

Old Stone Church - April 2022



WORDS FROM WANG – “*Seeds Of Hope*”

The Easter season will soon be upon us. But before we put the ham in the oven we need to first engage in the passion story; complete with last suppers, nails and crosses, and cold, dark tombs. Not to mention the denial, the betrayal, the agony, profound isolation, and Jesus breathing his last. For there is never resurrection without death and dying.

On Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent, many of us had the opportunity to plant seeds in black, rich soil. Many of us have nurtured those seeds throughout the 40 days of Lent and hopefully observed the miracle of life that was just waiting to burst forth in the lifeless seeds. The planting of spring seeds has always provided believers with a wonderful analogy for the Easter story. Life from death, hope from hopelessness, joy from sorrow, and promise from disbelief.

On Easter Sunday we will sing hymns that reflect these themes and will once again give thanks for the life, death, and resurrection of God’s beloved, Jesus Christ. And, the accompanying story of creation; that the earth is the Lords and all that is within it as we further celebrate the passing of another winter season.

The Easter season continues in the weeks that follow Easter Sunday. And included in the many observances is a day set aside for celebrating the natural world that not only provides us with inspiration, but more importantly, that supports life itself. It is a celebration of all things great and small that make up the various parts of our ecosystem; the wonders of creation that exist in a delicate balance with one another that all life may be sustained; that God may be glorified.

Yes, it’s true. We glorify God in the ways that we interact with creation and the ways in which we work to steward all that is “out” there. Earth Day, is the very day we reflect on our obligations as custodians of God’s good works. But as stated on a coffee mug recently gifted to me, every day is earth day.

In the words of Douglas Bowman, *“What the world desperately needs is information and heightened consciousness, the awareness of the fact that the global environmental crisis is the primary and most crucial issue the world currently faces and should constitute the primary agenda item for all our institutions – from the churches to government. I would argue that the greatest service the churches could render the world is providing education concerning facts of the environmental crisis, the things that have contributed to the crisis, and the resources available to us for altering our way of thinking and action in constructive ways.”*

We recently had our first meeting of the newly formed “OSC green team” and we look forward to sharing our thoughts and ideas for doing the very thing Doug Bowman is suggesting in the above quote. In the meantime, a blessed holy week and Easter season to all. See ya’ in church.

Pastor Bob

Worship Opportunities (April)

April 3: The 5th Sunday in Lent

Scripture: John 12:1-8

Sermon Theme: *Living in the Mary-Moment*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served



April 10: Palm Sunday

Scripture: Luke 19:28-40

Sermon Theme: *With A Loud Voice*

April 14: Maundy Thursday

6:00 - Dinner and Fellowship

7:00 – Worship with Holy Communion



April 15: Joint Good Friday Service

3:00 p.m. Co-led by Pastor Bob and Pastor Carolyn

Note: the service is being hosted by the Rockton United Methodist Church

located at 102 W. Chapel St. (the corner of Blackhawk and Chapel)

April 17: Easter Sunday (one service at 9:30)

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Sermon theme: *The Darkness Could Not Overcome*



April 24: The 2nd Sunday of Easter (Earth Day Observed)

Scripture: Psalm 24:1-4, Genesis 1:26-28, assorted texts

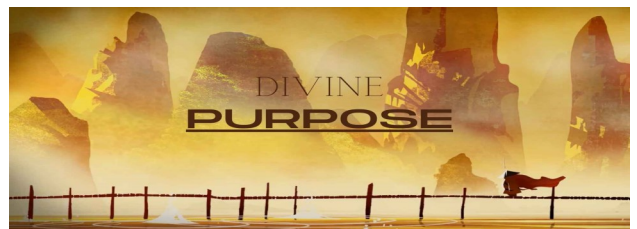
Sermon Theme: *The Earth is the Lord's*

May 1: The 3rd Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Acts 9:1-20

Sermon Theme: *Instruments of Divine Purpose*

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served



Flames of the Spirit: *Rekindling the Flame*

Updates on Our Shared Ministry Proposal

By now, most of our readers are aware that we have been in conversation with the members of our sister United Church of Christ in Pecatonica. The joint task force has officially met on two occasions (one at each church) and have come very close to reaching a consensus. Both churches have also sent reps from their respective finance teams to hammer out the details on shared responsibilities for financing the operations (primarily how we would share costs) of the shared ministry which is mostly the pastor's compensation package.

Pastor Bob recently led a worship service in Pecatonica and met with the congregation afterwards to get better acquainted which included some informal conversation and a Q and A session. All signs are that we should continue the conversation in hopes of developing a plan for approval and a timeline for rolling things out.

We want to stress to our members that should we move forward, it would be for a one year trial period whereupon we would make a final decision whether to stay in a shared ministry or to return to the way things were. We want to further stress, that this not a merger; it is shared ministry which would include the creation of a "parish" (for lack of a better word) with a name and logo to encapsulate what our shared goals and mission would be for the future - with a plan for "branding" and "marketing." All involved have expressed a high level of enthusiasm and consider this a unique and welcome opportunity.

Once the joint task force has reached a consensus, we will hold a congregational meeting in hopes of receiving a formal blessing from the members of OSC. As always, we welcome input and support (and prayers) from church members.



Faith Formation Retreat – (follow up and thanks)

Our Confirmation group returned from our "Faith Formation" retreat feeling inspired and energized despite being a little tired from a full weekend of camp activities and programming.

Here are some comments from those who attended the retreat:

- I loved the stories about the sacred grounds (the mounds) of the Daycholah Center
- The team building activities
- The game room
- Two people said they liked the campfire donuts
- The hot chocolate machine
- liked walking in the rain
- walking the labyrinth
- making new friends

Due to overwhelming support and generosity of the members of OSC, the kids were only responsible for about 1/3 of the actual cost for the retreat. Special thanks to all of our sponsors!

Mothers and the Earth Concert

Friday May 6 @ 7:30 p.m.
Old Stone Church

101 E. Union St. Rockton, IL (815-624-6212)

A celebration of mothers and planet earth featuring Bob Wang and friends performing the music of John Denver and others from the singer-songwriter era. The concert is free to the public.

There will be a free will offering to assist with Ukrainian family relief efforts.



New: Rockton Food Pantry Advisory Board

Members and friends of the Old Stone Church remain proud of the long-standing mission and ministry that is the Rockton Food Pantry. Literally thousands of families and individuals have benefited from the ongoing efforts of the hundreds of volunteers who have given of their blood, sweat, and tears in service to the wider community.

And then there's the countless donors who have given food and generous monetary gifts to sustain this invaluable outreach to those in need. And, of course, we would be remiss if we didn't give credit where credit is due. Donn VanSchelven has been the driving force behind it all. Donn's dedication to the food pantry has been unsurpassed and his leadership is the reason why the Rockton Food Pantry remains the strongest and longest running programs of its kind in the area.

But even Donn would admit that he is only human and that we will, sooner or later, need to begin the search for a new leader, or at least, have a plan for his eventual retirement from his position as director and coordinator. And to say his will be big shoes to fill would certainly be an understatement. But for now, we are happy to report that he has no intention of stepping down but he has agreed that a board would be in his best and would help in strengthening and sustaining this viable mission.

With that said, recent events and conversations have led us to consider the formation of a food pantry board. The board's purpose will be to offer support, direction, develop policy, but most importantly, to assist with the creation of a plan for the inevitable transition of leadership. We are happy to announce that several prospective board members have been approached and have accepted a role on the team. They are, Gordie Pierson, Wendy Eltman, Amy Bestul, Ken Thomson, Pastor Bob, and of course, Donn VanSchelven. The team will be having its first meeting in the very near future and we would certainly welcome the input from others.

April Birthdays

2nd- Brenda Glead
3rd- Chuck Piper
6th- Marlene Street
13th- Hannah Middleton
15th- Lindsay Rudy
16th- Ted Hager
19th- Gordon Pierson
19th- Steve Gleasman
19th- Steve Franklin
27th- Mary Miller
28th- Russ James
29th- Donna Hubble



OSC Online

There are many things we as a church are able to do online. Did you know that you can access livestream video, make donations and pledge payments, and access our newsletters directly from our website? If you haven't looked at our website in a while, head on over and take a look!



April 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Communion Confirmation	4	5 Worship Team 7	6 Grief Group 10:30	7 Pantry 9-11	8	9
10 Palm Sunday	11 Girl Scouts 5:30p	12 Council 7	13	14 Pantry 9-11 Maundy Thursday	15 Good Friday	16
17 Easter Sunday	18 Boy Scout Mtg 6p	19	20 Grief Group 10:30	21 Pantry 9-11	22	23
24 Confirmation	25 Girl Scouts 5:30p	26	27	28 Pantry 9-11	29 Old Guys 8:30	30

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