

The Messenger

Orchard Covenant Church
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THE PASTOR'S PAGE

It's Friday, but Sunday's Coming!

This line from a famous sermon by Reverend S. M. Lockwood fits us today, as we are in the midst of Lent, the period of 40 days before Easter. Are we remembering Jesus' fasting and temptation in the wilderness? Have we already broken the fast we planned? Eaten the cookies we said we wouldn't eat, etc.? We are not alone. How can we continue in practical ways, to remember Jesus' suffering and "die" with him, then join to celebrate Jesus' resurrection later this month?

Let's renew our commitment to focus on things important to God. Perhaps you have your own sense of God's focus for you; that's great. Here are some other ideas:

"Fast" for God's creation: Remembering our biblical call to care for God's earth and vulnerable people, Erin Wathen lists *seven things to give up or reduce during Lent: Choose one or more of these:*

1. **Meat** (do we know how much of our meat and chicken comes from China?)
2. **Take-out meals** (use more throw-away containers)
3. **Single-use plastic** (how many water bottles per day / week do we use?)
4. **Cheap coffee** (often grown by people kept in slavery; buy "fair trade")
5. **Stuff** (clear your space, clear your mind, clear your life...)
6. **Paper** (avoid using more than necessary, recycle, de-clutter)
7. **Driving** (walk more, drive less).

Pray a "Daily Examen," a Jesuit discipline in which we review our day and find the movement of God in all the people and events of our day: Sit quietly and reflectively. Make notes in a journal, if you wish:

Begin with a pause and a slow, deep breath or two;

Thanksgiving: What am I especially grateful for in the past day?
The gift of another day * The love and support I have received * The courage I have mustered * An event that took place today...

Petition: I am about to review my day; I ask for the light to know God and to know myself as God sees me.

Review: Where have I felt true joy today? * What has troubled me today?
What has challenged me today? * Where and when did I pause today?
Have I noticed God's presence in any of this?

Response: In light of my review, what is my response to the God of my life?

A Look Ahead: As I look ahead, what comes to mind?
With what spirit do I want to enter tomorrow?

See you in church! Pastor Nancy Ebner

April Calendar!

April holds several special events! More information inside...

Saturday, April 6, 6:30pm
Spring Fine Arts Evening
Art Show and Musical Extravaganza

Sunday April 14, 11am
Palm Sunday Worship Celebration

Thursday April 18
Maundy Thursday
Soup and Bread Supper
6pm
Worship with Holy Communion 7pm

Sunday April 21
Easter Breakfast 9:30am
Resurrection Celebration
11am

Thursday & Friday April 25-26
East Coast Conference Ministers' Annual Meeting
At Orchard Covenant

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1- Art Lawler
April 1- Garth Marshall
April 10 - John Hayden
April 10 – Howard Clark
April 10 – Ben Tibbetts
April 13 - Sharon Campsie
April 13 – Jenny Nishimwe
April 22 - Mary Lou Deshais
April 23 - Ellen Ebner
April 25 – Erik Olson
April 28 - Ron Benoit
April 29 - Nathan Bromage

ANNIVERSARIES

April 5 - Don and Gabrielle Olson

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

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 1 Council Prayer / Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
April 2 Immerse at Hokansons', 6:30 p.m.
April 3 Immerse at church, 12:00 noon
April 4 Choir, 7 p.m.
April 6 Spring Fine Arts Rehearsal 2-6 p.m.
Concert and Art Show, 6:30 p.m.
April 7 Final Immerse, church, 6:45 p.m.
April 9 Final Immerse at Hokansons
April 10 Final Immerse, church, 12 noon
April 11 Choir
April 14 Palm Sunday
April 18 Maundy Thursday
Soup and Bread Supper, 6:00 p.m.
Worship with communion, 7 p.m.
April 19 Good Friday
Free Concert at ECC, John Tibbs, 7
April 20 Men's Breakfast
April 21 Easter Sunday
NO Sunday School or coffee hour
Breakfast at 9:30 a.m.
April 25 East Coast Conference Annual
Meeting, Ministerium meets here
April 26 Ministerium here until 1:00 p.m.
Annual Meeting continues at ECC

SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

ACTS will be receiving a Social Justice Award at the 3rd annual Martin Luther King Jr. event at Chez Josef in Agawam at a luncheon on April 6 at 11:30am. This award honors ACTS for its 32 years of contributing to the education of the children of Springfield. Other awards will be given for health disparities, race relations, entrepreneurship, and economic development. For tickets, please call 746-3655, ext. 127.

The Men's Connection

Saturday, April 20

Time: 8:30 to 9:30 am

at the Orchard Covenant Church
Breakfast will be served.



**I
DID
IT!!**

YOU DID IT!!

Thanks to almost the entire congregation for responding to the recent congregational survey. A total of 55 people filled out the survey of 95 questions, more than enough respondents to insure a valid result. The analysis of the data will allow the Search Committee to produce an accurate profile of our church. That profile will help attract our next pastor.



STOP

By Elisa Morgan in Our Daily Bread, June 1, 2018

My friend and I sat in the sand, near the ever-rhythmic ocean. As the sun sank in the distance, wave after wave curled, paused and then rippled toward our toes, stopping just short each time. "I love the ocean," she smiled. "It moves so I don't have to."

What a thought! So many of us struggle to *stop*. We do, do, do and go, go, go, somehow afraid that if we cease our efforts we will cease to be. Or that by stopping we will expose ourselves to the ever-present realities we work to keep at bay.

In Psalm 46: 8-9, God flexes His omnipotent muscles, putting His power on display. "Come and see what the Lord has done . . . He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire." God is a busy God, who works to create calm within the chaos of our days.

And then in verse 10 we read, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Spring Fine Arts Evening

Orchard Covenant Church
95 Berkshire Street
Indian Orchard



Saturday, April 6 6:30 p.m.



Art Show and Musical Extravaganza



Free Admission.

Donations Accepted to
support OCC ministries.

Spring Fine Arts Evening

Spring Fine Arts Evening is just a few days away...can you feel the anticipation? I sure can. Events like this take several months of planning and preparing and always have a definite beginning. This began with a suggestion from Pastor Nancy, an interest from June Foster, and a commitment by Ben Tibbetts. A small committee took to task organizing and sorting out the details for when, where, who, and how. After just a couple meetings those major details were agreed on and a couple more meetings got the details in place.

The technical role of organizing and planning is now complete and it is close to ShowTime.

Ah ShowTime!...when hours of practice for a song or dance, sometimes years of devotion to a hobby or craft, and always LOVE for our God who has blessed us with gifts and talents can be celebrated.

To all who have contributed, and that includes the many un-named people in our lives who have inspired any of our joys, and to all that will enjoy this event...God bless!

Please join us for this joyful celebration.

COVENANT PASTORS ARE COMING

On Thursday April 26, 9 to 5:30 and Friday April 27 all morning, we'll host around 80 East Coast Conference Covenant pastors for their Ministers' Association Annual Meeting. If you've been around for awhile, you'll remember we last did this in 2006.

We'll welcome them on Thursday morning, offer morning refreshments before the 10am meeting, serve a nice lunch and afternoon "coffee and." The pastors will meet for 3 sessions on Thursday, ending before dinner, and on Friday morning. We'll be leading simple worship songs at the start of each session and the pastors will celebrate Holy Communion in the last session. They have decided to lift up women pastors this year, so four East Coast Covenant women pastors, including Pastor Nancy, will be giving "CovTalks", in imitation of the better known "TedTalks," each followed by small group discussion.

Anyone who has time that Thursday or Friday is welcome - and needed! - to help host our pastors. Please contact Pastor Nancy or Toni in the church office to sign up to serve!

Legacy Giving: Have you made a will?

Pastor Nancy

Someone in our church family recently told me of their plans to make a will and include Orchard Covenant as a beneficiary. I was pleased by the thoughtfulness of this plan, and hope they follow through! You may be surprised to learn this is not a wealthy person, but just someone who wants to be sure that any assets they have left are responsibly managed.

Have you thought of including Orchard Covenant in your will, as a way to leave a legacy for the next generation of believers? Churches continue through the years through many kinds of giving, and bequests can be great blessings for any church.

Please pray about how you can practice generosity, both now and in the future. OCC is experiencing tight finances right now; sacrificial giving and growth are both needed! Have you invited someone to church lately?

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pray for all of us as we move from Lent into Holy Week and then into Resurrection Sunday that we experience the power of the Holy Spirit transforming our lives. Pray that new people will be drawn to join us in living out His Presence.

Pray for the Search Committee as they gather information that will help attract a new pastor.

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

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

A PRAYER FOR EASTER

Would we be counted
among the doubters
hiding in the shadow
cast by that cruel cross?
Or, when challenged,
like Peter
openly deny you?
There are times, Lord
when doubts assail
and the distance between us
seems to increase.
There are times, Lord
when sin has its hold,
like a barrier between us
that will not move.
Who is there we can turn to
when we feel so overwhelmed?
Who can roll away the stone
and reveal the empty tomb?
No one but you, Jesus,
no one but you!