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## From the Pastor's Desk



Can you believe that we're almost in March and that we've already gone through the first two months of 2023?!!

It's already Lent. That started on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd. Lent, of course, is the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, which this year is April 9th. "Lent" comes from the Old English word *læncte*, meaning "lengthening (of daylight hours)" (or, less literally, "spring" or "springtime"). Traditionally, Lent is a time that we engage in intentional prayer, self-examination, confession, and humility.

I invite us as a church family to approach Lent in that spirit this year. Our worship theme is a phrase coined by author and life coach Nancy Levin: **Honoring the space between "no longer and not yet"**. Cross-marked and Spirit-sealed, we dwell in the space between the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the final fulfillment of God's hope-filled promises. In this space between, we dwell in the unfinished world as unfinished people. As the gospel of John reminds us, "we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed."

Each week during Lent we will be invited into *vocare*, a spiritual practice in our personal lives, our circles of relationships, and our congregation, designed to help us discover and embrace and lean into the various ways that God calls us in our everyday lives so that even amid the not yet, we can more intentionally live life on purpose for the common good.

Our Lenten weekly themes are: February 26: "Called to Being Tested"; March 3: "Called to Openness"; March 12: "Called by God which is Life-Giving and Life-Changing"; March 19: "Called to Attentiveness"; March 26: "Called to Regret"; April 2 (Palm/Passion Sunday): "Called to Experience God's Presence"; and April 9 (Easter Sunday): "Called to Resurrection". You won't want to miss the chance to honor the space between no longer and not yet!

Our Lenten Sunday School series this year will be taught by Pastor Curt and Jeri Jones. We will be looking at Adam Hamilton's book Why? Making Sense of God's Will (with a new introduction). We will be covering one chapter each Sunday during March with questions that virtually all of us ask at one time or other. They include: "Why do the innocent suffer?"; "Why do my prayers seem to go unanswered?"; "Why can't I see God's will for my life?"; and "Why God's love prevails". On April 2, we will have a special Prayer Mosaic in the Gathering Place. There will be no Sunday School on Easter Sunday, April 9.



Each Thursday during March, between 12:30 and 2:00 PM – several UCC churches in the York Association (including St. John's Blymire's UCC) will take turns hosting a light lunch and short worship service on the spiritual practices of praying, forgiving, fasting, singing, and giving. The schedule and locations are listed below.

During Lent we will continue also with the interim tasks that we have already started. These include the congregation filling out a Diversity Survey (following up on Valerie Dennis' presentation on February 19th), starting Messy Church to begin in April, looking at our church's Constitution and By-Laws with an attorney to determine if we need to change or edit or tweak them, being trained and setting up to start livestreaming our Sunday worship services, establishing an active and an affiliated church membership lists, looking for a new home for Emmanuel's Closet, and continuing our caring responses to local and wider urgent needs. We hope to start a Profile Committee in a month or so. A Search and Call Committee for our new settled pastor will hopefully begin its work by late spring.

I have said this almost every month. But I want to again state that we want to continue to build up our church and to answer the all-important questions: **Who are we as St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become as we journey into God's future? What is our unique niche here in Dallastown?**

I will see you around the month of March.

God's continued blessings on you, Pastor Rick

## **Lenten Services 2023**

### **Spiritual Practices**

#### **Wednesday, February 22**

St. John's Blymire's UCC, 1009 Blymire Rd., Dallastown, PA 17313  
7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday service with imposition of ashes and Communion

#### **Thursday, March 2 (with other York Association UCC Churches)**

Dover UCC, 45 W. Canal St., Dover, PA 17315  
12:30 p.m. soup & bread; 1:15 p.m. Lenten Service  
*Praying*

#### **Thursday, March 9 (with other York Association UCC Churches)**

Faith UCC, 509 Pacific Ave., York, PA 17404  
12:30 p.m. soup & bread; 1:15 p.m. Lenten Service  
*Forgiving*

#### **Thursday, March 16 (with other York Association UCC Churches)**

Hayshire UCC, 100 Haybrook Dr., York, PA 17406  
12:30 p.m. soup & bread; 1:15 p.m. Lenten Service  
*Fasting*

#### **Thursday, March 23 (with other York Association UCC Churches)**

St. John's Blymire's UCC, 1009 Blymire Rd., Dallastown, PA 17313  
12:30 p.m. soup & bread; 1:15 p.m. Lenten Service  
*Singing*

#### **Thursday, March 30 (with other York Association UCC Churches)**

Locust Grove UCC, 1035 Locust Grove Rd., East York, PA 17402  
12:30 p.m. soup & bread; 1:15 p.m. Lenten Service  
*Giving*

#### **Thursday, April 6**

St. John's Blymire's UCC, 1009 Blymire Rd., Dallastown, PA 17313  
7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Fellowship Around Tables and Communion Service

#### **Sunday, April 9**

St. John's Blymire's UCC, 1009 Blymire Rd., Dallastown, PA 17313  
8:45 a.m. – Easter Festival Service and Communion

## **SUNDAY SERVICES in MARCH**

### **MARCH 5 – SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT- START OF UCC WOMEN’S WEEK**

Scripture: John 3:1-17

Message: “Called to Openness” -- “Close, by no cigar!”

Theme: Nicodemus’ encounter with Jesus shows there’s a difference between knowing about God and knowing God, that we can’t stay neutral, and that we need to die to our current life.

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton’s “Why do the innocent suffer?”

### **MARCH 12 - THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT – DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS**

Scripture: John 4:5-42

Message: “Called by God with God’s Gift which is Life-Giving and Life-Changing”

Theme: The Samaritan woman is confronted: Who is Jesus? What gift of God has He come to bring? Who needs to hear about Jesus?

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton’s “Why do my prayers seem to go unanswered?”

### **MARCH 19 - FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT-ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

Scripture: John 9:1-41

Guest Speaker-Rev. Rodger Snyder

Theme: From Jesus’ encounter with the blind man, the disciples are led to ask:

What separates us from God? What restores us to God? Do we believe in the Son of Man?

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton’s “Why can’t I see God’s will for my life?”

### **MARCH 26- FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

Scripture: John 11:1-45

Message: “Called to Regret” “To get a complete picture, we ask: What do we learn from our regrets?”

Theme: From the Lazarus episode, we realize that that is the story of salvation in miniature, that Jesus came to share in our suffering and to show God’s love, and that God’s plan is to release us from the power of death through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice.

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton’s “Why God’s love prevails?”

### **APRIL 2- SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT - PALM/PASSION SUNDAY**

Scripture: portions of Matthew 26 and 27

Message: “Called to Experience God’s Presence”

Theme: What is the gift of God? What surprises me about God’s presence? Who needs to hear the gospel? Moreover, the betrayal we don’t like in others may be part of our blood, too!

During Sunday School: Prayer Mosaic

### **APRIL 6- MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE—7:00 PM**

Around tables with Holy Communion

### **APRIL 9- EASTER SUNDAY - SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Message: “Called to Resurrection” How do our values inform how we practice resurrection?” As we trust in Jesus to lead us into and through the future, we have nothing to fear.

**MARCH**  
**BIRTHDAYS**



2. Sarah Smith  
Lexus Luckenbaugh
9. Madison Nugent
10. Patrick Michaels
12. Joel Frey
16. Lillie Eberly
19. Nicki Barley
20. Erin Michaels
22. Joyce Raver
24. David Morton  
Jamison Rost
28. Maya Ness  
Peter Busch  
Diane Ness
29. Wayne Althoff
31. Marshall Geesey

*May God Bless You*  
*On Your*  
*Birthday*

**CELEBRATING MARCH ANNIVERSARIES**

March 29 - Terry and Frances Doll - 59 years



# FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Red Brick Chapel

Cemetery

Month-2023	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense
January	\$10,823.00	\$9,149.59	\$0.30	\$612.18	\$738.24	\$200.00
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
<b>Total</b>	\$10,823.00	\$9,149.59	\$0.30	\$612.18	\$738.24	\$200.00

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ February 1, 2023

\$16,634.42

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ February 1, 2023  
(Includes \$55,169.25 Endowment)

\$58,023.19

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ February 1, 2023  
(Includes \$798,180.71 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

\$798,750.77

## Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2023

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	Balance
Beginning				\$ 806.82
January	3	\$576.00	\$ 151.00	\$ 381.82
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$576.00</b>	<b>\$ 151.00</b>	

## **REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER**

**Peggy Luckenbaugh**  
Room 704B  
Colonial Manor Nursing Home  
970 Colonial Avenue  
York, PA 17403



Keeping in our prayers  
**Dolores Barley**  
**Jeanette Black**  
**Cindie McKinsey**  
**Friends battling cancer**  
**Covid 19 patients**

**Linda Trone**  
Room 604  
Colonial Manor Nursing Home  
970 Colonial Avenue  
York, PA 17403

**Carolyn Innerst**  
Room 123  
Senior Commons@Powder  
Mill  
1775 Powder Mill Road  
York, PA 17403

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**Remember**  
and pray for  
**Our Members**  
in the  
**Military**

**A1C Ness, Brandon**  
6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad  
Tucson, AZ 85756

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Our first chicken BBQ of the season will be held on Saturday, April 8, from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM. You will get a 1/2 chicken, baked potato, applesauce, roll and butter all for \$10.00. To place an order, please call the church office 244-0655. We sold out early nearly every month last summer, so to be guaranteed a dinner, it is best to pre-order. Other BBQ's will be held on the 2nd Saturday of each month thru October.

We are also planning to set up a bake sale table and would welcome donations of homemade cookies, rice krispie treats, cupcakes, candy, etc. Please put individual portions in baggies or plastic wrap. They may be dropped off at the church the day before or the morning of the BBQ. Thank you.

### **EMMANUEL'S CLOSET** **We Need a New Home**

St. Paul's UCC, which has generously housed Emmanuel's Closet for the past few years, is being sold. Therefore, we will have to move out of that location by the end of March. The last day that we will be open for service there will be March 25.

Because of this timeline we have moved up the dates for the Easter meal give-out. Food clients may pick up the extra holiday food bags and gift cards for perishable items on either March 18 or March 25.

We are in the process of looking for a new location in the Red Lion/ Dallastown area and hope to find one soon, but will remain closed from March 26 until we do. If anyone has any ideas as to where we can relocate, please see Sterling Boyd. We do not want to have to close permanently, since this is a vital ministry to our community.

We are hoping to be able to give out much of our current inventory before leaving St. Paul's. If you have already bought any food to donate, we will gladly take it, but we ask that you not purchase any new items or bring in any clothing or household goods until we find a new home. Thank you.



If you don't want to be late for church on Sunday, March 12, remember to turn your clocks ahead by one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 11.

Daylight saving time begins at 2:00 AM that Sunday.



## ***MEN'S GROUP***



Our Men's Group will meet on Tuesday, March 14 at 7:00 PM. Once again we will host a mystery guest and another visitor. Participants will try to guess something about the guest. After guessing, our guest will present a great program. Anyone wanting to have supper at Parma in Dallastown are asked to meet there at 5:45 PM.



## ***Women's Beach Retreat***

Our annual Rehoboth Beach Women's Retreat will take place April 21-23. The cost is \$160 per person and we need 15 people to get that rate. There is a sign up sheet in the Gathering Room. Also, please indicate if you would be willing to drive. We will carpool, leaving the church at 8:00 AM Friday morning. Deadline to sign up and pay is March 12.



## ***CARD and GAME CLUB***



We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

We will meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. Our next meeting will be March 8.

## ***"Pull Up a Chair and Be Our Guest."***

The FUN Team is once again sponsoring a ladies luncheon and program called "Pull Up a Chair and Be Our Guest." The event will be held on Saturday, April 15, from 11:30 AM-3:00 PM.



Registration will begin at 11:30, with lunch at noon. The menu will consist of comfort food, including chicken and waffles. After lunch we will move to the sanctuary for our program on Christian hospitality, featuring Cindy Innerst-Axe as our speaker. The cost is \$15.00 per person, which includes lunch, gift bags, and door prizes. There is a sign up sheet in the Gathering Room. Deadline to register is Sunday, April 2.

Feel free to invite a friend and join us for an afternoon of fellowship and fun. See Marti Leader or Diana Myers if you have any questions.

Pastor Rick's Bible study has now resumed at 10:00 AM on Tuesday mornings. We are studying the book of Matthew. Anyone who is interested is invited to join.



Book Club has returned! We get together on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 11:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Each person will tell about a book they have read or are currently reading. It is also a time of fellowship and support. Lunch will be ordered in. Come join us and bring a friend! Questions? Text or call Ginny Weber at (202) 549-4358.

## ***SOUP SALE***

The Fun Team is now taking orders for homemade hamburger vegetable soup. The cost is \$9.00 per quart. There is a sign up sheet for orders in the Gathering Room or you may call the church office. The deadline to order is Sunday, March 5, and pick up will be Saturday, March 18, from 9:00 AM-noon here at the church.



## ***A Matter of Balance***

The York Area Agency on Aging will once again be offering a class here at our church to help older adults who are experiencing trouble with balance and have concerns about falling. This is the same class that was offered here last spring. The program is FREE for those 60+ years old. It will run for 4 weeks on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1:00-3:00PM May 2-May 30 (no class May 16 because of Election Day). See the flyer on the next page for more information. To register, please call Megan at (717) 855-0437. This class is open to the public and space is limited, so call early to reserve a spot! Priority will be given to members of our church if they call before the beginning of April.

## ***CHAIR YOGA***

Looking for some gentle, easy exercise? Come check out our Chair Yoga classes! These classes are especially good for beginners. No equipment is necessary. Yoga is one of the most highly recommended forms of exercise for seniors! You can come occasionally, once a week, or twice a week. Just come and give it a try! It's easy! Men, this is not for women only!

Classes are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10-11 am here at the church. There is a \$10 fee for each class. Hope to see you there!





# DO YOU HAVE **concerns** about falling?



## A MATTER OF BALANCE

MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

**Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A MATTER OF BALANCE is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.**

**This program emphasizes practical strategies to manage falls.**

### **YOU WILL LEARN TO:**

- view falls as controllable
- set goals for increasing activity
- make changes to reduce fall risks at home
- exercise to increase strength and balance

### **WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

- anyone concerned about falls
- anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength
- anyone who has fallen in the past
- anyone who has restricted activities because of falling concerns

The **FREE** class is held twice a week for 4 weeks for those 60+ years.

**Location:** St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ  
1009 Blymire Road, Dallastown 17313

**Dates:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, May 2—May 30 (no class May 16)

**Time:** 1pm—3pm

**To register:** Megan at 717-855-0437



**Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls Volunteer Lay Leader Model ©2006**

This program is based on Fear of Falling: A Matter of Balance. Copyright ©1995 Trustees of Boston University. All rights reserved. Used and adapted by permission of Boston University.

**A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model**

Recognized for Innovation and Quality in Healthcare and Aging, 2006, American Society on Aging.

A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model was developed by a grant from the Administration on Aging (#90AM2780).

## A HELPFUL ARTICLE BY REV. DR. ANNA HALL

*The following recent article explains why we at Blymire's Church are not alone in our desires and efforts to involve more young people in our church and why we think that starting Messy Church is good at this point. – Pastor Rick*

**We are down to a handful of kids in our church. Help!**

**Where Have All the Children Gone?**

**We are down to a handful of kids in our church. Help!** by Rev. Dr. Anna Hall

In my work with churches through Convergence and my personal experiences as a leader in congregations, I have heard this lament many times. In some ways, this may be one of the hardest transitions for 21st century churches. To go from memories of full, multi-classroom religious education programs in the late 20th century to many Sundays when no children attend at all is painful and anxiety producing, to be sure.

The first thing to know is that you are not alone. Let's do some math. By 2020, the median worship attendance at most churches was 65. This is declining over time. The average age of people in congregations is now 57. This means that if children are present, they may be brought by grandparents rather than parents. As of 2020, 13.8% of regular participants in congregations are under 12. **This means that if you are among the 69% of churches in the US with 100 or less attending worship, you likely have less than 14 actively participating children.**

But let's not stop there. We are also seeing in our congregational assessments and national survey data (Pew Research Center) that there have been changes in frequency of attendance as generations move through the church, and particularly in young families. 69% of parents of children under 18 attended only once or twice a month or less, and this was in 2014, before the pandemic. Those in the Baby Boomer Generations or older were twice as likely to attend weekly than Generation X, and over 4x as likely as older Millennials. Since Generation X and older Millennials are the ones most likely to have children in the household these days, I bet you can begin to see the problem.

A dozen kids or less, attending 1-2 times per month, very rarely all on the same Sunday, means only a handful in your education programs each week at best. This makes it very hard to plan programming, particularly if you are still trying to have multiple classes by age groups. It can feel awkward to have 2 teachers for only one child in a class. Planned activities may not work with only 1-2 students. Teachers who show up to volunteer and have no kids attend that week become demoralized.

The situation is not hopeless, though, for those churches seeking to be intergenerational and support spiritual formation in young people. The solution doesn't involve competing with the mega-church with expensive and shiny programming. And the solution definitely does not involve blaming the pastor, society, and everyone around for the lack of children in the church. Here's what you can do:

- 1. Believe that God can call even the smallest group of believers to do amazing things.** There is nothing wrong with your church just because you don't have children present every week, or in numbers you had decades ago. Society changes over time, and the role of religion within it. You are called to be who God is calling you to be, right now, with your current group of believers, no matter how small.
- 2. Focus on quality child care first.** Make sure that you have child care during all adults-only activities and meetings, which means two trained, background-checked and reliable workers at all times. This will likely mean paying childcare workers if you are a smaller congregation. Budget for this. Families will never be able to fully participate in the life of your church if they can't bring their children. A pastor or volunteer teacher can be available during this time so that if kids show up they can receive a spiritual formation lesson in the one-room-schoolhouse model. Seasons of the Spirit, Illustrated Ministry, and many other curriculum providers offer resources for multi-age classrooms.



3. **Make church life intergenerational.** A fellowship hour with a lesson and a craft can bring 85 year olds alongside 5 year olds, making important connections between the two. Storytelling during worship can be enjoyed by all ages when framed as an essential part of the service rather than just “Time with the Children.” Consider a “playground” down front so most kids are able to play and learn during worship, still providing access to childcare for the smallest or those who need extra support. Experiment with more family-friendly songs and worship elements so all can feel welcome. Train your adults to see noise and mess from children as a part of God’s good news for the congregation. Emphasize that you are doing all this so that “kids of all ages – 0-99” are welcome and included in your congregation.
4. **Rethink spiritual formation.** Families today need ways to help their kids learn about faith that fit into their busy lives. E-mail a resource such as a weekly lesson or a monthly calendar of formation themes to all parents, grandparents, and caregivers in your congregation so that they can have daily devotional time with the kids in their lives at the dinner table or on the daily commute. Stay in touch with families outside of Sundays – kids love snail mail and seeing church leaders in attendance at sports and performances. Help parents learn about faith formation through sharing books, videos, and other resources that emphasize how all of life is spiritual formation, if we reflect on our experiences as a family or community and support that reflection with learning and prayer.

None of these suggestions are a magic bullet that will restore your childrens’ programming to its 1980s glory. However, all of them are a faithful way forward to sharing faith with young people and supporting families as they seek spiritual support in this ever-changing world.

If you need help brainstorming or implementing some of these ideas, please email me at [anna@convergence.org](mailto:anna@convergence.org) to learn about all the ways Convergence can help.

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### **Stockpiling the Caregiver’s Toolbox**

The York Association is sponsoring FREE training classes for family members and caregivers of individuals with Dementia/Alzheimer’s. The training is scheduled Tuesdays, April - June 2023 from 2:00 - 4:30 PM, hosted at Hayshire UCC, 100 Haybrook Dr, York. Seating is limited. Please register and direct any questions to Hayshire church office - [hayshirechurch@gmail.com](mailto:hayshirechurch@gmail.com) or call (717) 848-4007.

#### **Classes (Effective Tools for YOUR Toolbox):**

<b><i>Building Blocks of Dementia</i></b>	April 25
<b><i>Behavior &amp; Communication</i></b>	May 2
<b><i>Helping Skills &amp; Activities of Daily Living</i></b>	May 16
<b><i>Activities &amp; Engagement in Your Home &amp; Community</i></b>	May 23
<b><i>Safety in Your Home</i></b>	June 6
<b><i>Taking Care of YOU</i></b>	June 13



## What people have been saying...

Messy Church has enabled us to reach out creatively to those on the periphery of our church and helped us to make and maintain links with families who would not or cannot be with us at our 'usual' gathering times.

**Rev Bob Morris**, Cirencester Baptist Church

Just wanted to let you know about the amazing success of our Messy Church.

We are now on our fourth month and it has grown each month. At this week's session we had 106 people, including our team of helpers, and the vast majority of our guests have no other church contact. It's so exciting to be involved in such a good group. Thank you so much for the ideas. The challenge now is to figure out how to fit them all in!

**Rev Allie Kerr**, St Dunstan's, Upton

Messy Church has made a HUGE impact on worship in one of the two parishes where I am a minister.

**Rev Dr Robin Hill**, Longniddry, Scotland

We've been running Messy Church in our parish (just outside of Toronto, Canada) for the past two years, and God has been doing amazing things in helping us connect with unchurched or dechurched families.

**Rev Judy Paulsen**, Christ Church Anglican Church, Oshawa

I suspect that all that is needed for Messy Church to help people grow into quite mature informed discipleship is implicit in the basic picture and model.

**Bishop Graham Cray**

It has been fascinating seeing the kids and families take on board such a fresh way of being church.

**Rev Christine Moimoi**, Uniting Church, Drysdale, Victoria, Australia

Sometimes God does a new thing... and it seems to me that at the moment God is doing a new thing around the world through Messy Church and that we must praise him and thank him for that, pray that it'll go on growing and, wherever we can, bless the work and encourage it on.

**Dr Christina Baxter**

Through much prayer and preparation, we have reached out to some 15 fringe or non-church families who are now die-hard Messy Church-goers. They inform me it is the highlight of the week for their children, and one father shared with me that he never thought he would ever say he goes to church weekly and enjoys it.

God is doing some amazing things here. We assumed it would taper off after the first couple of weeks, but the families are beginning to invite other families because it is a great environment to discover and learn.

**Rev Tim Waghorn**, St Augustine's Church, Melbourne, who runs a weekly Messy Church

## Messy Church

is growing fast.

It started in 2004 at an Anglican church near Portsmouth, UK, and has since spread around the world and across all the major Christian denominations. The number of Messy Churches registered on the website directory is increasing month by month.





## Messy Church

- Is for families who don't yet belong to church
- Is a congregation of the church, not a stepping stone to the existing service
- Is for all ages, not just children
- Is not a franchise but a model to adapt to different contexts
- Is resourced, enabled and supported by BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship)

### A typical Messy Church might run once a month on a day and at a time to suit families in the area.

It would have elements like these:

- A relaxed welcome time with drinks and snacks
- An activity-based learning time, with Bible-themed crafts, competitions, games, prayers and other activities
- A short celebration, usually with story, song and prayer
- A sit-down meal for everyone

### To be a Messy Church, it will express the values of

- Christ-centredness
- Hospitality
- Creativity
- Celebration
- All-age, as equal priority is given to the needs of adults and children

### Messy Church needs:

- A core team of three or four, plus a larger team of any number of people with different gifts
- To be seen as another congregation alongside the existing congregations
- A leadership team who spend time listening to God, reflecting on their local community's needs and communicating effectively with the wider church congregation

## How to start

Details can be found on the website [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk), in *Starting your Messy Church*, in the first *Messy Church* book and *Messy Church—the DVD*.

- Visit another Messy Church
- Read the resources
- Listen to God and to your community
- Contact your Regional Coordinator
- Gather a team
- Plan thoroughly
- Be faithful to the values of Messy Church
- Publicise effectively
- Review regularly
- Enjoy it!

## Resources

A range of Messy Church resources is available to help you start and run a Messy Church.

Messy Church, Messy Church 2 and Messy Church 3 each give 15 sessions of Messy Church ready to use and useful details of the thinking and theology behind the practice.

The magazine *Get Messy!* provides a ready-to-use session for each month and up-to-date stories, news and advice from across the network.

Other books to inform and enrich Messy Churches are also available at [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk).

A range of licensed Messy Church branded clothing, publicity and other merchandise is available from CPO, [www.cpo-online.org.uk](http://www.cpo-online.org.uk).

The Messy Church team is available to run training. For details, please see the website or contact the administrator: [messychurch@brf.org.uk](mailto:messychurch@brf.org.uk) or 01235 858246.

## Cost

BRF, a registered charity, makes no charge for a church to run a Messy Church but invites churches to support the work of the Messy Church team as part of its home mission. By giving directly to the work of Messy Church you are enabling more churches to hear about it and to continue BRF's work of supporting and sustaining existing Messy Churches. For further details, see the website or contact the administrator: [messychurch@brf.org.uk](mailto:messychurch@brf.org.uk) or 01235 858246.

Messy Church is part of BRF, a Registered Charity. BRF, 15 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon OX14 3FE



## UCC YORK ASSOCIATION OUTREACH COMMITTEE INVITES YOU TO CARE FOR CREATION

As our UCC churches begin the season of Lent, we are reminded of our connection with God's creation and the call to care for it. Ash Wednesday marks the start of a period of reflection, repentance, and renewal, a time to turn our hearts and minds towards God and to consider our impact on the world around us. At the same time, we are called to examine our relationship with creation and to take action to restore and protect it.

With this in mind, the Community Outreach Committee needs your help in planning and promoting an "initiative" that began "in our own backyard". Along with this, are specific events with community partners that your church members can participate in the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>.



### Habitat Action Team @ Nixon Park.

Celebrate & improve habitats on these nature walks where we'll be removing invasive species and/or planting native plants. Pre-registration will be required.

**Saturday, April 22, 9-11am & 1-3pm:** Earth Day Habitat Improvement Walk

**Sunday, April 23, 9-11am:** Earth Day Habitat Improvement Walk

**Saturday, April 29, 9-11am & 1-3pm:** Arbor Day Tree Planting

**Sunday, April 30, 9-11am:** Arbor Day Tree Planting



### Lower Susquehanna Riverkeepers Association

Clean Up Day on 4/22 (Earth Day) - with the location TBD.

Greener Codorus Initiative Kick off on 4/12

Work crew volunteers needed every Monday morning and Wednesday evening in York City. (April)

### CRDC -The Bag That Builds Program Initiative, Challenge and Celebration Event



How much plastic can you collect in a week?

Yours in Christ,

Glenn Young, Co-chairperson

George DeMers, Co-chairperson



## Revelations for March from “Bly Mire” Mouse

Boy! You guys don’t give up on the activity around our humble abode here at Blymire’s Church! But we love to see and hear you coming and going!

There isn’t much down time or quiet time here for us, but that’s okay. We love it when Wanda comes in every week morning. We then hardly have time to turn around when there are counters, chair yoga classes, card and game club, Bible study, book club, Circle of Grace, and choir and bell rehearsals (you’re sounding better all the time!). We hardly get a good look at Pastor Rick during the week as he runs in and out breathlessly so often. What’s that all about? lol

The little ones and us like to sit back and enjoy the Sunday worship services, Sunday School and your one diversity discussion, and your special Ash Wednesday service. Then there are the “specials” each month where you usually have a lot of food and some crumbs for us to gobble up (don’t stop that!). We overheard the love stories that were shared at the men’s group with your spouses. The stories were funny, touching, and romantic. Thanks for letting us eavesdrop!

But the highlight of our month was your Valentine’s Party/Desserts/Dancing. “Timeless” really rocked the place with their mostly oldies rock n’ roll music! And the paintings they were giving away were so nice. We and the little ones were swinging to the music just as so many of you were. In fact, we were so into it that Mire tripped over her own hind feet and sprained one of her hind ankles! Oh, she’s all right. She just needs to stay off from that foot and leg for awhile and to rest. She’ll be okay in no time. It’s all good!

We heard that several of you couples and families are spending time in Florida for parts of February and March. Have a good time. In fact, we heard that several of your regular meetings during February – Trustees, PRT, and CMT – were cancelled because so many of you were away. When you folks get back, we always look forward to eavesdropping and listening to your tales of places far away that we will never get to, but that sound fun. We travel vicariously through so many of you!

We look forward to March and to the Lenten and Easter season. We overheard that you will have a Lenten theme: Honoring the space between “no longer and not yet” where we recognize that we live in the space between the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the final fulfillment of God’s hope-filled promises. We look forward -- with you – to listening, praying, and living that theme out.

Happy gusty, windy month of March to you all! Do you think we’ll finally have our winter weather during March? We hope not!

Love,

Bly and Mire and our precious little ones



### March Humor:

**Seen on a church sign: 7 Days Without Prayer Makes One Weak**

**A preacher wound up the services one morning by saying, “Next Sunday I am going to preach on the subject of liars. And in this connection, as a preparation for my discourse, I would like you all to read the seventeenth chapter of Mark.” On the following Sunday, the preacher rose to begin, and said, “Now, then, all of you who have done as I requested and read the seventeenth chapter of Mark, please raise your hands.” Nearly every hand in the congregation went up. Then said the preacher, “You are the people I want to talk to. There is no seventeenth chapter of Mark.”**

*(source: The Best of Good Clean Jokes, Bob Phillips, 1989, Harvest House Publishers)*



We do not draw people to Christ by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.

Madeleine L'Engle

### THE WEAVER

My life is but a weaving  
between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colors  
He worketh steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow  
And I, in foolish pride,  
Forget He sees the upper,  
And I the underside.

Not til the loom is silent  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why.

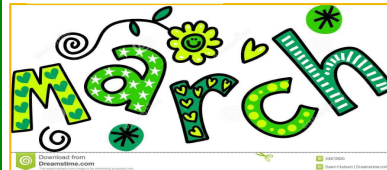
The dark threads are as needful  
In the Weaver's skillful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern He has planned."

Benjamin Malachi Franklin



2023

MAY GOOD  
LUCK BE  
WITH YOU  
WHEREVER  
YOU GO AND  
MAY YOUR  
BLESSINGS  
OUTNUMBER  
THE  
SHAMROCKS  
THAT  
GROW.



### THE REAL JESUS

The Jesus of many people is small enough to be contained in an aquarium that fits on the cabinet. He never causes trouble or demands attention. If you want a goldfish bowl of Jesus, steer clear of the real Jesus Christ. He changes everything!

No, Jesus doesn't make you skinny, or clever. Jesus doesn't change what you see in the mirror. He changes how you see what you see. He will not be silenced, packaged, or predicted. He is the pastor who chased people out of church. He is the prophet who had a soft spot for crooks and whores. He is the king who washed the grime off the feet of his betrayer. He turned a bread basket into a buffet and a dead friend into a living one. And most of all, he transformed the tomb into a womb out of which life was born ....your life.

Max Lucado

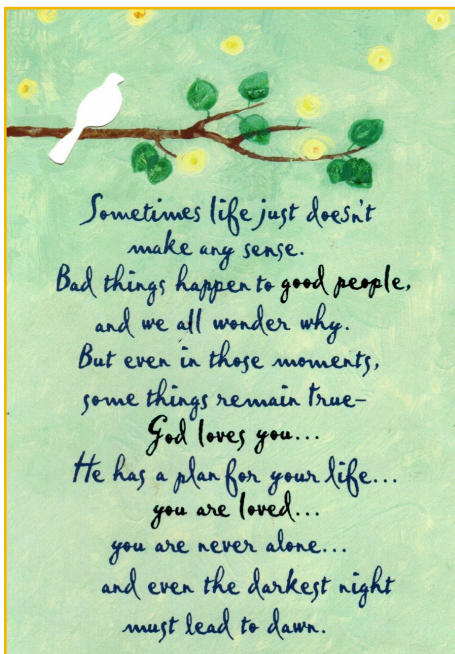
Pray when you feel  
like worrying.

After running helped Tyler Moon lose 100 pounds, he celebrated by signing up to the run the Twin Cities 10-mile race. A person of faith, he replaced his name on the race bib with the message, "Jesus Saves" hoping to inspire spectators at the event.



At the eight mile mark, Tyler experienced an irregular heartbeat went into cardiac arrest, and collapsed. The runner behind him, a certified registered nurse anesthetist, rushed to perform CPR. Tyler's rescuer's name: Jesus Bueno. With the help of 11 other runners, including nurses, first responders and a physician, Jesus (who goes by Jesse) assisted Tyler until an ambulance arrived. Tyler was taken to the hospital and stabilized. Doctors told him the incident was an anomaly. His heart is now healthy and he feels blessed to have another shot at life, thanks to what he calls "divine intervention,"

"It's just something I never expected" Tyler said of being saved by a man named Jesus, highlighting his race bib's message. "But God's plans are greater than anything I could ever think of."





## ERMA BOMBECKS SPRING CLEANING TIPS

### **Disclaimer!**

*The techniques described here are not necessarily those recommended by St. John's Blymire's UCC!*

### **DIRT**

Layers of dirty film on windows and screens provide a helpful filter against harmful and aging rays from the sun. Call it an SPF factor of 15 and leave it alone.

### **COBWEBS**

Artfully draped over lampshades reduce the glare from the bulb, thereby creating a romantic atmosphere. If someone points out that the light fixtures need dusting, simply look confused and exclaim "What? And spoil the mood?"

### **DUSTING**

If dusting is REALLY out of control, simply place a showy urn on the coffee table and insist that "This is where Grandma wanted us to scatter her ashes."

### **GENERAL CLEANING**

Mix one-quarter cup pine-scented household cleaner with four cups of water in a spray bottle. Mist the air lightly. Leave dampened rags in conspicuous locations. Put on an exhausted look, and sigh, "I clean and I clean and I still don't get anywhere."

**SPRING CLEANING FOR YOUR MIND** Spring will soon be upon us. Our thoughts now turn to airing out our homes, and making everything shiny and clean. Now is a good time to spring clean our minds too. Every so often, our minds need a spring cleaning. We so easily can get in the habit of negative thinking. Our minds, like our homes, need to be purged of what isn't useful. Here are some thoughts that I suggest you clean from your mind. Put them out to the curb and give yourself a fresh start to spring.

1. **"I Can't" Thoughts:** You can do anything that you set your mind to. If what you want to do is in line with God's purpose for your life, then with conviction and hard work, you will accomplish it. Remember that we are not limited by other people or by our circumstances. We only are limited by the "I can't" talk that goes on inside our heads. Anyone who has ever achieved anything great has had to purge the "I can't" talk from their minds. I encourage you to do the same.
2. **"The Grass Is Greener" Thoughts:** Comparing yourself to others is a recipe for frustration. What I've learned over the years is that there will always be someone who is smarter, more attractive, more talented and more successful than I am. But I'm not supposed to be focused on what others have. Instead, I am supposed to focus on my own unique mix of talents. God has made each of us with certain attributes so that we can best fulfill our special purpose on this earth. So, make the most of the gifts and talents that *you've* been given, and don't worry about the gifts and talents of others.
3. **"I Can't Make a Difference in This World" Thoughts:** You would be shocked at the incredible power that you have to change the life of another human being for the better. A small word of encouragement can set someone on the path to fulfilling his or her dreams. A simple compliment can give someone confidence. A note telling someone that you've been thinking about them can make that person feel less alone in the world. Our words and actions have tremendous power. So, know the power you possess and change someone else's life for the better.
4. **"I'm Not Important" Thoughts:** If you are alive and breathing, God has a plan for your life and a purpose for you to fulfill. You are important. And you have something very important to offer the world. Your job is to figure out what God wants you to do with your life, and then pursue that goal with all your energy and passion. We each are called to bless the world. Some of us may be called to make a positive difference to other people. Others may be called to help animals or the environment. Whatever your calling, know that your contribution to this world is an important one.

Our thoughts directly impact what we achieve and how we experience the world. So this week, take some time to do some mental spring cleaning. Get rid of the negative thoughts that may be holding you back from accomplishing great things and being a blessing to this world.

Meerabelle Dey

### **BE A BLESSING**

**PRAY OFTEN. BE KIND.**

**GIVE THANKS.**

**DO GOOD. HAVE COURAGE.**

**LEAD WITH LOVE. PRACTICE PEACE.**

**BE THE LIGHT. WORK FOR JUSTICE.**

**ENCOURAGE OTHERS.**

**BE JOYFUL.**



We are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

# Good news flags

Use batik, a unique fabric-dyeing method, to create flags celebrating the good news of Christ's resurrection.



## What you need:

- Colored chalk
- White linen fabric
- Washable gel glue
- Acrylic craft paint
- Textile medium
- Paintbrushes

## What you do:

1. Cut fabric to the desired size and shape. Set it on a flat, protected surface. With chalk, lightly sketch an Easter design or message.
2. Completely cover the chalk lines with gel glue. Let dry.
3. Mix equal parts paint and textile medium. Paint the flag with that mixture, which makes paint permanent. Let dry.
4. Soak the dried fabric in warm water a few minutes. Then gently peel away the glue to reveal the unpainted areas. Lay flat to dry.
5. Hang the flags and celebrate!



## SEEING AND BELIEVING

Until Thomas saw Jesus' nail scars with his own eyes, he doubted the resurrection. What did Jesus tell Thomas?

**Directions:**  
Use the code to fill in the vowels and complete John 20:29, NIV.



"B \_ c \_ \_ s \_ y \_ \_ h \_ v \_ s \_ \_ n m \_ ,  
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

y \_ \_ h \_ v \_ b \_ l \_ \_ v \_ d ;  
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

bl \_ ss \_ d \_ r \_ th \_ s \_ wh \_ h \_ v \_ n \_ t  
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

s \_ \_ n \_ nd y \_ t h \_ v \_ b \_ l \_ \_ v \_ d ."  
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

**JOHN 20:29, NIV**

Answer: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:29, NIV