

Midway through Lent

*D*espite the fact that we know Easter is our most significant holy day, many, many Christians really only observe Lent by showing up at church on Sunday and listening to a sermon about, praying about, and responding to questions about Lent. Very few of us have the bandwidth to actually spend any sort of time in disciplined spiritual practice during these forty days.

And I certainly don't mean to condemn, criticize, or judge anyone. You mustn't think that I or any clergy wake up every morning in Lent and engage in a disciplined spiritual practice. That could very well happen: there are certainly many days when I do, but there are also many days when I'm halfway through 6 emails, dog care, bill paying, spiritual counseling with others, etc. before I realize that my morning has slipped past me, and if I am going to acknowledge my practice and engage in it, I better get on the stick.

Most of this is the result of the pace of life with which we've been saddled. The responsibilities of running a household, maintaining a career, making sure the kids are prepared, ready, and on time for school and their many extracurricular activities is demanding, rushed work. The 21st century pace of life that we live in the American Northeast is really ridiculously unhealthy.

So maybe I just gave you a full set of excuses that you can deploy. But instead, I encourage you to see it as more of a good, hard look at reality. Because the truth is that in every moment, every day, we get an opportunity to inject some spiritual discipline, or at the very least some spiritual awareness, into that schedule.

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That's the real intent of Lent. It's not so much to make us into some "picture-perfect" Christian. It's more to prepare our hearts in a very meaningful way to experience a memorable and meaningful Eastertide.

The meaning of Easter is truly profound. And the blessing of positive energy and Transcendent joy that can be found in the meaning of Easter are best experienced and understood when we've prepared ourselves for that experience. Engaging in a Lenten practice can be as simple as spending a few moments

in gratitude every morning when we wake up, or reviewing the previous day's events to see ways that we could have handled something better, but without judgment or condemnation. Just with curiosity and wonder to help us determine how best to do the next right thing.

...by being people of faith,
we are able to transcend our
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constantly digging graves
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into, and from which we need
rescuing.

The goal is to arrive at Easter morning without being distracted, exhausted, frazzled, merely focused on Easter dinner, chocolate bunnies, jelly beans, and Easter egg hunts. Instead we get to participate in the amazing, regenerative, potent metaphor of resurrection, and what it can mean for us in the totality of our lives moving forward. Yes, we do get to be people of Hope, despite a cynical, skeptical, angry world. The resurrection of Jesus is not some cosmic magic trick. It's a profound reminder that by being people of faith we are able to transcend our egos,

and hence learn to avoid constantly digging graves that we will repeatedly fall into, and from which we need rescuing.

Your assignment, should you choose to accept it: for the rest of Lent, for the next few weeks, find a way to engage in a daily practice. If you feel that starting up a spiritual practice sounds like too much work that you simply don't have time for, try "micropractices". These are tiny acts that can be done in our day-to-day life, moment by moment, as we work our way through the day, that help us refocus, even if for a minute, on our relationship to God, our responsibility as people of faith, and our role as people of Hope, Easter people.

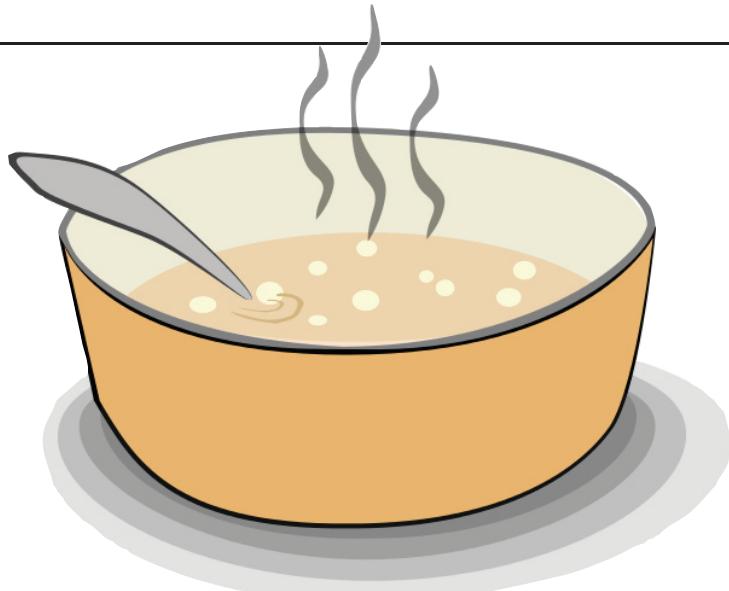
Find something that works for you. A morning prayer of gratitude, an evening prayer for Hope and healing, a midday meditation that acknowledges the busyness of your life and celebrates a respite that you've given yourself and carved out for your day. Call a lonely person. Pray for someone who could use intercession. Somehow find a way to have a deliberate, intentional daily connection to God during these forty days that reflect Jesus's forty days in the wilderness.

After all, we live in the wilderness of a godless society, an armed camp of divisiveness, jealousy, self-righteous anger, greed—the list goes on and on. This wilderness has been provided for us, we have to do the intentional and difficult work of keeping our feet firmly planted on God's good earth and our hearts firmly grounded in our relationship to God.

You deserve to celebrate the full blessing of Easter, with hearts that have been cultivated and made ready for it.

May it be so.

Rev. 



Soup, Bread, and Fellowship!

In case you missed the first Soup Supper hosted by Stephanie & Doug Kammerer, or even if you didn't, there will be a second Lenten Simple Soup Supper **Thursday evening, April 4th starting 6:30 pm** or as soon you can get to the church. Following our simple meal, Rev. Jack will bless us with more Lenten wisdom. **Please join us!**

L E N T – Let's **E**nd **N**egative **T**hinking

L E N T – Let's **E**mbrace **N**ew **T**raditions



Your prayers are requested for...

- † Dian Harlin, Alice Marcus' sister; Cliff Martin, for continued healing; Dave Beesley, who has cancer; Frank Hoefle, Megan Shaw, Tammy's daughter; Paul Farber, Vince Aiosa, Ann Arrigo, Dan Taylor
- † Victims of abuse, accidents, neglect, terrorism, weather extremes, pain
- † Peace in our country and around the world, our leaders and military

Please feel free to call the office (201-384-1063) with any request.

Prayer Requests



Time to say Goodbye...

Dear Friends,

For every beginning there is an ending. The time has come for me to retire and head down to Lewes more often and for longer periods of time with my husband, Al and our cat, Dennis. Since September, 1998, it has been my pleasure to be your Church Administrator. Needless to say, your church has been like my second home. I would like to sincerely thank MaryLou Boyd who made each "work" day a pleasure. She was my go-to encyclopedia when I had questions. MaryLou has been a godsend to me; my constant and dependable friend through the years and will continue to be. Olga Stepanova has been a true blessing. Very early every week, Olga's music would be in my "Inbox" for the next Sunday. She never skipped a beat (haha). And, I must mention Jen Chin, the world's most devoted, knowledgeable and informative VOLUNTEER! Jen, in my humble opinion, keeps your church running smoothly with her hands-on involvement.

Thank you for the years; I will hold fond memories and thoughts of you in my heart. May God bless each of you and your families always.

The best to you,
Andrea



Liturgists' Lineup for April

Sunday, April 7 Kelly Montello

Palm Sunday, April 14 Nancy Sierra

Easter Sunday, April 21 Jeff Gardner

Sunday, April 28 Liz Marcus

ALLELUÍA!

CHRIST IS ALIVE!



Palm Sunday Service
PANCAKE BRUNCH FOLLOWS
SUNDAY, APRIL 14
10:30 AM

Maundy Thursday
Tenebrae Service
THURSDAY, APRIL 18
7:00 PM

Good Friday Service
FRIDAY, APRIL 19
12 NOON

Easter Sunday
Family Service
SUNDAY, APRIL 21
10:30 AM
HALLELUJAH CHORUS
(FROM "MESSIAH") ~ HANDEL



Town-wide Yard Sale

Saturday, April 27

(Rain Date: Sunday, April 28)

WANTED! Donations!

The Haworth Library will be again be sponsoring a townwide Garage/Yard sale. For the past two years, we have successfully held this church fundraiser, taking advantage of the considerable publicity offered by the Library not to mention the potential volume of customers browsing all over town. Any and all donations are welcome! We will again be selling gently used, CLEAN clothing. Due to lack of storage space, large furniture items must be brought to the church the day of the sale. **Books, household items,**

toys, electronics, JEWELRY, attic treasures, as well as BAKED GOODS will be sold.

Donations may be brought to the church now through the day of the sale. Items may be placed in the first (smallest) classroom.

**Sign-up sheets are available for Friday SETTING UP and Saturday SELLING shifts.
We will need everyone who is able to help with this once-a-year fundraiser!**

Thank you so much!

Celebrate Earth Day April 22nd



from Rev. Jack...

Paramount Goals

From *Always We Begin Again, the Benedictine Way of Living*
by John Mcquiston II

What is wanted is not that we should find ultimate truth, nor that we should become secure, nor that we should have these, nor that we should be without hurt, but that we should love.

There is no fear in love.
Therefore we should not fear life, nor anything in life, we should not fear death, nor anything in death, we should live our lives in love with life.

It is for us

to train our hearts
to live in Grace,
to sacrifice our self-centered desires,
to find peace without want
without seeking it for ourselves,
and when we fail,
to begin again each day.

*I*f we adopt an outlook of confidence and trust and perfect our experience by care for others, if we live in the certainty that we are heirs in the providence of the outermost mystery, we will begin to change into the persons that we have the potential to be.



Congregational Life Survey

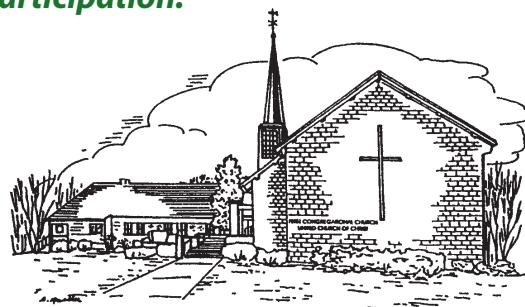
The United Church of Christ strongly encourages congregations to maintain an updated, current Church Profile. This is also part of our on-going work of determining exactly who God calls us to be as a congregation.

Crucial to that process will be a series of surveys. On Sunday, March 31, our first survey was distributed following worship. Copies continue to be available in the church office as well as down in Fellowship Hall.

The survey is completely anonymous.

Once completed, please return yours to the envelope marked "Surveys" in the door box of the Pastor's office by Sunday, April 14. Your input and feedback will be integral to this process!

Thank you for your attention and participation.





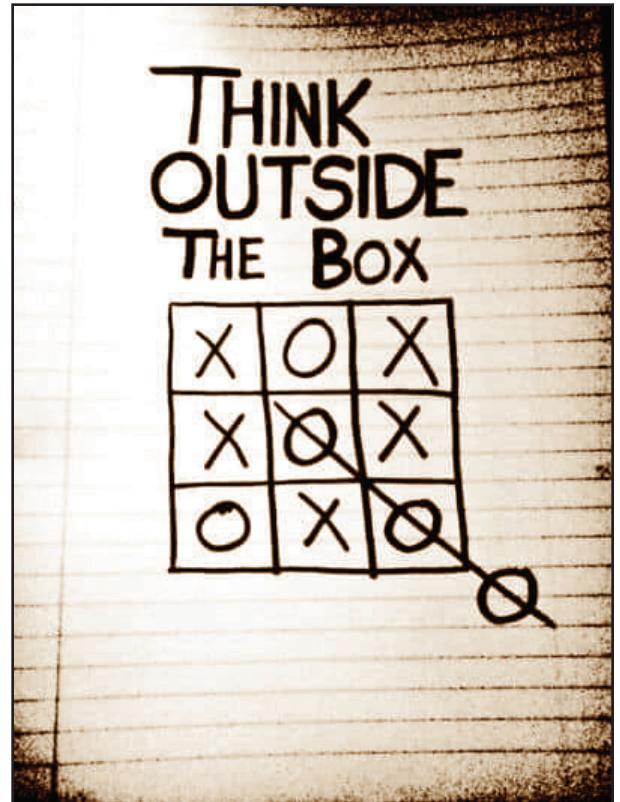
Are you
willing
to
CHANGE?



The mistake no Christian should ever make is to be generous with Judgement and stingy with Grace.

Church, the world is absolutely starving for Love and it's time we stopped making excuses and unlocked the pantry, so that everybody gets a belly full.

johnpavlovitz.com



Sunday, March 24

One Great Hour of Sharing®

Mission Moment

presented by Sabrina Wilson & Maya Nathanson

Sabrina:

Nia Sullivan runs a girl's Safe Center and Boys and Girls Club in the Mathora Village, Sierra Leone. Safe Centers provide girls with an after-school support group that is focused on keeping girls in school and eliminating child marriage, female genital mutilation, and teenage pregnancies. They also discuss topics related to health, hygiene, goal setting, and self-love. The Boys and Girls Club functions to empower young people to reach their full potential. Students selected to attend the Safe Center and Boys and Girls Club were chosen because of life circumstances that include poverty, Ebola-related loss of parents, and teen motherhood. Many of the students were at risk of dropping out of school.

In Mathora, the attendance of both the Safe Center and Boys and Girls Club programs slowly began to decline. This lack of support was linked to parental expectations for their children to provide family support and assistance after school. Girls are typically involved in preparing dinner and caring for siblings. Unable to help their families with sales during school hours, children make their way to the streets to sell goods that will produce income for their families, leaving them no time to participate in after-school programs. Convincing families to allow their children to regularly attend the after-school programs was a challenge.

Complications with paying school fees was another prevailing issue that many Sierra Leonean families encountered. When families couldn't pay the fees, students were suspended from school which reduced the likelihood that children would continue their education. It is difficult to balance the need for children to gain an education with expectations for them to earn money that helps sustain their families. These concerns lead many parents to withhold the necessary support for their children to thrive in the programs.

Maya:

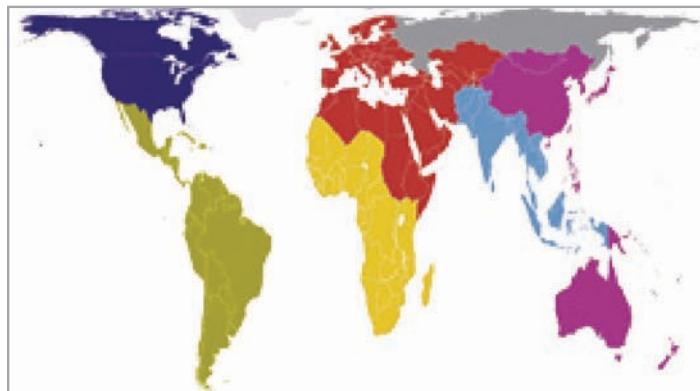
To gain a better understanding of the situation, Nia and her co-worker, Assiatu, met with the village chief and one of the Center mentors. Chief O'Bai shared the strengths of community members and ways those strengths could promote attendance in schools and in the weekly after-school programs. His presence and his support of the educational initiatives resulted in community members seeing the programs as credible, including finding ways to collaborate with local organizations in the Tonkolili district to help make school fees more affordable. Because of his support, Mathora girls remain in school.



Continued...

The increased attendance continued from that moment, and as a result, today many of the girls are inviting their friends and sisters to join. Learning from Chief O'Bai shaped the way Assiatu and Nia work in other communities. They now regularly meet with different chiefs to discuss issues concerning children and the activities being planned. They now join community efforts in developing positive and sustainable solutions for their concerns.

Nia Sullivan is a Global Mission Intern serving with Council of Churches, Sierra Leone. Her appointment is supported by your contributions to **One Great Hour of Sharing®**, a special mission offering of the UCC and by our global partner, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Please give to **One Great Hour of Sharing®** on March 31st so Nia can continue her ministry to girls and boys in Sierra Leone.



UCC Global Ministries works with global and local partners for justice, reconciliation, and peace.

Sabrina and Maya together:

On behalf of the children in Mathora, thank you for your gifts.

edited from ucc.org.

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Photos by Doug Kammerer

Sunday, March 24 **Emma's Sunday School Kids Prepare Coffee Hour!**

Cookies and bagels were in order on Sunday, March 24th as Emma Nathanson and her class (with the help of Alice Marcus and Nancy Sierra) baked cookies for Coffee Hour. This is the second time our children have prepared Coffee Hour. The cookies and bagels were delicious and a warm, aromatic experience was enjoyed by all! Special thanks to Emma for going above and beyond.



Photos by Doug Kammerer

Sunday, March 17 Supporting Our Muslim Brothers & Sisters

During Sunday school we read some stories from newspapers from the previous week so that the kids could learn a little bit about the terrorist attack in New Zealand. We talked about how sad we were to think about people being shot in their house of worship. Pastor Jack told us that he works with a Muslim group that does a lot of interfaith activities. We thought we would make posters of support and take pictures that he could pass along.

from the Treasurer...

Please continue your supplemental giving whenever you can and thank you so much! Any ongoing extra support to the church coffers is always welcome!



Minister's Discretionary Fund*; OCWM Basic Support; High Winter Utilities Costs; Snow Removal; Upcoming Sidewalk, Roof, & Building Repair... the list goes on.

Our sympathy to the Hayden family.



Esther A. Hayden, 93, of Oradell, N.J. died on March 2, 2019. Esther was a member of the church, joining on June 3rd, 1991. Esther, her husband, James, and son James were active members of the church. Esther was the leader in establishing the Memorial Garden. Her husband James's ashes were the first buried there. As written in her obituary in the *Record*, Esther was a talented needlepoint artist and knitter.

Giving of her talents over the years, Esther knitted many Remsen blankets for Women's Fellowship which were sent to Church World Service. These days, Mary Lou Boyd and Dorothy Blakeman continue to knit these blankets at our weekly Lunch Bunch gatherings.

May God Bless the Hayden family at this time.

—Written by Mary Lou Boyd and added to by Jen Chin



Giving FLOWERS for Worship

Should you wish to provide flowers for Sunday worship, please sign up on the "Flowers" clipboard downstairs in Fellowship Hall and include whatever person or occasion you wish to commemorate.

You may either bring your own flowers or our church Administrator, Andrea will gladly order them for you from Schaefer's Gardens in Haworth.

The church is now currently billed \$27 (\$25 plus \$2 delivery charge). We will appreciate your prompt reimbursement as soon as conveniently possible.

Thank you.

Letter of appreciation from Jeanne Martin, Executive Director of Meals On Wheels North Jersey. We were so happy to be able to include this wonderful organization in our 2018 Christmas Offering.



100 Madison Avenue, Suite 3 • Westwood, NJ 07675
(201) 358-0050 • Fax: (201) 358-0010 • www.mealsonwheelsnorthjersey.org

March 7, 2019

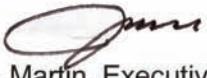
First Congregational U.C.C.
276 Haworth Avenue
Haworth, NJ 07641

Dear Friends:

This will acknowledge, with our sincere and heartfelt thanks, your donation of \$720.00 made to Meals on Wheels North Jersey. We are so appreciative of your continued support.

This contribution allows us to continue providing nutritious meals, delivered to the elderly and/or disabled, five days a week by our 500+ unpaid volunteer drivers.

*Thank you so much!
Yours truly,
Jeanne E. Martin*

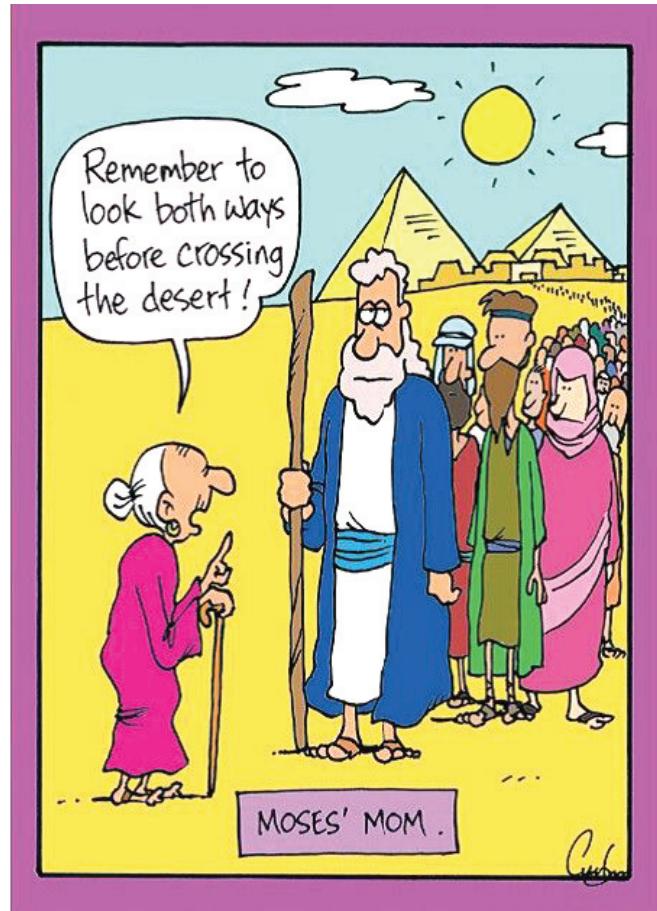

Jeanne E. Martin, Executive Director
Meals on Wheels North Jersey
jeanne@mealsonwheelsnorthjersey.org
201.358.0050 office

This confirms that you have received no goods or services in return for your donation.



April Birthdays

- 2** Kaitlyn Montello
- 7** Brody Davis
- 8** Liz Marcus
- 11** Linda Aiello
- 17** John Blakeman
- 19** Robin Maslanek
- 25** Michael Maslanek Jr.
- 30** Avalon Davis



Faithful with much...



At a Wednesday evening church meeting, a very wealthy man rose to give his testimony.

"I'm a millionaire," he said, and I attribute it all to the rich blessings of God in my life. I can still remember the turning point in my faith, like it was yesterday.

I had just earned my first dollar and I went to a church meeting that night. The speaker was a missionary who told about his work. I knew that I only had a dollar bill and had to either give it all to God's work or nothing at all. So at that moment I decided to give my whole dollar to God. I believe that God blessed that decision, and that's why I am a rich man today."

As he finished, it was clear that everyone had been moved by this man's story. But, as he took his seat, a little old lady sitting in the same pew leaned over and said: "Wonderful story! I dare you to do it again!"



April 2019

First Congregational UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday Worship & CHURCH SCHOOL* ~ 10:30 am ALL ARE WELCOME and invited to share coffee & fellowship downstairs in Fellowship Hall afterward. <small>* Child care available. No church school summer months; resumes September. Choir Rehearsals: 9:15 am Sundays ONLY September-June</small>	 8 pm Toastmasters (LG)	2	3 6:00 – 8 pm Light Church (PS, S) 9:30 – 11:00 am PLAYGROUP (FH) 3:00 – 10 pm Light Church (PS, S)	4 10:30 & 4:00 pm Music Together (FH) 6:30 pm Simple Lenten SOUP SUPPER	5 10:00 am Music Together (FH) 11:00 – 1 pm Lunch Bunch (FH) 12:45 - 3 pm Women's Step (LG)	6 7:00 – 8 am Light Church (LG) 10:30 am Music Together (FH) 12 Noon – 3 pm Parkinson's Group (FH)
7 10:30 am Worship Service Communion Light Church (Sanctuary / FH / K) Andrea's Farewell LUNCHEON following Worship	8	9	10 6:00 – 8 pm Light Church (PS, S) 9:30 – 11:00 am PLAYGROUP (FH) 3:00 – 10 pm Light Church (PS, S)	11 10:30 & 4:00 pm Music Together (FH) 7 pm BIBLE STUDY (Lounge) 7:30 pm AA (FH)	12 10:00 am Music Together (FH) 11:00 – 1 pm Lunch Bunch (FH) 12:45 - 3 pm Women's Step (LG)	13 7:00 – 8 am Light Church (LG) 10:30 am Music Together (FH)
14 PALM SUNDAY 10:30 am Worship Service Pancake Breakfast to follow 1–5pm Light Church (Sanctuary / FH / K)	 8 pm Toastmasters (LG)	16 NOON: Haworth SENIORS (Fellowship Hall)	17 9:30 – 11:00 am PLAYGROUP (FH) 3:00 – 8 pm Light Church (PS) 8:00 – 10 pm Light Church (S)	18 10:30 & 4:00 pm Music Together (FH)  7 pm Tenebrae Service 7:30 pm AA (FH)	19 NO Music Together  12 Noon Good Friday Service 12:45 - 3 pm Women's Step (OFF)	20 7:00 – 8 am Light Church (LG) NO Music Together
21 EASTER SUNDAY ALLELUIA! 10:30 am Worship Service Light Church (Sanctuary / FH / K)	 22	23	24 9:30 – 11:00 am PLAYGROUP (FH) 3:00 – 8 pm Light Church (PS) 8:00 – 10 pm Light Church (S)	25 NO Music Together 7 pm BIBLE STUDY (Lounge) 7:30 pm AA (FH)	26 NO Music Together  10:00 – all day YARD SALE Setting Up (FH) 12:45 - 3 pm Women's Step (LG)	27 7:00 – 8 am Light Church (LG) 10:00 – 3 am Town-Wide Garage/Yard Sale (FH) NO Music Together
28 10:30 am Worship Service 1–5pm Light Church (Sanctuary / FH / K)	29	30				

FH: Eleanor Norton Fellowship Hall (downstairs); LG: Lounge (upstairs); OFF: Office; K: Kitchen; S: Sanctuary; PO: Pastor's Office



Happy Easter!

First Congregational UCC

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