Hall become the permanent Sunday school room. This will give the kids and teachers more space as well as a separate area from the hall. Family Fun Night went well this month, but I am going to work on having more active activities that will work in the Fellowship Hall. Nursery has been quiet but will be offered again first Sunday of each month and as needed. Alix is our only nursery staff right now so I will revisit that minor issue soon. Sign language choir starts up again this Sunday with the doxology being done live the first Sunday of each month. The kids will start going up to the altar again for the children's moment with Mary which is great. Beth and Doreen are just an amazing team when it comes to teaching our kids!
- Trustees (Mike): Mike reminded us of the fundraiser breakfast sponsored by the Trustees and asked us to share on Facebook. Marti noted that checks should be made payable to the Trustees vs. SOV.
- Hospitality (Sue): Sue noted the following:
 1. We should do some publicity around Effie's appointment to SOV. We could combine this with our physical opening or some other event.
 2. She is working on identifying the role of the Hospitality Committee.
 3. She is looking for ideas on how to reach out to those who haven't returned post-pandemic. This might be some type of

gathering to get to know each other, or could be combined with a “meet Effie” event.

4. The committee is planning on a “Getting to Know You” column for the *Circuit Rider*. This column would profile a couple of members each month, ideally someone new to the church and someone who has been here a while.
 5. The first fellowship time will take place on 3/6.
 6. The committee is recruiting ushers for worship and to host fellowship time.
 7. Should a member of the church be present at each wedding and funeral to provide directions and any other help needed?
- Worship (Effie): We are moving into Lent with the “Good Enough” theme for both worship and Soup and Soul. Sandy noted that we will have only one usher other than the first Sunday of each month. Offering plates will remain in the narthex. We are also revisiting how we do communion, the current prepackaged wafer and juice being expensive, with a potential return to weekly offering.
 - Finance (John): Based on the first month of data, we are within a couple of hundred dollars of budget. There is usually a significant gift in January, which we were pleased to receive again this year.
 - SPRC (Beth): Nothing to report.
 - UMW (Barbara): This group has been meeting with an average attendance of nine to ten. They will be holding the Mother’s Day Bake Sale again this year. The new “official” name of this group is “United Women in

Faith” though the UMW name will most likely continue to be commonly used.

- Lay Leader (Mary): She has met with Effie and Sandy on the role, and welcomes input from any of us.
- Certified Lay Minister (Sandy): She expressed gratitude for the cards and gifts in appreciation for her service. She also thanked Mike for putting the service together at the last minute when Effie was unable to attend, and for his behind-the-scenes work.

Marti brought up that UMC churches in Russia and Ukraine share a bishop, and that UMCOR is there to help. Effie noted that Pam is putting a list of places to donate.

Sue noted that we had two carloads of donations for Dorcas House. We have also collected hats, mittens, and gloves for Open Table, including contributions from the Knitting Ministry.

Hannah mentioned the Lenten giving opportunity (a 10% increase over current giving, for example) and suggested it be publicized more. The Youth Souper Bowl fundraiser proceeds will go toward mission shares.

The next meeting will be on 3/28 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting was closed with a prayer by Sandy at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Bell-Lombardo

Easter Trivia

1. Easter always falls between which two dates? (March 22 and April 25)
2. This date is determined by what? (First full moon on or after the Spring Equinox)
3. In the 13th century, the church prohibited eating what during Holy Week? (Eggs)
4. What baked good is a Good Friday tradition? (Hot cross buns)
5. In what country did the tradition of the Easter bunny originate? (Germany)
6. What’s the most popular Easter candy in America? (Love ‘em or hate ‘em, Marshmallow Peeps)