



# The Circuit Rider

*Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church*

*May, 2022*

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## Living in Hope

Spring has arrived...not only as a date on the calendar but also in the feeling of the warmth of the sun, the blooming of flowers, and our engaging in outdoor activities after the season of winter. Between the recent rain showers I have been preparing the community garden to begin planting season after Mother’s Day. I have started some plants in my little green house dome and am eagerly awaiting the sprouting of my first tomato shoot!

In a few weeks the church as a whole will take a Saturday and work on our spring cleanup. We will take the flowers that were donated for Easter and will plant them on the church grounds...beautifying the space even more. In the days and weeks ahead we will gather as community in worship, fellowship, work, and play. We will see one another’s faces and share in the joy of being present with one another and caring for one another.

In all my preparations for springtime and engagement, I have also noticed the tendency today of people to focus on their personal needs and wants at the cost of the other. This saddens me immensely. As Christians we are called to “bear one another’s burdens” and to “support one another” during hard times. I want to offer all of us a gentle reminder that we are to do this daily...not just when we are on church grounds.

We are to engage in kindness and hospitality everywhere we go. I have noticed, as we trudge along through this pandemic, that due to fatigue and fear people are less patient, less kind, less caring, less loving, less Christ like.

My request is that we covenant as a community of faith to be MORE

### 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*

like Jesus. Let us look to do all the good we can whenever we can for whomever we can. Let us act with compassion. Let us work with care. Let us love boldly. Let us serve with delight so that those who wonder what it means to be a Christ follower today will see the face of Christ in the actions that we do and the lives we live.

In His Service,  
Pastor Effie

## Statewide Covid Memorial

Shepherd of the Valley's Church Council voted to support the Rhode Island State Council of Churches efforts to bring a statewide Covid-19 Artistic Flag Memorial to RI to honor Rhode Islanders lost to Covid-19. Fred Faria is spearheading this effort and has been working with the RI State Council of Churches and various state officials to bring it to fruition. The idea for the RI memorial was inspired by the COVID memorial event on the Mall in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 2021 by artist Suzanne Firstenberg. See the website <https://www.inamericaflags.org/> for a look at this wonderful memorial. Fred is looking for a few volunteers to help with this project. If you are interested, please reach out to Fred at 401-828-5355, [fffaria001@gmail.com](mailto:fffaria001@gmail.com)

## Native American Ministries Sunday: Wear Red!

On Sunday May 1, 2022 we will celebrate Native American Ministries. We are asking all women and girls to wear red to church as a sign of support for missing and exploited indigenous women and girls. Last year at Annual Conference the Native American Ministries Team asked that churches would offer this form of support.

It is also one of our special offering Sundays. Your support helps equip seminary students who honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries, empower congregations to find fresh and culturally appropriate ways to minister to their communities with Christ's love, and support seminary scholarships for United Methodist Native Americans. Envelopes will be available in the entryway for persons to support Native American Ministries.

After service, weather permitting, I would like those persons who would like to participate to stay for a group photo that we can post in our Fellowship Hall as well as share with the Conference Newsletter.



Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, after worship  
Baked goods needed  
Proceeds benefit Camp Aldersgate scholarships

## Upcoming Events

### Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)

WISH is resuming its *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.

### Wednesday Wisdom Seekers

This group is resuming its study of 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.

### Spring Clean Up Day

Our annual Spring Clean-Up Day will take place on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 a.m. to noon. Rain date is May 14<sup>th</sup>. We plan to plant perennials, cut back some vegetation, trim some trees, move some wood piles and handle general clean-up of the church and parsonage areas. All are welcome to help! Please dress appropriately and bring rakes and other tools you might be able to use to help out.

### 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](mailto:barbw146@verizon.net) or 647-0638. Thank you for your support.

### United Methodist Women (UMW)

The United Methodist Women will meet on Thursday, May 19th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Our program will be "Celebrate the Little Stuff". You are welcome to bring a lunch and enjoy fellowship time.

### Church Picnic

The church picnic will be Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup> after church. Be on the lookout for a sign-up sheet! We will be asking for sides as well as monetary donations for hot dogs and hamburgers. There will be games for the kids as well to celebrate the end of the Sunday School year!

## Regular Events

*Editor's Note: SOV has a number of regular meetings and events, listed below. Some of these are in person, some via Zoom. Please check before joining. 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](mailto: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 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the church. It is open to those in middle through high school.
- **Knitting Ministry**—The Knitting Ministry meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
- **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 May 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Social Justice Group

Arnold Mills pastor Arlene Tully has convened the Seacoast District pastors to see how they can be involved in justice ministry. This is different from missional ministry, going to the root of the problem versus taking care of the problem. If anyone is interested, let Effie know and she can invite them to the next meeting.



## Circuit Rider Information Due May 23<sup>rd</sup>

Please include all June and summer events, including groups that will not be meeting or events not taking place during the summer. September Circuit Rider due date is August 21<sup>st</sup>

## 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.

- 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 people 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.
- We ask you not to gather in the narthex after worship. Please move into Fellowship Hall to meet and greet your fellow attendees or exit the hall.
- Fellowship time will be held after worship. We may not always have food (see the "Help Wanted" section), but you are welcome to join us for conversation and connecting.

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").

# Caring and Sharing

## Ukrainian Relief

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

- UMCOR: [UMCmission.org](http://UMCmission.org)
- Advanced Project World Central Kitchen: [WCK.org](http://WCK.org) [Chef Relief Team](#)
- Global Giving: [Ukrainian Crisis Relief Fund](#)
- United Nations: [Ukraine Humanitarian Fund](#)

## 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](http://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.

# Getting to Know Each Other

As mentioned in April's Circuit Rider, the Hospitality Committee is starting a new column "Getting to You Each Other."

As the chairperson I, Sue Dyl, am going first. Those of you who attended before Covid know me as the person who would stand before the congregation each month with clipboards to pass around for volunteers to sign up for Ushers and Hosts for Fellowship Time.

Growing up I attended Washington Park UMC, now known as Open Table of Christ. I was confirmed there and also married there in 1974. In 1981 when our daughter Shyla was born, I wanted to find a church closer to our home in Scituate for her baptism. She was also confirmed here in 1993 and married in 2009. Her daughters Natalia and Briella were baptized here and currently attend Sunday School and are in the sign language choir. My son Brian was also baptized and confirmed here, and Pastor Katherine performed his marriage to Samantha in 2016. Their daughter Lizzie was also baptized here in 2019.

Currently I attend WISH and sing in the choir, both along with my sister Barbara Bicknell. She also was brought up and married at Washington Park UMC and joined SOV when her daughters were born, starting in 1984. I love my SOV family who have supported us in good times and bad, especially with the passing of my husband in 2020. Over the years I have served on almost every committee alongside many pastors and associate pastors, so if you have any questions about SOV feel free to ask me.

Also, if you have a suggestion of someone who you would like to get to know better or would like to write about yourself, please let me know.

## Office Notes

### Church Event/Fundraising Calendar

We now have a master calendar to coordinate events, mission projects and fundraisers. Let Pam know your planned dates ASAP to secure your slot.

### Address Updates

If you're new to the church, have moved or changed to a seasonal address, or gotten a new phone number or email address, please drop Pam a note ([office@sovumc.necoxmail.com](mailto: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 should be on 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](mailto:sknapp719@icloud.com). Room schedules for small groups should be scheduled through Pam in the church office.

### Fundraisers and Mission Projects

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.

## Help Wanted

### Bake Sale Bakers

The United Methodist Women are looking for bakers to donate baked goods to the Mother's Day Bake Sale after worship on May 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be a signup sheet in Fellowship Hall or contact Barbara Walz at [barbw146@verizon.net](mailto:barbw146@verizon.net) or 647-0638.

### Communion Help

Starting May 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:sknapp719@icloud.com) or 860-617-5804.

### Fellowship Time Hosts

Hosts are needed for the reinstated Fellowship Time after worship. 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.

## Youth/Family News

### June 5<sup>th</sup> Worship Service

The June 5<sup>th</sup> service will include a celebration of our kids and teachers as we end another amazing Sunday school year! Please let Lisa Marciniak know if your child will be there that day to participate in the service

### 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 day.

### 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.

*To all those who take a mom's role in anyone's life,  
Happy Mother's Day!*

# Church Council

## Minutes:

### March 28, 2022

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

Sandy opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. We shared our joys and concerns.

In reports:

- Children's/Family Ministry (Lisa): Sunday School in Fellowship Hall has been going well with four new kids in the last three weeks. Next month a bowling outing with youth and families is planned for spring vacation. She is looking to revamp Family Fun nights for next year. She is also looking into babysitting certification classes our youth could take. This would provide additional help in the nursery the first Sunday of each month when nursery is offered. This would be in lieu of hiring a second staff member. She noted that there will always be an adult present, but that two people are needed. Any adults will need to have passed a BCI.
- Hospitality (Sue): We had a successful first fellowship Sunday with food. She still needs to meet with Effie and Sandy about the people who have stopped coming over the last couple of years, feeling that we need more than a letter to find out why they're not coming and how we can welcome them back.
- Finance (Hannah gave John's report in his absence): Revenues through the end of February are \$30,800 against a budget of \$32,300. The variance is due entirely to lower than expected giving. Expenses are \$35,200 versus a budget of \$36,400. This is due to a variety of items with the biggest favorable being reimbursements at \$1000 less than budget and biggest unfavorable being utilities being \$700 more. Net income is a negative \$4,400 versus a budget of negative \$4,100. We have made no Mission Shares payments.
- Staff Parish Relations (Beth): Nothing to report.
- Trustees (Mike): The fundraising breakfast sponsored by the Trustees raised a preliminary net of \$800, with about 75 people attending. He thanked everyone who helped, especially Fred for cleaning the coffee pot that had been sitting for two years. He also noted that we had a potential septic issue which turned out to be a running urinal, now repaired.
- United Methodist Women (Barbara): The new district meeting will be next month. The organization's name is being changed to United Women in Faith, though still part of the United Methodist Women's organization. Effie noted that the new name is related to the church split and trying to be inclusive. Barbara also reported that the Mother's Day Bake Sale is returning on May 8 on a "Bake what you like, pay what you want" basis. Proceeds will go toward Aldersgate scholarships.
- Lay Leadership (Mary): Nothing to report.
- Associate Minister (Sandy): We now have a welcome corner when you walk into the church with ushers trained on what to do with new people. Each will receive a blue bag with a prayer square from the Knitting Ministry, a prayer stone, an SOV wristband, and a welcome letter from Effie with contact information. Within two days, each will be contacted by Effie or Sandy. The ushers will also have printed bulletins available for new people. Church leadership should recognize new people from the blue bags and make a special effort to welcome them.
- Pastor's Report (Effie):
  - We are still trying to figure out how to exit the sanctuary and not gather in the narthex—she asked for help in moving people into Fellowship Hall or outside.
  - On outreach to those we haven't seen, some people have asked to be removed from the rolls so the Hospitality Committee is asked to contact Pam before

reaching out to those we haven't seen recently.

- The Jurisdictional Conference may happen in November. The question has been raised if it's legal to have a Jurisdictional Conference if there's no Annual Conference. If allowed, the new bishop for the New England Conference will be elected.
- Effie will be away for a number of reasons during the summer. Beverly Stenmark, Hope Luckie, and Sandy will cover.
- Val O'Connor has asked to start an anti-racism group at church. Effie is supportive and can provide resources.
- Arnold Mills pastor Arlene Tully has convened the Seacoast District pastors to see how they can be involved in justice ministry. This is different from missional ministry, going to the root of the problem versus taking care of the problem. If anyone is interested, let Effie know and she can invite them to the next meeting.
- She suggested we watch the video of the New England bishops sent to the congregation if we have not already done so.
- Trinity Solar, which does residential solar installations and does their outreach through non-profits, has contacted us about a referral program. They would provide the church information on their services. Congregants could then reach out to them. For each appointment set up with a congregant, the church would get \$100; it would get \$1000 for each installation. Sandy moved, Lisa seconded, and it was unanimously approved to do some more research and, if positive, move forward with this program.

Fred Faria then joined the meeting, describing the Covid memorial on the Washington Mall featuring 400,000 flags for those who have passed from Covid. He is looking to spearhead a similar project, the Covid Artistic Project, here on the State House lawn in late spring or early summer. He has reached out to the State Council of Churches who is interested, and would be a good organization to spread the word. He asked Effie to contact the District Superintendent for RI UMC's support, and will request space with the governor. Once he has a place, the date and time can be set. He has researched flag sources and costs, and would have the exhibit up for a week. Once the exhibit is over, the appropriate number of flags will be given to each city or town to create their own memorial, personalize, etc. At this point, he is requesting a letter of support from SOV; no funding is currently involved. Barbara moved, Sandy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Sandy and Effie will coordinate on the letter by the end of the week.

In new business, Marti brought up the wording on the request for email addresses in the announcements—those getting the emails would already have their email addresses listed with the church. She also noted that the wording on winter food pantry needs should be updated to reflect the spring season. Effie suggested she bring these suggestions to Pam.

Effie closed the meeting with a prayer at 7:40 p.m.

Next meeting is 4/25/22 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Bell-Lombardo



Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. - noon

Dress appropriately; bring rakes and other tools for cleanup.