

# CHARLTON CHIMES

LENT  
2021



A LENTEN  
JOURNEY

Holy God ...

As we begin this season of Lent,  
we acknowledge that we need Your help  
and Your strength for this spiritual journey.

So, we ask...

Teach us to pray with faith  
and read Your Word with understanding.

Teach us to worship with passion  
and reach out to one another with love.

Teach us to give generously,  
serve compassionately,  
and use our time mindfully;  
so that we may reflect Your goodness  
and that others may discover  
Your grace through us.

*In Jesus' Name. Amen.*



## The Charlton Chimes

### IN THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor .....	3
Winter Worship .....	4-8
40 Days of Scripture .....	8
40 Days of Prayer .....	10-12
40 Days of Almsgiving .....	13
40 Days of Reflection .....	13
40 Days of Encouragement .....	14-18
40 Days of Kindness.....	19
View from My Pew .....	20
Lay Leader Devotional .....	21
40 Days of Laughter .....	22
National Day of Unplugging .....	23
Holy Week Services .....	24

# From the Pastor ...



You have wondered why we look at ourselves in the mirror. The mirror has been a part of life for centuries. The first mirrors thousands of years ago were made of metal. The Etruscan, Egyptian and Roman civilizations burnished copper, silver, or bronze until their surface was so smooth that it reflected light, producing the mirror effect. In the Middle Ages, the mirror was no longer used due to fear of the consequences of the sin of vanity, though its use remained among the courtly ladies. In the fourteenth century, glass mirrors were imposed, consisting of a well-smoothed sheet of glass on which silver is poured. This mirror model is the one that is still used today.

While this historical information about how the mirror has evolved is interesting, we have not yet answered the question: Why do we look in the mirror? The simple answer would be that we look in the mirror to see the image of ourselves. Some will indeed say that they do not like to look in a mirror because it shows them the reality of who they are. Perhaps more generously, others would say that a mirror helps them see their mistakes and improve them. None of us spend hours in front of a mirror. We do a quick check to see how our hair looks, if our tie is straight, or how we are dressed. We look at ourselves in a mirror just for a short moment before an important event.

Now think of this Lenten season as a time of transition to look in the mirror. For example, one of the first Christian leaders to see the Lenten season as a transition time was Eusebius of Caesarea. He was a historian of Christianity, exegete, and bishop dating back to approximately AD 332. Eusebius of Caesarea himself mentions that celebrating Lent was a feast of transition. We strive to move on to the things of God, just like those who left slavery in Egypt and crossed the desert into the Promised Land. As people, they saw themselves in the mirror to be transformed and molded into a new nation. In other words, the journey of Lent is a time of transition to look in the mirror for a moment. Remember that we must look at ourselves in the mirror of our society, towards our neighbor and the world, as "ambassadors for Christ," (2 Cor. 5:20). Although we look at ourselves in a mirror, we are still called to remember in what image we are made and what image we are marked: the cross.

We were created in the image of God, restored through the renewed image of God, who is Christ. Therefore, we are called to be ambassadors participating in that image. The image of Christ is reflected in the mirror of our lives. As Christians, in 2021, we are also called to live in a time of transition during this Lent season. We spiritually travel for 40 days to prepare our minds and souls, connect with God, and mirror God's presence in our community and the world. Lent is a time of renewal for the Church, for us as a community of faith and as individuals. But above all, it is a time of grace. God does not ask us for anything that He has not given us before: **"We love God because he first loved us"** (1 Jn 4:19). God is not indifferent to us. God is interested in each of us. God knows us by name, takes care of us, and looks for us when we live challenging times. Let us examine ourselves in the mirror for a moment during this Lenten season and find the perfect reflection of Christ during this time of transition. Amen.

*Pastor Miguel*

## SERMON SERIES FOR LENT AND EASTER

40

The English word "Lent" comes from the Saxon word that means "spring" and has roots in the Germanic word related to "lengthening" (since in springtime, days start getting longer). In many languages, the word for "Lent" is connected to "forty": *Cuaresma* coming from forty in Spanish, *Quaresima* deriving from *Quaranta* in Italian, and *Carême* deriving from *Quarante* in French. In English, we use the word "*Quarantine*," a very familiar term for us during the pandemic. It comes from the same etymological root, derived from the Italian words *Quaranta Giorni* which means 40 days.

The number "40" is present in the Bible on several occasions. It may surprise you to know how often this number has played an essential role in the life of God's people. The 40 days in Noah's ark during the flood or the 40 years of Moses and Israel's people wandering in the desert. Or the 40 days of Jesus in the desert before beginning his ministry. These are some of the events where "40" is mentioned in the Bible. This number also has different interpretations and meanings. An example of them is the 40 years of Israel wandering in the desert, which prepared them for a "change," from being slaves to being free. From living in a strange land to possessing the Promised Land.

For the Church, Lent's season is a forty-day journey between Ash Wednesday and Easter. During this season, the Early Christian Church experienced a time of repentance, preparation, and conversion. It was a time when the Catechumens were prepared to be baptized at Easter. These days, Christians around the world observe Lent in many ways. Many orthodox and traditional denominations will strictly follow the fast, beginning with wearing ashes on Ash Wednesday and abstinence of meat, fish, eggs, and fats until Easter Sunday. Other traditions will choose to give up just one item for Lent, more commonly a 'luxury' such as chocolate, meat, social media, or watching TV as a way to refocus their faith during this time.

Our "40" sermon series is an invitation to discover and reflect on some of the biblical events where "40" was a significant number for the people of God, and in the life and ministry of Jesus. All of these through the eyes of Lent. A time to discover that during a "40" day's journey, we are called to encounter Christ with a humble heart.



### **Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021 :: 40 Days of Preparation**

(Joel 2:1-2, 12-17) The prophet Joel says to the people, "Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." (2:13) The prophet announces the Day of the Lord is coming, and it is characterized by destruction and grief rather than deliverance and joy. (2:13) Therefore, it is a call for lament and repentance, asking the people to return to God with a sincere and humble heart. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of our season of Lent. It is the invitation to undergo a forty-day journey returning to God. But why ashes? Ashes are the traditional sign of sorrow and repentance and are also a sign of "mortality." Ashes are signs of physical death, as in 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' We began as dust, and our bodies will return to dust until Christ raises us up. By receiving ashes and keeping them on, we publicly proclaim our intent to die to our worldly desires and live even more in Christ's image. How are you preparing to return to God from your old doings?



### **Sunday, February 21, 2021 :: 40 Days of Reflection**

(Matthew 4:1-11) Today's Scripture is a pivotal reading on our season of Lent. After being baptized, Jesus, the Son of God, sinless and with no need of repentance, is tempted in the wilderness. At the same time, Jesus, God in human flesh among us, fasted for 40 days and 40 nights as He prepared for his ministry. Jesus faced a spiritual and physical battle. During this time, he entered into a time of reflection and preparation. Lent is a time of repentance, reflection, and preparation. By being in the wilderness, we present ourselves as we are in the solitude of our existence. This stage allows us to be in contact with God through Jesus Christ. What would you respond to the tempter? What would you respond to God? May the beginning of these 40 days of Lent be a time for us to reflect on our journey.

### **Sunday, February 28, 2021 :: 40 Days of Restoration**

(Genesis 6, 7, 8) According to the Bible, Noah was a righteous and blameless man among the people of his time; but his generation was corrupted. God decided to put an end to his creation. The divine decree is devastating but required by the depth of human wickedness and the passion of a just God. As a faithful man, Noah followed God's instructions and built an ark. Animals of each species and his family are on board. They experienced a forty-day voyage during the flood. After it, God made a covenant with Noah as a second chance for the world. God re-created the earth. As Christians, during this season of Lent, we are invited to be re-created by God. It means to reestablish our covenant with Him. What a better opportunity than during these 40 days of Lent, we can see the sign of a Lenten rainbow as covenant-keepers. How are you keeping the covenant with God during Lent?

## **Sunday, March 7, 2021 :: 40 Days of Renewal**

(Numbers 32:13) When we read the story of the people of Israel wandering in the desert, we ask ourselves why God did it? Then we begin understanding that the people who left slavery in Egypt didn't know much about God. Even Moses didn't know much about God, but he accepted the call to liberate his people with faith. Forty years was a time of change, a time of renewal, a time to know God. During those forty years, new generations were born, new experiences were lived, the Ten Commandments were given, and they learned and saw God's provision for them as people. The Tabernacle was built to remember the presence of the Lord. God was renewing them as people to enter The Promised Land, leaving behind their time of oppression to be free.

The word "Renewal" is an essential term for Christians during the season of Lent. Renewing our minds and spirits requires faith and the desire to accept God's call to journey with Him. So, during these 40 days, God can shape us, mold us, and make us new, just as He did with the people of Israel as they were prepared to begin a new life in the Promised Land. What aspect of your life are you asking God to renew during this season of Lent?

## **Sunday, March 14, 2021 :: 40 Days to Reconnect**

(1 Kings 19:1-15) The prophet Elijah experienced the intensity of fatigue and discouragement after his two great spiritual victories: the defeat of Baal's prophets and the answer to his prayer for rain. Queen Jezebel decides to hunt him down to kill him. Elijah feels alone and abandoned by God. All he wants is to die. The angel of the Lord visits Elijah twice, challenging him to eat because his mission must continue. With nothing but that food, Elijah travels for 40 days and 40 nights to Mount Horeb, the place where he encounters the Word of God.

Lent is a time to reconnect with God. We may feel weary, tired, and wanting to lose the battle, but God gives us his spiritual food and drink to keep us going. God gave a ration for forty days and nights, as a symbol of the change that the prophet's life underwent on the way to Horeb. How are you reconnecting with God during this season of Lent?



**Sunday, March 21, 2021 :: 40 Days of Repentance**

(Jonah 3:1-10) Jonah had run away from God, but he received a second chance to participate in God's work. God sent him to Nineveh to preach a message of repentance for the people of, at that time, one of the most influential cities in the world. It was not an easy task. Noah proclaimed, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned" (v. 4b).

As a result of Jonas' preaching, Nineveh's people believed God, and proclaimed fasting, and dressed in sackcloth from the oldest to the youngest of them. The sackcloth (ashes) was used as a symbol of mourning and repentance. The people repent before God.

Our society has often disconnected from the true meaning of Lent. It is even just recognized in the ecclesiastical environment. How many times, as Christian citizens, we see how far away our cities are from God. Wouldn't it be nice if repentance came to them too? In this season of Lent, as God's people, we are called to pray for our city for its people's repentance.



**Palm Sunday, March 28, 2021 :: We Recall**

(John 12: 12-19) Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday. On this occasion, the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we are called to remember amid a crowd that hailed him as the Messiah. People took palm branches and spread their clothes on the road, saying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Today is a day to remember. Remember that Jesus was cheered as the Messiah, but a week later he was sentenced to the cries of "crucify him." Two completely opposite requests. To make a decision, we must "remember" what Jesus did for each of us.

As we enter Holy Week, we meditate on Jesus's sacrifice for us on the cross. What do you remember about Jesus, the day he entered your heart?

**Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2021 :: We Rededicate**

(John 13: 1-17, 31b-35) In ancient times, there were no paved streets like today. Israel was no exception. Its roads and highways were dusty. The feet and sandals of the walkers got dirty going from one place to another. With the day's perspiration, the dust from the roads, and the feet rough from the journey, it was necessary and essential to refresh the feet. In ancient times, the person who entered a house took off their sandals and washed their feet. If the house owners were wealthy, the servants were the ones who washed their feet. This unpleasant but necessary task fell to the servant who had the lowest hierarchy. In this Maundy Thursday reading, it is Jesus who offers to wash each of his disciples' feet. This was the duty of a servant. But it is Jesus who becomes a servant to cleanse us from all impurity and refresh our souls and hearts. How do you become a servant in the presence of God on this Maundy Thursday, when Jesus tells us, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." (v.35)



**Good Friday, April 2, 2021 :: We Remember**

(John 18: 1-19) Jesus has been handed over by Jewish officials to Pilate, the Roman governor, who interrogates him. He wants to know why this man, whom they call "the Messiah," has so many enemies in his own town. The sentence is in his hands. The question is straightforward "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus gives him the reasons for his mission and why He is the Truth. After this, He is sentenced to the death penalty and the death of the cross. On this Holy Friday, we meditate on the death and crucifixion of Christ, and the possible 40 lashes that our savior received, according to the law (Deuteronomy 25: 3). What about your reasons for following Christ as you reflect on the sacrifice He made for each of us? What is your answer?

**Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021 :: We Rejoice**

(Mark 16:1-8) During the past 40 days, we have been rethinking how we can see the saving sacrifice of Jesus. We began with his time in the wilderness, a time of reflection, preparation, and change, to start his ministry. Today, after a week of passion and death, we find that the stone has been rolled away. Jesus has risen. Jesus overcomes death and sin, thereby making us beneficiaries of his infinite love, forgiveness, and hope. Let us celebrate! Christ has Risen!





# FORTY DAYS OF SCRIPTURE READING



We are once again suggesting that you read the gospels during this season of Lent. In this schedule, it is suggested that you take a break from the schedule on the Sabbath. You may want to consider reading them from a translation of the Bible that you may not normally read. For example, you might use The Message, the Common English Bible or the Contemporary English Version. If you would like to borrow a different version of the Bible, please see Chuck Kaufmann, or you may find several versions online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com). Before you begin your reading, take a moment to clear your mind from the demands of daily living. Then offer a prayer, asking God to open your eyes to the reading of these holy scriptures, that you may experience them in a new and fresh way.

Wednesday, February 17 — Matthew 1-3  
Thursday, February 18 — Matthew 4-6  
Friday, February 19 — Matthew 7-9  
Saturday, February 20 — Matthew 10-12  
Sunday, March 21 — Sabbath break  
Monday, March 22 — Matthew 13-14  
Tuesday, March 23 — Matthew 15-16  
Wednesday, March 24 — Matthew 17-18  
Thursday, March 25 — Matthew 19-20  
Friday, March 26 — Matthew 21-22  
Saturday, March 27 — Matthew 23-24  
Sunday, March 28 — Sabbath break  
Monday, March 1 — Matthew 25-26  
Tuesday, March 2 — Matthew 27-28  
Wednesday, March 3 — Mark 1-3  
Thursday, March 4 — Mark 4-6  
Friday, March 5 — Mark 7-9  
Saturday, March 6 — Mark 10-12  
Sunday, March 7 — Sabbath break  
Monday, March 8 — Mark 13-14  
Tuesday, March 9 — Mark 15-16  
Wednesday, March 10 — Luke 1-3  
Thursday, March 11 — Luke 4-6

Friday, March 12 — Luke 7-9  
Saturday, March 13 — Luke 10-12  
Sunday, March 14 — Sabbath break  
Monday, March 15 — Luke 13-14  
Tuesday, March 16 — Luke 15-16  
Wednesday, March 17 — Luke 17-18  
Thursday, March 18 — Luke 19-20  
Friday, March 19 — Luke 21-22  
Saturday, March 20 — Luke 23-24  
Sunday, March 21 — Sabbath break  
Monday, March 22 — John 1-2  
Tuesday, March 23 — John 3-4  
Wednesday, March 24 — John 5-6  
Thursday, March 25 — John 7-8  
Friday, March 26 — John 9-10  
Saturday, March 27 — John 11-12  
Sunday, March 28 — Sabbath break  
Monday, March 29 — John 13-14  
Tuesday, March 30 — John 15-16  
Wednesday, March 31 — John 17-18  
Thursday, April 1 — John 19-20  
Friday, April 2 — John 21  
Saturday, April 3 — 1 Corinthians 15



# FORTY DAYS

As all married couples know, communication is key to the success of any marriage. In fact, communication is essential in any relationship. And it's the same in our relationship with God. Prayer is how we communicate with God ... not only sharing the thoughts of our mind and heart with our Lord, but also being open to hearing his voice in our own life.

Jesus talked about praying to God many times throughout his ministry. However, it is very important to note that he never said "***if*** you pray"; he said "***when*** you pray". Jesus even gave us a model to use in our prayer life, which we now call 'The Lord's Prayer'. We keep a flier entitled "**Living the Lord's Prayer**" in the cross hall outside the sanctuary. We are enclosing a copy within this newsletter for you to use during this Lenten season.

We would also like to remind you of two ancient forms of prayer that are being rediscovered and finding popularity in today's culture that may enrich your prayer life this Lenten season.

## The Prayer of Examen

The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It is a time of thankful reflection of where God is in your everyday life. If practiced at the start of the day, you would reflect on the previous day; if practiced at the end of the day, you reflect on the events of that day. There are 5 basic steps in The Prayer of Examen. Another method of using the prayer would be to do steps 1 thru 4 in the evening as you review the day, and then do steps 1 and 5 in the morning as you prepare for the day ahead.

1. Ask God for his light and grace to guide your prayer, that you may reflect on the day with God's eye, and not merely your own.
2. Give thanks for all the blessings that you can see throughout your day.
3. Review the day, taking careful note of any thoughts or actions that come to mind. Reflect upon your interactions with others. Were there moment you wish you could change? Were there moments you would like to happen again?
4. Ask forgiveness for those things you may have said or done that you may not be pleasant in God's eyes.
5. Seek God's guidance for the day ahead. As you've thought about negative reactions to events of the previous day, consider how you might react in a more positive manner. Consider if you need to make amends to someone in your life. If you reflected upon a positive experience that lifted your spirit that day, consider how you can make that a part of your day-to-come as well.

## Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a Latin term which means "divine reading", which incorporates the reading of scripture into our prayer life. For many people, prayer has become a virtual "wish list" of what we would like God to do for us. We have become quite good at talking to God. But we have not developed a discipline for listening to God in our prayer time. Lectio Divina is a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. While there are many ways of practicing Lectio Divina, here are 4 basic steps.

1. Read the Scripture. Then read it again slowly and deliberately. You may want to then read it once again, this time reading it aloud. If desired, you may wish to read it in a different version. The object is to read and re-read the Scripture and allow it to sink in and claim your focus.
2. Reflect upon it. Take note if there were any words, phrases or portions of the Scripture that stood out to you as you read it. If so, review those sections again.
3. Respond to what you have read; let the Scripture inspire your heart to speak to God.
4. Rest in the Word. This may be the most difficult part of the practice. Be still and be silent. Listen to what God may have to say to you this day.

## The Jesus Prayer

The 'Jesus Prayer' is an ancient form of prayer that is often used to gain focus and peace in one's life. It is a short, rhythmic prayer based on two scriptures: an exhortation from Paul found in Romans 10:13 ("Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved") and the story of the tax collector found in Luke 18:13 ("But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'")

To pray the Jesus Prayer, you simply sit still. As you take in a deep breath, you pray "Lord Jesus, Son of God." Then, as you slowly exhale, pray "have mercy on me, a sinner." You are encouraged to focus on your breathing as you repeat this prayer each time you breathe in and out. The repetition of the prayer will help calm your mind and prevent it from wandering. This creates space for the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart to the presence of God with you.

A variation of the 'Jesus Prayer' is called the 'Breath Prayer'. You follow the same steps of focusing on your breathing in and out as you pray phrases that speak to you at that particular time of your life. For example, you might pray 'Lord God' or 'Loving Father' as you breathe in; and then 'give me peace' or 'forgive me' as you breathe out.

40

FORTY DAYS  
OF FASTING

40

Of all the Spiritual disciplines, fasting is probably the least understood. Similar to Jesus' words on prayer, he never said "if you fast"; he said "when you fast". This means that fasting is not just for Roman Catholics ... it is a spiritual discipline for anyone who wishes to grow closer to God.

The first premise of fasting is to think less of oneself, even to the point of making a sacrifice, in order to focus on God. Jesus told us that when we fast we are not to make a show of it like hypocrites do. A fast is different than a hunger strike; a fast is an act of devotion to God, while a hunger strike is a power play and a way of attracting publicity. So, if you're serious about practicing a Lenten fast, don't go about bragging that you're giving up chocolate or soda for Lent. Remember, fasting is not about your giving up something so that you would be physically healthier in the end; it is about sacrificing something as an act of commitment to grow closer to God.

It is important to note that a fast is a disciplined diet and not a total abstention from food. During a religious fast, you still eat, but in a disciplined manner. Fasting and sacrifice does not mean putting your health at risk. Fasting can take on many forms, and only you can decide what is best for your spiritual and physical health. It may be as simple as refraining from dessert, more involved such as giving up one meal a day, or as intense as abstaining from food for 24 hours every week.

Fasting goes hand-in-hand with prayer. Fasting allows us to sacrifice a part of ourselves and allows us to concentrate on something more important than our physical needs ... that of our relationship with God. So when you "give up" that dessert or meal, spend that time in prayer.

While the Biblical concept of fasting concerns food, there are other methods of fasting. Again, the practice of fasting is not about becoming physically healthier. It is about becoming **spiritually** healthier. It is about the discipline and sacrifice that you are making in order to grow closer to God.

Our fast-paced and digitally-connected world has changed how we live our lives. While some of this has enhanced our lifestyles, not all of it has been positive. It seems the more "connected" we are with technology, the less connected we are with each other. You may decide that it is time to take a digital fast. You can decide that a cell phone does not need to be answered every time it rings. (Some people remember the time that if you called someone and they weren't home, you had to wait until another time to reach them!) Perhaps you may want to refrain from checking your email after a certain time. Some of you may want to go as far as to observe a "digital Sabbath", a day of your choosing to set aside and "unplug" from technology. What would it be like to live a day without email, cell phones or the internet? What would it be like to spend that day with family and friends ... or better yet, in prayer?

Remember, the purpose of fasting ... in whatever form you choose to observe it, is to become spiritually healthier and to grow closer to God.



## FORTY DAYS OF ALMSGIVING



Another time-honored Spiritual Discipline is almsgiving. The foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. During Lent, we are asked to focus more intently on “almsgiving,” which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity.

Almsgiving is a word that is rarely used today, but it is something that is part of the life at Charlton Church. The support of missions, both locally and world-wide, has been central to the life and ministry of our congregation for decades. In addition to mission trips and local projects, Charlton has continually financially supported a wide variety of program through our monthly missions, special offerings and spare change collections.

If you would like to make Almsgiving part of your Lenten discipline, you may want to consider how you can better support the Giving Grace and Helping Hands programs at Charlton which provide assistance to those in need within our greater community. You may want to prayerfully consider making a sacrificial offering during Lent. For example, forego eating out and donating that money instead.



## FORTY DAYS OF REFLECTION



Being a ‘Christian’ literally means being “Christ-like”. In ‘church talk’, we even say that we need to be ‘imitators of Christ’, to live as Christ lived.

Today, the expression often asked is “What would Jesus do?” The answer to this question can be easily found in the Gospels.

Prayer and fasting were an integral part of Jesus’ life. What would Jesus do? Jesus went up to the mountain and prayed all night. When was the last time you prayed for half an hour? Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When was the last time you skipped lunch to spend time with God?

During this Lenten season, let us prayerfully consider the ways we can be Christ-like to improve our relationship with God.

# 40

# FORTY DAYS OF E

Prayers by Deb Livingston, Kathy Hoo

## Ash Wednesday, February 17



Lord, teach me to let go, step back and let You take the lead. Amen.

## Saturday, February 20



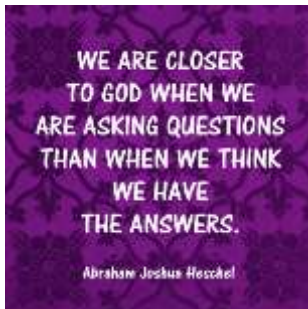
Lord, I pray that I have the joy that only comes from You, no matter my circumstances. Amen.

## Tuesday, February 23



Lord, may Your light shine in me and through me so others will find their way. Amen.

## Thursday, February 18



Lord, may I have the wisdom to seek You and Your ways, instead of the ignorance of trusting my own judgment. Amen.

## Sunday, February 21



*Sundays are not actually a part of the Lenten season. We encourage you to join us for worship, and to read the scriptures.*

## Wednesday, February 24



Lord, may I spend my time in faithful prayer with You and not waste it in useless worry. Amen.

## Friday, February 19



Lord, help me to see others as You see them, and help me to be kind so they will see You. Amen.

## Monday, February 22



Lord, take my life and mold and shape me so that by Your love I may be a new person. Amen.

## Thursday, February 25



Lord, teach me to use the toils and troubles of my past as a stepping stone of learning for the peace and joys of my future. Amen.

# ENCOURAGEMENT

ver, Marcy Miller, and Marjorie Martin

# 40

## Friday, February 26



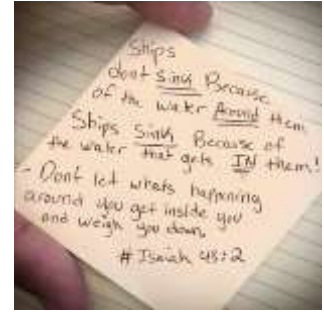
Lord, help me to have faith as a child, even when it seems there is nothing to believe in. Amen.

## Monday, March 1



Lord, let the words that come out of my mouth always give tribute to you. Amen.

## Thursday, March 4



Lord, I give thanks that You are with me wherever I go. Amen.

## Saturday, February 27

When someone is going through a rough time... just sit with them. No preaching. No advice. Just be there.



Lord, give me the wisdom to be there for another in a time of need; to just be there. Amen.

## Tuesday, March 2



Lord, help me not be judgmental of anyone's actions. Amen.

## Friday, March 5



Lord, help me to remember You will NEVER forsake me. Amen.

## Sunday, February 28



*Sundays are not actually a part of the Lenten season. We encourage you to join us for worship, and to read the scriptures.*

## Wednesday, March 3



Lord, lead me to good in this life, wherever I am. Amen.

## Saturday, March 6



Lord, help me to care for others and empathize with what they are going through. Amen.

# 40

# FORTY DAYS OF E

Prayers by Deb Livingston, Kathy Hoo

## Sunday, March 7



*Sundays are not actually a part of the Lenten season. We encourage you to join us for worship, and to read the scriptures.*

## Wednesday, March 10



Lord, help me to be a good example for all those who see me, especially children. Amen.

## Saturday, March 13



Lord, help me to give more and expect less – for the world needs more of that kind of love. Amen.

## Monday, March 8



Lord, I rest in the knowledge that my God never makes mistakes in his creations. Amen.

## Thursday, March 11



Lord, thank you for knowing my thoughts even before I think them. Amen.

## Sunday, March 14



*Sundays are not actually a part of the Lenten season. We encourage you to join us for worship, and to read the scriptures.*

## Tuesday, March 9



Lord, know that I'm grateful for all you've provided me; therefore, I have joy in my heart. Amen.

## Friday, March 12



Lord, free my mind from worry because You know what I need and will take care of me. Amen.

## Monday, March 15



Lord, You know me and love me - guide me, sustain me, rescue me. Amen.



# ENCOURAGEMENT

ver, Marcy Miller, and Marjorie Martin

# 40+

## Tuesday, March 16



Lord, free my heart from hatred so that others may see You in me. Amen.

## Friday, March 19



Lord, may I be Your hands and feet on earth to show Your amazing love to all. Amen.

## Monday, March 22



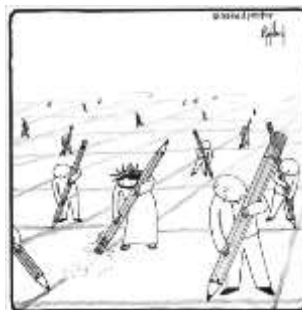
Lord, the storm is so big and my boat is so small – give me faith to trust You in the storms. Amen.

## Wednesday, March 17



Lord, show me how to be 'that one'. Amen.

## Saturday, March 20



Lord, help me be a wall-breaker so that I may bring my brothers and sisters together in peace. Amen.

## Tuesday, March 23



Lord, help me to be a blessing to everyone I meet today. Amen

## Thursday, March 18



Lord, let me be the light and love in the dark corners of the lives of others. Amen.

## Sunday, March 21



*Sundays are not actually a part of the Lenten season. We encourage you to join us for worship, and to read the scriptures.*

## Wednesday, March 24



Lord, thank you for surrounding me with a loving Christian family and friends. Amen.

# 40

# FORTY DAYS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

# 40

**Thursday, March 25**



Lord, help me to think before I speak. Amen.

**Monday, March 29**



Lord, help me to be the Good in the world. Amen.

**Thursday, April 1**



Lord, remind me I can't experience the mountaintop top if I haven't walked the valley. Amen.

**Friday, March 26**



Lord, help us to sing when we are faced with things we cannot change. Amen.

**Tuesday, March 30**



Lord, let my example shine in someone else's rain. Amen.

**Friday, April 2**



Lord, help me to remember that I alone can make a difference in the world. Amen.

**Saturday, March 27**



Lord, thank you for quiet moments spent with you. Amen.

**Wednesday, March 31**



Lord, help us to remember that they will know we are Christians by our love. Amen.

**Saturday, April 3**



Lord, nourish my faith so I can be prepared for the darkness. Amen.

40

FORTY DAYS  
FOR ACTS OF KINDNESS

40

*by Tom Schreiber*

Shortly after Thanksgiving, Stephanie and I realized we would not be able to share time together until sometime this early this year. Rather than celebrate the Christmas Season together ... and with other friends we normally spent time with ... we sent hand-written cards and notes to our friends.

Then after further discussion, we decided to expand this card sharing to acquaintances we normally see at that time of the year . . . the general manager and a long-time restaurant server of a hotel we normally stay at in Williamsburg every December . . . the owner of a country gift store we buy Christmas gifts and wrapping from . . . the managers of a few restaurants we usually have holiday meals at. There were just simple notes letting each of these folks know we missed them and that we were thinking about them. The responses we received – especially from this second groups of folks – were quite touching

While in these modern days of instant messaging and emails, a hand-written note may seem old-fashioned – but to someone who brightened your day, your life, or who in a visible manner was making a difference in someone else’s life – knowing they are cared for or cared about can be quite meaningful.

There is another experience I would like to share with you. I was at a restaurant last fall, eating breakfast by myself and making notes for what I knew would be an active day ahead. It was at a place I often frequent and happen to know quite a few of both the staff and customers. However, on this day I was very self-absorbed “working my way” through my bacon and eggs, and was paying very little attention to anyone.

When it was time to pay – my server told me that another guest had paid for my meal – but they wanted to remain anonymous. I felt bad; as I had not even taken the time once I sat down to look around and see if there was anyone I knew in the restaurant that day. To this day, I still don’t know who bought me breakfast! That act of kindness was both a blessing and a wake-me-up . . . that I need to be more aware of those around me and possibly “be there” for them . . . just as someone “was there” for me that morning!

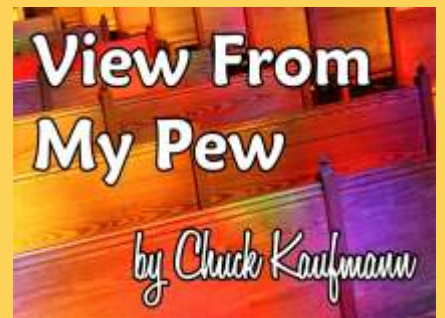
As we enter this season of Lent, I would like to encourage each of you to prayerfully consider what “random acts of kindness” you might be able to do that could bless another person. You never know how the simplest act could make a difference in the life of another person.



How is it with your soul?

I'll be honest that with the pandemic, the political season, the events at the Capitol in early January, and the general discord among American citizens, my soul has been in a state of unease these last several months.

I have been giving quite a bit of thought to this graphic that I saw online:



Seeing this reminded me that **perspective is everything**.

Far too often, we forget that other people may perceive things very differently than we do, but that does not make them wrong.

But as I have been reflecting and meditating on the best way to deal with people who have differing perspectives, I was challenged to consider even more profound ways that 'perspective' can affect how we live and are part of the greater community. An example of this, for me, has been seen in our country's response to the pandemic. In many ways, we have become a "me" culture; our baseline of thinking always considers what's in it for me. There has been the debate in our culture about the use of masks, with many people feeling that mask mandates are an affront to their personal rights. I saw an interview with an American who has lived in the Netherlands for many years who shared that it is very different there, because a shared sense of community responsibility is part of their national identity. It is such a part of the fabric of the country's identity that is simply understood and there is no word in their native language to describe it.

As I continued my reflection on the issue of 'perspective', I came across this quote by Basil the Great, a Greek bishop who lived in the 3rd century:

***“When someone steals another’s clothes, we call them a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not? The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat unused in your closet belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the who has no shoes, the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor.”***



***Saint Basil the Great***

I don't know about you, but I find these words to be quite profound and challenging. I would think that adopting this perspective would be life-changing ... not only for that person, but also for countless others who would be the recipient of their kindness. As we all continue our Lenten journey this year, I encourage you to meditate and reflect on these words of Basil the Great and consider what changes God might be calling each of us to make in our own lives.

# At the Foot of the Cross

by Debbie Livingston

As we approach the season of Lent, we often hear the verse from the prophet Joel, *“Return to me with all your heart”* (Joel 2:12).

I would like to add that we return to God as if we were there At the Foot of the Cross. From the different biblical accounts it is assumed that among the public and passersby, chief priests, teachers of the law, and the elders, soldiers, the centurion, the disciples, specifically the beloved disciple, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and the other Mary and many others were present at Jesus’ crucifixion.

Imagine yourself being there on that day watching, anticipating the events of this day. If you were part of the crowd, it may have been curiosity. If you were in opposition of this Jesus, you may have been one of the crowd sneering and jeering. If you were a Jesus supporter, you may have been in anticipation of his next move to save the world or in shock over the horror that was unfolding before your very eyes. Those closest to Jesus especially those whose lives were changed and made whole and new by Jesus were most likely bowing down in pain over the loss of the One true Son of God. We assume at least one such life was changed by those events: *So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”* Matthew 27:54 Jesus, the only perfect man being crucified for a sinner such as me! The realization of this moment as we watch the whole world of sin resting upon his shoulders for each of us is too much to bear. Why?

Jesus paid the price for our sin because there is nothing we can do to earn salvation, the grace and mercy our Lord so freely gives, for our place in eternity. All we need to do is return to God and accept that gift of the risen Savior. In this season of Lent, I challenge you to stand At the Foot of the Cross, remembering the sacrifice our Lord made for each of us, asking His forgiveness for all we have done, and accept His gift of Salvation. Each of us has a story of repentance and His love. Here’s mine:

Dear Father,

Thank you for allowing me to stand at the foot of the cross – just me – in the midst of millions – and you see me – with all my ugliness and sin and faults. Forgive me, Father, for the many things I have done to hurt you, to hurt others, and to take you for granted. I do not deserve the gift you so freely give to each of us. But you call me daughter. You allowed me to hand over my past, my sin by your sacrifice on the cross in exchange for life eternal. There is nothing I can do to pay for such a gift as you have paid it all! Thank you, Lord, for taking on the sins of the world for one small person such as me.

In Jesus’ Name I pray, Amen

***Debbie Livingston is the Lay Leader at Charlton Church. As such, she is the primary representative of the church membership on all committees and is the ‘chief-encourager’ of our church laity.***



40

# FORTY DAYS FOR SMILES AND LAUGHTER

40

*Lent is a time of reflection and is often somber, rightly so. But it's important to note that the 40 days of Lent do not include Sundays, as they are considered "little Easters" and are days to remember and celebrate that we serve a Risen Lord. While our reflection and meditation during this time will help us draw closer to God, we need to remember that Jesus came to this world to fill our lives with joy. So let us take a few minutes and share a few smiles and laughs with one another.*



One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of his older deacons to lead the opening prayer. The deacon stood up, bowed his head and said, "Lord, I hate buttermilk."

The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going. The deacon continued, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was totally perplexed. The deacon continued, "Lord, I aint' too crazy about plain flour. But after you've mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits."

"Lord, help us realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what You are making. After you get through mixing and baking, it'll probably be something even better than biscuits. Amen."

Amen and amen!

*"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28*



God commanded and said, “*You shall work six days but on the seventh day you shall rest.*” (Exodus 34:21) This message to God’s people is about taking a break, recharging, resting mind, body and spirit. Somehow in our modern life this message is difficult to truly achieve. The idea of completely unplugging every seventh day feels tragically impossible to do. Some people do refrain from their jobs or physical labor by resting their bodies; however, many folks struggle to unplug from our electronics. In some ways, technology has become a creeping intrusion into every human interaction. Many people have multiple cell phones, or don’t even turn their phones off. There are some employers that now demand employees to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and even on vacations and holidays. The growing expectation that we are

always reachable has created a society of people who are on edge and overwhelmed. This concern is now spreading into our children and youth too. Today there are educators and physicians expressing concerns regarding children and youth becoming tech addicts and unable to learn basic social skills due to their overuse of technology at such young ages.

Do you recognize this concern in yourself or perhaps a loved one? Consider participating in the National Day of Unplugging from sundown on Friday, March 5th until sundown on Saturday, March 6th.

Who’s behind this idea of unplugging? ‘Reboot’ is a non-profit Jewish organization that inspires people to unplug from technology and take time to pause and reflect on their use of digital devices such as phones and computers. The organizers at Reboot claim that people are weary and tired of always being plugged in. They believe that our modern age needs a tech timeout or a tech detox and hope that a specific time put aside will bring awareness for people to try to put their digital devices aside more regularly to recharge themselves to their faith, family and world around them. The National Day of Unplugging is a sort of a Sabbath Manifesto designed to slow down our hectic lives even if it is for only a day or two.

The National Day of Unplugging isn’t just for those of the Jewish faith; it is for all people of all walks of life and of all faiths. Consider participating and unplug from technology on March 5th—6th. Log on to [www.nationaldayofunplugging.com](http://www.nationaldayofunplugging.com) and take the pledge to unplug or you can just make your own commitment and join the unplugged movement this coming March. Take a break and unplug and reconnect to our God and others. Take time to rest mind, body and spirit.

# HOLY WEEK SERVICES

## PALM SUNDAY



Sunday, March 28

Join us for Sanctuary Worship at 8:30 am  
or at the Drive-In Service at 10:00 am  
as we join our voices in a resounding Hosanna!



## MAUNDY THURSDAY

Thursday, April 1

Join us in the sanctuary or online  
at 7:00 pm  
for a service of Holy Communion

## GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 2

Join us in the sanctuary or online  
at 7:00 pm  
as we reflect on Jesus' crucifixion

## HOLY SATURDAY



Saturday, April 3

Prayer Vigil in the Sanctuary  
6:00 am to 6:00 pm

Sign up for a prayer time, or simply stop by at your convenience



## EASTER CELEBRATIONS



Sunday, April 4

Join us for Sanctuary Worship at 8:30 am  
at the Drive-In Service at 9:45 am  
or for Sanctuary Worship at 11:00 am





# CHARLTON CHIMES

SPRING  
2021

*“Behold, I make  
all things new.”*

Revelation 21:5

Pentecost (Greek for “fiftieth”) has its roots in the Jewish Festival of Weeks, the 50-day celebration following Passover. The disciples gathered in the upper room were observing the Festival of Weeks when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in a great wind, with tongues of fire. The story tells us that “devout Jews from every nation under heaven” had gathered in Jerusalem for the feast; yet when the disciples came out of the upper room “speaking in tongues,” everyone could understand them. Back in Genesis 11:1-9, when the Tower of Babel was being constructed, there was a “confusion of tongues” and people were no longer able to understand one another. With the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the confusion is reversed—and people are once again able to communicate with one another.

In many ways the fire of Pentecost is similar to the image of God’s refining and purifying fire that can be found throughout the Old Testament. As the Holy Spirit descended upon those early followers of Christ, God’s refining and purifying power gave birth to the new church.

Let it be so for Charlton Church! The family of faith known as Charlton has been faithfully following where God has led for generations. And through the years, God has led us in many different directions. And while some may think we are facing uncertain and difficult days, others have a sense of great hope, feeling that God is once again using his refining and purifying power to build us up to do even greater things for his kingdom.

Let it be so for Charlton Church! Bring on the Pentecost fire!



## The Charlton Chimes

### IN THIS ISSUE

Spring Mission Offerings .....	2
From Pastor Miguel .....	3
Spring Worship .....	4-7
Mission Announcement .....	8
In the Kitchen .....	9
Charlton Preschool .....	10
Church Family News.....	11
Contact Information .....	12

# SPRING MISSION OFFERINGS

The mission envelopes and monthly noise offering supports the following programs:

## MARCH

### Bishop’s Partnership and UMCOR

Help the UMC  
reach out and assist  
those in need  
in our country  
and around the world.

## APRIL

### Helping Hands of Charlton Church

Help provide meals  
to those in our community  
who are experiencing  
food insecurity.

## MAY

### World Vision Child Sponsorship

Support Charlton’s  
sponsorship of children  
in Armenia and Haiti.  
(see next page)

# From the Pastor ...

The seasons of the year are a display of the miracle of creativity, goodness, and divine mercy. God always surprises us. God breaks the routine to get us back to action. With the arrival of spring, there is a new beginning. After a dark night, God gives us a wonderful day; after a cold season, a warm welcome. After a few tears that roll down our cheeks, a smile of hope. After a difficulty, God gives us the breath of the solution, a breath that brings a new beginning. God always tells us: ***"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."*** (Isaiah 43:19)



Spring reminds us of the surprise of a new beginning, the colors blazing after discouraging grays and blacks. Spring encourages the flowering of good attitudes, confidence, optimism, and gratitude to enjoy new shoots of life, shoots that allow us to germinate in hope. There is no doubt, in the spiritual field, spring also has its meaning. Although our spiritual life is not divided into seasons, like our earth, this beautiful spring season guides us towards spiritual awakening. We recognize the presence of God as the beginning of a new spring day. With the arrival of spring, our lives have a unique opportunity to flourish. Put aside the cold, the rain, and the dark days. Let us turn our face to God.

In the same way that so many spring plants and flowers turn their faces towards the sun, this sun illuminates them and gives them life and warmth. May our face also turn to God, the Giver of Life and Light, for our being. May this spring bring the blessing of new things, of new challenges, of new airs. Something that refreshes us gives us a fresh breath in the face of so many challenging moments we have had to live during these long months. May the spring light of Christ illuminate our lives. Amen.

*Pastor Miguel*



THE EASTER TO PENTECOST SERMON SERIES:

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## The Celebration of a Church Reborn

To speak of Pentecost is to talk about the celebration. It is a celebration that occurs fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those disciples and followers of the Master of Galilee. Those who were in the darkness of doubt and fear after the crucifixion of the Christ. They are strengthened by the promise of the Holy Spirit to be new people.

To speak of Pentecost is to talk about the celebration. It is to recognize that this day is the beginning of a new adventure of faith. Not from just men who left their nets; not only women who followed the Resurrected Christ. This Promise is a gift to those who have been faithful. This Spirit enlightens an incipient community of faith to be a Church of faith and hope. The path to Pentecost means leaving doubts behind and feeling that you are no longer alone facing the direction of discipleship, but instead with the Comforter, Counselor, and Advocate company, the "*Paraclete*."

To speak of Pentecost is to talk about the celebration. It is the birth of the body of Christ - the Birthday of the Church. When that same Divine Gift polished, transformed, and filled those who gathered in that same Spirit. It was a promise not only given to some, but to many. Many of those living in Jerusalem were conversant in Greek or Aramaic. However, within their ethnic groups, they also spoke a unique language. It was in those ethnic languages that they heard this proclamation. They were all together, but they heard the miracle distinctly. God created a new identity of unity through the Holy Spirit. Like a fine piece of jewelry, people were refined to emerge from the ashes of hopelessness. And be transformed into a new church.

So, if Pentecost is a celebration, why not celebrate? Why not celebrate that, during this time of the pandemic, the church has been in the process of transformation. Church doors have been closed, and the church has become a pilgrim church. It has become a church in homes, a church in the parking lots, and many other places. It is a church seen on a device at different times; but this church has grown. This church has been transformed through refinement. This church has been faithful to God's mission amid the turbulent circumstances. And in all this, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the *Paraclete*, has accompanied us. Because we are also part of the promise given to those in the Early Church, the church will never be the same after this pandemic. Just like those who were followers and disciples of Christ. Those who, through the experience of Pentecost, were transformed into a new community of faith.

There is no better way to prepare for the birthday of the church on Pentecost than to journey together through the texts of this series. This will be a time to recognize that we haven't been alone and that the Holy Spirit has been working in us to become a more robust church after these challenging times.



**Sunday, April 11, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — What is Your Name?**

(Acts 4:1-12) "By what power or by what name did you do this?" (4:7) were the questions that the Sanhedrin priests of Sadducees asked Peter and John. These disciples had been arrested and taken to jail after they had healed a man who had been lame since birth. They declare that this healing has been done in the name of Jesus, who was crucified and risen. One of the most frequent questions we are asked when we go to the doctor, register for a job, or simply fill out a form is: what is your name? Having a name is the meaning of identity within the society in which we live. Our parents have chosen that name for some reason. Perhaps in honor of a good friend, or simply that name has a deep meaning. That name will accompany us for the rest of our lives, and each year, when we celebrate our birthday, it will be mentioned in the song that is sung to us. The followers of Jesus also have a name, and that is being a Christian. If that name has been taken and received seriously and with commitment, it will always be used and proclaimed. Peter and John, under challenging circumstances, did not deny their identity. How do you honor God with your name?

**Sunday, April 18, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — All For One, One For All**

(Acts 2:43-47) The word *Koinonia* means common life, a shared life. In the Christian community, this is based on sharing the risen Christ's life with his people. But this Koinonia (fellowship) does not have only a vertical dimension because this produces a horizontal dimension, too. The early Christians, we are told, had all things in common, which is an essential mark of the church. We are usually invited to be part of a celebration because we are important to the host. The invitation can be a circle of friends, colleagues, family, church, a particular group. We all have something in common that unites us, as part of the celebration. As a church, we are part of that group of believers who meet Sunday to Sunday to celebrate Christ. When we serve others, we do so because it is part of our calling to be one in Christ. It is said that the early church was a church that lived in a community, but she also attended to the needs of others. How do we address those needs and remain a community in this time?

**Sunday, April 25, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — Is the Guest List Complete?**

(Acts 9:1-20) In the New Testament, there is no more outstanding example of conversion and transformation of life than that of Saul. The picture is of an angry, violent man absolutely convinced of his own righteousness. Saul hated the disciples of the Lord. He was not seeking Jesus when Jesus sought him. We might say that Saul was decidedly against Jesus when Jesus decided for Saul. But this tough man, Saul, has an encounter with Jesus, his life is transformed, and the change of his name to Paul is an example of a change in life. The invitations for those who will participate in a celebration is something that is not left to chance. We take the time to make a list of those who will be part of an important event in our lives. All the guests are those who meet certain requirements ... friendships, shared history, and others in our social and work circles. But what happens when someone who is not part of the guest list appears? This is the case with Saul; he was not part of the pattern of what it was to be a Christian. However, Jesus makes him part, and extends the invitation to be part of the community of faith. How prepared are we to receive others who are not part of the circle?



**Sunday, May 2, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — A Well-Chosen Gift**

(Acts 1:1-8) Today's text is the initial part of the account of the Ascension of Jesus. Something we will see later in our sermon series. After the resurrection, Jesus appears to his disciples multiple times. On several of these occasions, there is a clear message *"And see; I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so, stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."* (Luke 24:49). The promise of the Holy Spirit, Comforter, Counselor, and Advocate company, the "Paraclete," will be with them. This would not only accompany the disciples and followers of Jesus but would be the foundation for which the church would be moved to be a universal church. When we attend a birthday party, the gift is sought with precision, with love for the person who will receive it. It is proven that a gift given out of commitment does not have the same effect for the recipient as it does for the one who gives it. Jesus would leave his disciples, but he promises them the best gift - the companionship of the Holy Spirit. A gift that is part of the Trinity, a gift that will allow us to move, in power and glory, within this body of Christ called the Church that still lives today. A well-chosen gift!

**Sunday, May 9, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — The Motherhood of the Church**

(Acts 4:32-35) The small fragment of the Acts of the Apostles offers a "portrait" of the first community of believers. Several of these portraits are made in the book of Acts. They somewhat idealize the community since we already know other texts from the same book that show the differences and even dissensions within it. But a clear message is indicated: believers feel called to life in common, even to renounce private goods and make them available to all, so that no one will be in need. In other words, "The Acts" are "the gospel of the church," they are not limited to telling us "facts," but to showing the "life in the Spirit" of the first community, how the Spirit of Jesus is shown in it. Today we celebrate "motherhood" in its different spectra, be it through birth, adoption, relationship, or simply feeling that closeness in a "motherly" way. The Church is also recognized, in the position of motherhood, with those who are part of it. For in her womb, we are begotten, and she gives birth to us as children of God. She nourishes us spiritually and helps us grow so that we are ripe for the Kingdom of Heaven. The Church is indeed our mother. A mother who gives us life in Christ and who makes us live with others in the communion of the Holy Spirit.



**Sunday, May 16, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — Leaving Room for the Celebration**

(Acts 1:6-11) Today, we celebrate Ascension Sunday; for many, it is difficult to understand what happened that day. The Ascension is simultaneously the absence and presence of Christ. Christ is truly with God, but in the sending of the Spirit, he also blesses his church into that reality as the be-coming or in-coming of God's future. The Ascension represents the church itself and its mystery of being here in this world and its frailties, and at the same time belonging to the Lord. Today we remember that Jesus returns to his Father to give room for the church to be born. It is unlikely that the center of our celebrations disappears when we celebrate. However, Jesus recognizes that in three years of ministry, his followers can continue without him ... but in the company of the Holy Spirit, who will guide and comfort us at all times. This is Jesus, who makes us be part of his absence, but of his presence at the same time.

**Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021 :: Happy Birthday — Please, Do Not Blow Out the Candles**

(Acts 2:1-13) Today's reading describes the arrival of the Spirit with striking images: the noise of the wind, tongues like fire above their heads, preaching in multiple languages to all people. They are symbols. What happened to the Apostles and other disciples is the same that happens to every Christian. The first communities received the gift of God, the Holy Spirit. All Christians receive the Spirit in baptism. In confirmation, even in each Holy Communion, the Spirit is invoked on the gathered community. Today is a day of celebration; the day has arrived. The church is born. The first communities received the gift of God, the Holy Spirit. Christians today receive the Spirit in baptism, in confirmation, and in the Eucharist. The Spirit is invoked on the gathered community.

Today is symbolically the birthday of the church, the day of Pentecost. It is the day when the promise of the Holy Spirit is poured out on those who gathered that day in Jerusalem. Today, our church has been called to be reborn in hope, be transformed, and continue her mission. This time of the pandemic has allowed us to grow, strengthen ourselves, and continue moving forward. Our church will never be the same; because amid pain, challenges, and uncertainty, God continues to accompany us and fill us with the Holy Spirit. Let us Celebrate!



Today we feel the wind beneath our wings.  
Today the hidden fountain flows and plays.  
Today the church draws breath at last and sings  
As every flame becomes a Tongue of praise.

This is the feast of fire, air, and water  
Poured out and breathed and kindled into earth.  
The earth herself awakens to her maker  
And is translated out of death to birth.

The right words come today in their right order  
And every word spells freedom and release.

Today the gospel crosses every border  
All tongues are loosened by the Prince of Peace.

Today the lost are found in His translation  
Whose mother-tongue is Love, in every nation.

~ Malcolm Guite ~

— JOIN THE CONVERSATION —

As we consider how the church can emerge from the pandemic as a transformed and vibrant movement, Pastor Miguel invites you to join him this spring for an online conversation. Persons without the internet can join by phone. More details will be available in the Sunday bulletin.

Did you know that Pastor Miguel was a “World Vision Child”? Growing up in Chile as the child of two pastors was a very different experience than our typical pastoral family’s experience. Pastor Miguel knows first-hand what a difference it can make in the life of a young child to be sponsored by someone from the other side of the world. The pastor will share part of his story with you this Spring. In the meantime, the Ministry Council has decided to adopt two children as part of our monthly mission program. Our offerings in May will support these sponsorships. So ... we’d like to introduce you to our new Charlton family members!



Dieulene lives with her parents and brother in Haiti. Her parents struggle to provide for the family. Her father is a farm laborer and her mother is a vendor. Despite their efforts, it is difficult to meet the family's needs. Dieulene is growing up in a poor area in Haiti. The HIV and AIDS crisis has severely damaged the social fabric of entire communities, leaving many children without parents. Families often live in small wood or cement houses with a tin roof. A typical diet includes rice, beans, plantains and vegetables like cabbages or tomatoes. The terrain is rugged and hilly, with tropical plants and heavily forested areas. Dieulene is in primary school and her favorite subject is history. She helps at home by doing the family chores. She likes to play with dolls.



Narek lives with his parents and sister in Armenia. His parents also struggle to provide for the family. Both of his parents are unemployed and having difficulty finding jobs to meet the family's needs. Narek is growing up in a rural community struggling with poverty in the small, landlocked country of Armenia. Tall mountains, high plateaus, and deep valleys make up the terrain. Summers are warm, while winters are cold. Although crop-growing land is scarce, farmers manage to grow a variety of fruits. The typical diet consists of pasta, grains, vegetables, and fruit. He helps at home by putting toys away and likes to play soccer.

***A bulletin board will be created with more information about our sponsor children. Individuals and families are encouraged to correspond with Dieulene and Narek. For more information, contact Trish Wagner, our sponsorship coordinator.***





I have always enjoyed a good grilled cheese sandwich. Over the last few years, I've started experimenting and making lots of variations on the classic grilled cheese sandwich. Paired with the perfect soup, they make an excellent lunch or quick dinner.

Here are a few of my tried and true favorites ...

**Chuck's "Go To" Classic** — combination of Cooper Sharp and Hot Pepper Cheese, with a little bit of mustard inside the bread.

**Jalapeno Popper** — cheddar cheese and sautéed jalapenos, dipped in ranch dressing.

**French Onion** — onions simmered in French onion soup, then grilled with provolone cheese.

**Roast Beef** — thin sliced roast beef, hot pepper cheese, touch of Russian dressing on the inside. On this one, I skip the butter on the outside and use mayonnaise instead. Delicious!

Christmas was barely over when the church office started receiving phone calls asking if we would be making Easter eggs this year. A lot of discussion has been held concerning how this might be possible in the midst of the pandemic. Here's what you need to know:

- Eggs will be made on the five Mondays in March.
- Strict social distancing will be followed. Only 3 people will be allowed in the kitchen at one time, other workers will be spread thru the gym.
- We will primarily focus on making peanut butter eggs.
- Some coconut and butter cream eggs will be made to use up ingredients on hand. These will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- All egg sales must be pre-ordered thru the church office. You can order by calling the office or by placing an order online at [www.charltonchurch.org/eggs](http://www.charltonchurch.org/eggs)
- Eggs will be \$1 each.



Contact Barb Goss (717-579-4297) or Sandy Bovard (717-545-6332) if you have any questions.

# CHARLTON PRESCHOOL



Our annual read-a-thon will take place the first week of March. Donors will pledge an amount to encourage our families to read as many books as they can. All proceeds from the read-a-thon go towards classroom supplies and updating furniture.

Our next unit is titled, "Watch Us Work." We will learn about construction, machines that help us work and different forms of transportation. Our Bible lessons focus on building on the rock of God.

We will also spend time learning about Easter. It's amazing how much children learn from this story. We will also make some fun bunny crafts and celebrate Jesus' resurrection with a party.

Our final unit teaches us about our environment. Classes will learn about life cycles and discriminate between living and nonliving. Children will have an opportunity to plant flowers while we learn things grow and change. Bible lessons this month will teach us that God will provide. We will celebrate our growth throughout this year and recognize the children moving on to kindergarten next year.



***Don't forget to get your grocery gift cards at church, which benefit the preschool. They are available on Sunday mornings and also during weekday office hours. This is an easy way to support the preschool, since everyone is doing a lot of eating while stuck at home!***

# CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



## IN SYMPATHY

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Kathryn Martin, who died on January 4, 2021.

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Cathy King, who died on January 5, 2021.

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Nancy Wolf, who died on January 15, 2021.

Thank you so much for the greetings over the holidays. It's comforting to know that you and the church members are thinking of me and praying for me. I am doing pretty good. I am attending pulmonary rehab now. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.  
Sincerely, Donna Garrettson

Thank you to all who so kindly sent cards to my Mom over the years and to us since her passing. Our Charlton family means the world to us.  
Blessings, Barb and Al Goss

I want to thank my Charlton family for the cards, notes and greetings I received over the holidays. I wish you all a healthy, peaceful and hopeful new year.  
Blessings, Mary Miller

Thank you so very much for the holiday greetings. I feel very fortunate to be a member of such a caring church.  
Blessings, Joanne Shover

Thank you to our Charlton Church family for your condolences on the death of our brother and uncle, Larry Bender. It is comforting to know others share our mourning and time of grief.

Marleen Steele, Lauren Steele, Elyssa Henry, Tamra Foltz and family

Thank you to everyone for their cards, phone calls and support given to Nancy during these last few months. Thank you also to those who have made memorial donations in her memory.

With much appreciation, Ron Wolf

I just wanted to say thank you for the beautiful blue baby blanket! It is so gorgeous and so soft! We love it so much and I can't wait to wrap my little baby Owen in it! We really appreciate such a beautiful and special gift.

Amy and Chad Shinsky (Mark and Karen Holgrem's daughter/son-in-law)

Thank you for your recent donation of \$443 to Bethesda Mission. Please be assured that your gift is being put to good use, helping to meet the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the men, women and children we serve.

Sincerely, Scott Dunwoody

On behalf of the Ecumenical Food Pantry and those who benefit by your generosity, I would like to thank you for your generous donation that allows us to provide food assistance to the greater Harrisburg community five days per week.

Stay well, Emilie M. Tierney, Corresponding Secretary

On behalf of everyone at Susquehanna Service Dogs, we thank you for your support that allows us to raise and place service dogs trained to open doors for a person in a wheelchair, assist a person to get dressed, alert a person to a ringing phone, interrupt anxiety of a veteran with PTSD or provide deep pressure to calm a child with Autism.

Gratefully, Pam Foreman, Director

Thank you for your continued support of our work with children in Africa. You have no idea how much hope and help you give!

With Joy and Gratitude, Tanya, Foundation for Children with Aids

# CHARLTON CHURCH

A United Methodist Community

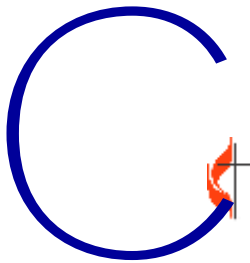
*Where Faith Meets Life*



**Making Disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the Transformation of the World**

5920 Jonestown Road  
Harrisburg, PA 17112

[www.CharltonChurch.org](http://www.CharltonChurch.org)



717.545.2000  
[office@charltonchurch.org](mailto:office@charltonchurch.org)

Office Hours are 10AM to 2PM  
Monday-Thursday, Closed Fridays

**Rev. Miguel Arenas**

*Pastor*

[pastormiguel@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:pastormiguel@CharltonChurch.org)

**Charles J. Kaufmann**

*Director of Worship Arts/Administration*

[chuck@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:chuck@CharltonChurch.org)

**Marianne Eagle**

*Office Administrator*

[office@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:office@CharltonChurch.org)

**Trish Wagner**

*Preschool/Children's Director*

[preschool@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:preschool@CharltonChurch.org)

**Debra Hughes**

*Nursery Attendant*

**Wendy Criste**

*Nursery Attendant*

---

**Martha Brown**

*Administrative Council chairperson*  
[churchcouncil@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:churchcouncil@CharltonChurch.org)

**Scott Pribanich**

*Ministry Council chairperson*  
[ministrycouncil@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:ministrycouncil@CharltonChurch.org)

**Marcy Miller**

*Trustee chairperson*  
[trustees@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:trustees@CharltonChurch.org)

**Heidi Staloni**

*Finance chairperson*  
[finance@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:finance@CharltonChurch.org)

**Caroline Allen**

*SPRC chairperson*  
[sprc@CharltonChurch.org](mailto:sprc@CharltonChurch.org)

Want to keep up-to-date on what's happening at Charlton Church?

Be sure to 'like' our page at [www.Facebook.com/charltonchurch](http://www.Facebook.com/charltonchurch)