

The Messenger

Orchard Covenant Church
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THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Waiting for Spring? Or for Life?

There's an old saying about March weather: *March comes in like a lion...and goes out like a lamb.* Meaning, it's still winter when March begins, and it's spring when March ends. By this time, we're waiting for Spring. March is sometimes white with snow, but I also think of March as the "brown" and gray month – brown grass, gray trees, dirty brown snow by the roadsides – and my eyes are looking for color! For life! Well, at Orchard Covenant Church, March – and every month - is a place of life. You should be here.

Life – on Sunday mornings, come early to see about 25 people in Sunday School with their teachers, learning and growing in their faith. Stand in the Blue Room – and you'll hear the activity level of our Upper Elementary class overhead! Look in my office – and you'll see our confirmation students diligently working on their assignments. The high school class seems quiet – but if you go up the stairs and look, there they are, bibles open, talking. The younger kids love Roberta's morning routine of lessons, prayers, projects, snacks and playtime. And Roberta loves them! The adult class passes out the scripture for the day – do you prefer English or Swahili? – and holds lively bible discussions from diverse cultural viewpoints, with translations going back and forth. One of our Sunday school teachers, struggling with cancer, still gets herself to class if she possibly can – one Sunday morning she wasn't feeling great but she told me, "I can't think of a more exciting place to be on a Sunday morning than with these children from all over the world!"

During February vacation we had a Youth Work and Play Day. For several hours, our hard-working group emptied the upstairs storage attic, cleaned it, and helped to sort the stuff. They hauled some to the dumpster, some to give away, and put some back. They ate pizza, played ping pong and futsal and found a board game and engaged in fun and laughter. It had snowed, and they helped shovel around the church. Before going home we read and talked about some teachings of Jesus and prayed. They said they had a great day working, and in their prayers thanked God for the chance to serve. I'm so grateful for young minds and muscles and hearts for God.

And there's more... come and see – and join - what God is doing here at OCC in Jesus' name. Let's thank and praise God! Also will you please pray for us in this year of transition? Pray for our search committee, pray for our children, pray for their parents, pray over their many challenges, pray for our elderly, pray for my new grandchild to be born safely in mid-March... Pray that we will all come to know and love the Lion and the Lamb of scripture – two images of God – as we march through March, full of life, whatever the weather does.

We might be waiting for Spring, but we're not waiting for Life – we've got life here at OCC!

See you in Church! Pastor Nancy Ebner

Lent Begins in March! March 6 is Ash Wednesday. We've begun our study series on the Poets and Wisdom literature a couple of weeks early. A reading schedule is in this issue.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

March 1 – Sue Wages
March 9- Bill Bromage
March 10-Francis Nakitare
March 13- Margaret Johnson
March 16-Jeanne Foster
March 19- Karen Ebner
March 22- Sean Mullins

ANNIVERSARIES

March 11- Mark and Tammy Thomas

[If your date is wrong or your name has been omitted, please contact the editor.]

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 4– Council Meeting; 6:30 pm
March 5 – Women’s Book Club at ECC
March 9 – Women’s Ministry event at ECC
March 10 – Daylight Savings begins
March 16 – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
March 20 – First Day of Spring
March 24 – Christ in the Passover
April 18 – Maundy Thursday
Bread and Soup supper – 6:00 pm
Worship and Communion – 7:00 pm
April 19 – Good Friday
April 21 - Easter Sunday
Breakfast at 9:30 am
NO Sunday School or Coffee Hour

The Men’s Connection

Saturday, March 16

Time: 8:30 to 9:30 am

at the Orchard Covenant Church

Breakfast will be served.

YOUR 2019 COUNCIL

Executive Board:

Chair—Mike Foster
Vice Chair—Francis Nakitare
Secretary—Brenda Orowe
Treasurer—John Howell
Financial Secretary—Dick Warner

Ministry Teams:

Christian Formation—Dina Hokanson
Evangelism/Outreach—Reverian Butoyi
Care and Nurture—Gail Joseph
Worship and Music—David Cioch
Properties—David Wapner

Pastor Nancy Ebner – Ex Officio

Thanks be to God!

A CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

The members of the Search Committee are asking for YOUR help. We want as much input from you as possible so that we can gather that information and it to form a profile of our church that candidates can access for their discernment. We ask each adult and teen to fill out a separate form which will be distributed on Sunday, March 3. Please spend some concentrated time answering the questions and return them no later than Sunday, March 17 which we’re calling **Search Survey Sunday**. You may either mail them to the church office or put them in a designated box in the back of the church. When you do that, please check off your name so that we know you have returned one. There is no need to put your name on the survey so it can be kept confidential. All those who participate will get a special sticker to wear on March 17! (Don’t be caught without one.) After all the results have been tabulated, we will also be meeting with you informally in various group settings to gather more information about your ideas and concerns about the pastoral search. *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give us a spirit of unity among ourselves as we follow Christ Jesus so that with one heart and mouth we may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:4*

THE SPIRIT OF FIKA

by Patricia Raybon in The Daily Bread, February 25, 2019

The coffeehouse in the town near my house is named *Fika*. It’s a Swedish word meaning to take a break with coffee and a pastry, always with family, co-workers, or friends. I’m not Swedish, yet the spirit of *fika* describes one thing I love most about Jesus---His practice of taking a break to eat and relax with others.

Scholars say Jesus’s meals weren’t random. Theologian Mark Glanville calls them “the delightful second course” of Israel’s feasts and celebrations in the Old Testament. At the table, Jesus lived what God had intended Israel to be: “a center of joy, celebration and justice for the whole world”.

From the feeding of 5000 to the Last Supper—even to the meal with two believers after His resurrection (Luke 24:30)—the table ministry of Jesus invites us to stop our constant striving and abide in Him. Indeed, not until eating with Jesus did the two believers recognize Him as the risen Lord. “He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened” (v. 30, 31) to the living Christ.

Sitting with a friend recently at *Fika*, enjoying hot chocolate and rolls, we found ourselves also talking of Jesus. He is the Bread of Life. May we linger at His table and find more of Him.

THANKS

Dear Rev. Ebner and the Congregation at Orchard Covenant Church,

Thank you for your generous \$1000.00 donation.

For the Young Life Springfield Committee,
Debbie Murray

Greetings from Pilgrim Pines,

Thank you for your prayers, your financial gifts totaling \$1485.83, and your participation throughout the year at camp. We look forward to seeing you very soon on the shores of Swanzey Lake.

Grateful, Jim Condap

SYMPATHY

We express our sorrow and grief over the death of Nancy Spaman. Peace be to her memory

Immerse : Poets and Wisdom Writings, Approximate Reading Schedule Winter / Spring 2019

1 March 3: Song of Songs and Psalms 73-89

March 10: Proverbs 1-22,

March 24: Proverbs 22-31, Psalms 90-106

March 24: Ecclesiastes and Psalms 107-134

March 31: Psalm 135-150 and Job 1-15

April 7: Job 6-42



HOW TO RUN A CO-OP

This is a great opportunity for anyone who is an entrepreneur, anyone who would like to know how to create and run a Co-op in farming or any other endeavor. There are scholarships, so don't let the money part scare you off! Check out this link:

<https://mailchi.mp/6f18cb7d2de0/2019-co-op-boot-camp-registration-open>

Songs from Upper Elementary Sunday School Kids

Eva

Tune: We Wish You a Merry Christmas

We share Christmas with one another (x3)
With the good Lord we sing.

Tune: Brother John

The king Lord has risen (x2)
He is born (x2)
Love and joy and happiness (2x)
We thank him (2x)

Zawadi

Tune: Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat
Christ the newborn King
Praising, praising, praising, praising
Life for you and me.

Msebengi

Tune: We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Christ the Lord the King is born (3x)
To save us from sin!

Isaac

Tune: Do you wanna build a snowman?

Do you wanna praise the Lord, and proclaim his holy Word?

Jesus Christ the Lord is born today, people say.

It's a really awesome thing!

This kingdom lasts forever.

Open the doors, he is the King of all.

Do you wanna praise the Lord (2x)

Sing His praise!

Jadiel

Tune: Row, row, row your boat

Sing, sing, sing your praise, to the mighty King!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus

Jesus is King of all.



PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pray for your newly elected Church Council as they, with God's help and guidance, give leadership to our church in 2019.

Pray for the Ebner family as they prepare to move to the Chicago area.

Pray for the Search Committee as they prayerfully discern the person God has called to be our next pastor.

Praise that the church's financial needs can be met with generosity and abundance.

Springtime!

Your message of hope
to a world tiring of winter's starkness,
longing for that first crocus
to push through snow's icy blanket
and spread its leaves,
like arms outstretched,
to its creator.

Springtime!

Our yearly reminder, if we needed one,
that to a world that was dark and cold,
a world devoid of love's sweet warmth,
you sent your Son
to break through sin's icy blanket,
and, arms outstretched
on a cross,
he brought us
hope.
Thank you