

May 2019

United Church Newsletter

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.



**A United Church of Christ, a United Methodist Church &
an LGBTQIA Welcoming Congregation
in University Place, Washington**

INTRODUCING OUR NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Staff Parish Relations would like to introduce our new Office Administrator - Kelly Krisman. We are grateful that Gretchen Engle, our interim Office Administrator, was able to spend some time training Kelly to get her on board.

Please stop by the office sometime to offer Kelly a warm UCUP welcome. Read below to learn a little bit more about Kelly.

My name is Kelly Krisman and I'm excited to become a part of United Church in University Place!

I was raised in Redmond with my younger brother and graduated from Inglemoor High School. I then attended the University of Washington and graduated with a BA in Sociology. Soon after graduation, I married my husband, Michael. We met in high school while working at McDonald's, which our kids think is hilarious and so weird.

Michael had just been commissioned in the U.S. Navy, so immediately following the wedding, we moved to Norfolk, Virginia to begin his Naval career. That was the first of nine moves in 20 years, followed by Everett, WA - Athens, GA - San Diego, CA - Seattle, WA - Pearl Harbor, HI - Washington, D.C. - Philadelphia, PA and ending with Bremerton, WA. We had our two children while in San Diego; Aidan who will be 16 in May, and Cassidy who recently turned 14. Michael grew up in Bothell, and with our kids in/entering high school, we decided this will be our final move. We are happy to be putting down some roots for a change, especially since most of our immediate family still lives in the Northwest.

Prior to having kids, I worked in various office environments and capacities. Since having kids, I've taken on a variety of volunteer roles, including Meals on Wheels, supporting Navy spouse groups and more elementary schools than I can count!

Now that our kids are getting older, I felt this desire to do something "more" with my life, and decided to look for a part time job. I was emailed this job description, and upon reading it, felt this would be a good fit for me. Then I looked up your church website and got very teary-eyed reading the "Who We Are" section. I suddenly felt very strongly - this is it; this is what my heart has wanted, this is the more. When our daughter came out to us as gay a year and a half ago, we knew we had to make a change. We actively searched for a church that would welcome her troubled heart and help her to feel God's love for her, while accepting her just as she is. We found that and so much more at Gig Harbor United Methodist Church. So, being able to do work I enjoy, while serving others within a faith community that has meant so much to me and my family, feels like God is working in my life and leading me here.

I look forward to meeting you all and will do my very best to be of service and support to you and your community.



From Pastor Cathy

My Easter sermon this year reflected the role of creation/Earth Day in the Easter Story. In the Gospel of John, the Risen Christ appears in a garden where Mary Magdalene mistakes him for the gardener.

In an article called "Art and Theology", Victoria Emily Jones writes: "Artists, primarily from the 15th & 16th centuries—have latched onto this detail of mistaken identity, representing Jesus as gardener, carrying a shovel or a hoe, and sometimes wearing a floppy gardener's hat. A few artists, such as Lavinia Fontana and Rembrandt, show Jesus in gardening clothes. Images of Jesus the gardener was a traditional theme of orthodox scriptural exegesis. Mary's misidentification was meant to remind us of a spiritual reality: Jesus is the gardener of the human soul, eradicating noxious weeds, one who "plants" us and grows us, getting his hands dirty in the soil of our hearts, and as St. Gregory the Great said, "flourishing seeds of virtue and bringing us to life".

Dating back to the 4th century, Easter became a time for baptism, a time of springtime renewal with imagery of the Garden of Eden. Catechumens were baptized at dawn Easter morning, facing east, in order to turn in the direction of Eden. Baptismal fonts were decorated with images of the Garden of Eden: "animals, birds, fish, flowers, trees, rivers, and fountains." (Robin Jensen)

Throughout scripture there is a connection between God and gardening. Genesis 2 portrays God as the first gardener: "God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there placed the human whom God had formed." The prophets wrote metaphorically of God as gardener in Isaiah 61:11: "As the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so God will cause praise to sprout up before all the nations." In the Gospel of John, Jesus encourages his followers to think of his death as a seed planted in the ground: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." John 19:41 mentions that Jesus was placed in a tomb in a garden, where Mary mistakes him for the gardener. In 1882 Charles Spurgeon preached: "Behold, the church is Christ's Eden, watered by the river of life, and so fertilized that all manner of fruits are brought forth unto God; and he walks in this spiritual Eden to dress it and to keep it; and so Mary may have been right in "supposing him to be the gardener."

Ten years ago, I had the opportunity to listen to Rita Nakashima Brock & Rebecca Parker present their book: *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Their research showed that early Christians portrayed Christ in a garden, not on a cross. The most ancient depictions of Christianity joyously affirmed the earth. It would not have occurred to them to glorify the crucifixion OR to long for paradise after death. It wasn't until the 10th century that churches began to depict Jesus on a cross. Rebecca & Rita embarked on a research journey visiting ancient holy sites - catacombs and the oldest known churches in Istanbul, Rome, monasteries in NE Turkey, and the Ravenna mosaics in Italy. They discovered there were no crucifix images. Jesus wasn't on the cross. The images showed Jesus as a child, as a youthful shepherd, a healer of the sick, a teacher, and frequent images tending a garden paradise in a world marked by known rivers which identified the garden as existing in the here and now. They write: "Paradise was the dominant image of early Christian sanctuaries. Christian paradise was something other than "heaven" or the afterlife. In the early church, paradise was this world, permeated and blessed by the Spirit of God." Church walls were covered with pastoral landscapes, orchards, sparkling rivers filled with fish, lush meadows, sheep, birds, and flowers.

A good part of the book demonstrates the progression of how the cross ultimately became the primary symbol of Christianity, moving away from images of Paradise, to Jesus suffering on the cross instead. The short version is that Western Christianity became obsessed with substitution atonement and redemption through violence, replacing resurrection and life in this world with a Crucifixion-centered salvation around the late 10th century, thereby changing its theology to justify war and domination.

Novelist Kurt Vonnegut gave humanity a failing grade when it came to caring for the earth, using Good Friday language: "The crucified Planet Earth, should it find a voice and a sense of irony, might now say of our abuse of it, 'Forgive them, Father. They know not what they do.' Except we do have a sense of our actions and the ways in which we are complicit, unless we choose to ignore or be in denial of scientific facts regarding climate change. In a very real sense, our devastation of Earth, can be understood as a modern-day crucifixion. Perhaps in connecting Easter with Earth Day, we have an opportunity to recover our love and responsibility for creation in a deeper way, becoming gardeners with Jesus, returning to Paradise with a flourishing Eden."

In her journals, 17th century mystic Jane Leade offers a spiritual vision of paradise. For Leade, entering paradise meant being spiritually transformed into a person rooted in love, who was growing and unfolding as a plant in the Garden of God. For Leade, salvation was not the gift of a crucified savior whose death pleased a wrathful God and freed people from punishment. Instead, salvation was the re-opening of the Garden of Eden, and the restoration of humanity's dignity, creativity, and responsibility.

In the book, "Reclaiming The Body in Christian Spirituality", Thomas Ryan, wrote: "It is an Easter spirituality that loves the earth because the trinitarian God creates, redeems and loves the earth."

As an Easter people, we do not only believe in the promise of new life. We also lovingly partner with God and Christ to birth new life in the midst of death, decay, and despair. Let us be co-gardeners of the Garden of Life with the Great Gardener of all time. Amen.

From Our President

Forgive me for getting a bit more personal this month, but I have a confession to make: I get tired. Between stress at work, two kids, a house, and being President of the Congregation, I very frequently find myself exhausted. And then there is the news, whether it is the angst of national politics, the terrors of climate change, or the ongoing barrage of hate, violence and tragedy. I'm a news junkie who is afraid to check the news. I just get tired. I often feel like I can't handle one more thing. I wonder how to go on, and sometimes whether it is worth it to keep trying. I just want to lie down, check out, avoid, and give up.

And sometimes I do. Lie down and check out, at least. Sometimes I need it, as it turns out I am human and humans need rest. But other times, what I need to do is the next thing: keep trying, start again, do the next thing. And I sometimes don't know how to do that. How do I argue once more about getting ready for school, how do I manage the stress at work one more day, how do I deal with the next challenge at church, work, home, outside? How do I write one more newsletter article (and many thanks to our new Office Administrator, Kelly, for reminding me to do so)? How do I find anything useful to do about the great issues; how do I correct apathy, poverty, climate change, racism, hate, intolerance? I'm too small, we're too little, it won't be enough.

I suspect I'm not alone. This fatigue is human, normal, and common. But it's not the end of the story, any more than Good Friday is the end of the story. Or even Saturday, when there is just waiting. We could argue that Easter Sunday is the end of the story, the Resurrection, but it's not, either. Easter is a crazy day to get through, full of chaos, family, events, eggs... (I suspect that the first Easter was as well, though with some more confusion and disbelief and fewer eggs). For me, this year, Easter was another point to get through, and we did, gloriously. But then, it was back to the grind. And then came the next Sunday. On this Sunday, I actually had little to do. I could sit for a moment, and reflect a bit. And I realized something: we are making a difference. On that Earth Day service, the Greening Team sharing their love of Nature and Creation is part of a long legacy we, and those like us, have of fighting climate change and other threats to our home and environment. The conversations I had with my kids, my friends at UCUP, even the babysitter we found this weekend, reminded me that people don't stay stuck at all times in the either/or thinking that gets us so stuck. And our members voting UNANIMOUSLY on Palm Sunday to affirm UCUP as an Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Church is a blow against white supremacy, and part of a broader movement. It reminded me that Easter is not a day, or a weekend, but a movement. It is a reminder that positive change is possible, that there is hope in the darkness, and that sometimes it comes in the most surprising of ways. Our job is not to make it happen; the Followers of Jesus did not raise him from the dead. Our job is to do our little part, to work to remember the possibility, to share the Hope. To be simply a part of the change. UCUP does that; we did this past month, we will (as I write this) next week at the Hunger Walk, and in the hundreds of thousands of interactions, small and large, that we have every day from the perspective that God is Love, All the Time. Thank you all for helping me to remember that, for living in Easter Hope, and for making this world a better place!





Joys & Concerns

It was a busy Easter week, and hope you were able to make it to at least two of the services offered...my hat's off to those that made the **6:30 A.M.** sunrise service in the Curran Apple Orchard. Writing of 'hats', I didn't see any Easter bonnets at church on Easter Sunday, but I did see two young men looking dapper in the hats they wore. Marilyn Thompson had six family members attending Easter services with her, including two great nephews. I pray that Pastor Cathy, Jeff Andersen, the choir and Gretchen Engle (in the office) have all recovered from a busy Easter Season.

It was great to see Michelle Wallace and to hear that she now has a new caregiver (helper). I want to thank Team 4 (they were in charge of the Fellowship Time for the month of April) for the many goodies they provided during the month, especially the carrot cake. There's a lot of coffee drinkers that want to thank 'Mr. Coffee' (Vic Bode) for making 'real' coffee.

Our prayers are with Kathy Munn and family after Allen died on Thursday, April 25th. Kathy and Allen were charter members of UCUP almost 50 years ago. Allen has always played a behind the scenes role at UCUP by loading up our donations and delivering them to My Sister's Pantry. We have lost a gentle soul. We were thankful to have Kathy, with daughter Mary Kay & her husband Steve, with us in worship this past Sunday.

Joan Martin and Dorothy Burkhart have recently been placed on Hospice Care. These women were regular church goers in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Every Sunday Joan took pictures of church happenings, and these were posted back by the coffee table. This was before cell phones were so ubiquitous. Dorothy loved the out-of-doors and made her cabin available at auctions so we could all enjoy the pines and waters of Puget Sound. Dorothy and Joan need our prayers, as do their families and friends. Even if you do not know them, raise thanks to God for putting them in our midst and wish them peaceful passing back to the Creator.

Shirley Paulson's son Brian is undergoing treatment for cancerous tumors, please keep him in your prayers....and for members of our congregation that are traveling... We also pray for those who aren't able to attend worship as frequently as in the past: Michael Marcoe...Yvonne Begeman... Donna Shoe...Michelle Wallace...Randi Byrd...Deb Howard... Joan Martin...Billie Jo Morgan...Blanche & Lahra Beesley... Emily Hartley...Mary Jones...Doris Larsen and Win Bjarkie.



4th Sunday Forum
May 26th 11:30am
Topic: Immigration
Focus: Detention Center in Tacoma

My Sister's Pantry Item of the Month: Soup

This month My Sister's Pantry is collecting soup. Bring your cans in on any Sunday in May!



UCC ANNUAL MEETING REFLECTION

On Saturday, April 27th, over 250 people (including delegates from UCUP: Robert Brown, Cathi Cline, Neil & Norma Rader, Judy Thierry, and Pastor Cathy) gathered at 1st Congregational Church in Bellevue for the UCC Annual Meeting. We unanimously voted to send a resolution in support of the Green New Deal to the Annual Synod UCC gathering, we commissioned new leaders, and we connected with folks around the conference. The Dismantling Racism team led us in a time of listening, reflection, and support of our clergy of color, as we heard stories of racism within our churches. Rev. Rick Derksen reflected: As a white person, I needed to stop asking "Am I racist?", but instead ask "How is my racism playing out?"

In preparing to receive Holy Communion, we interacted with a few stations. The first held a jar of pennies and a dish with these words: As Jesus confronted the money changers in the temple, we confess that the welcome of our churches isn't always the radical inclusion modeled by Jesus. Please pick up a coin from the bowl. Hold it in your hand and consider how we each contribute to keeping systems of white supremacy alive and thriving. Drop the coin into the tray, to symbolize our commitment to the justice work that Jesus calls us to. The second station held small pieces of fabric with these words: As Jesus died on the cross, the gospel story tells us that the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. Take a piece of cloth from the bowl and tear it apart - as we are all torn apart by the separation that is racism. All of us are torn apart when there is no justice in the world. Place the torn pieces in the basket. The third station held a jar of small stones with these words: Pick up a stone and take it with you. Each of us has a stone that we must roll away, to make room for reconciliation and rebirth as we build God's beloved community here together. Keep this stone with you as a reminder of your commitment to this important work.

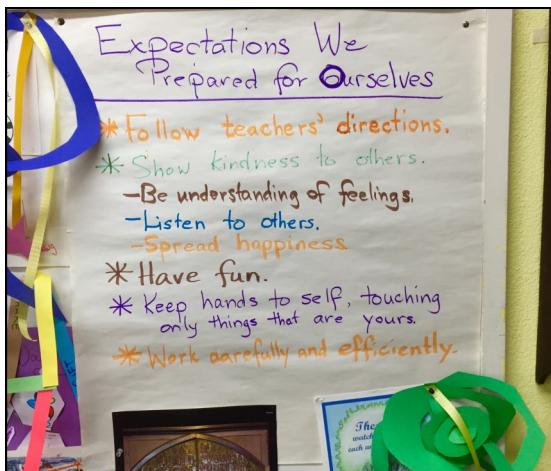


Greening Team Leads Earth Day Worship

Many thanks to Roger Martin's leadership, in facilitating the Greening Team to talk about their love of and adventures in God's creation, and their encouragement to be good stewards of the gift of this beloved earth. We heard stories from Wes Berry, Sharon Britcher, Cathi Cline, Jim Fohrman, Roger Martin, and Neil Rader. And many thanks to Don Thompson and AJ Rowatt for leading music with Pastor Cathy while Jeff Andersen was gone.

FAITH AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH NEWS

The UCUP Faith and Spiritual Growth Committee met in early April and again with the children during Sunday School to hear from them on how we might conduct ourselves in church, worship and in Sunday school. The teachers met with Pastor Cathy to better understand our collective role in providing Christian education and sharing our spiritual growth. The group will meet periodically to update and plan programming. Thank you to Dennis, Christine and Robert who met with five of our children to generate the "Expectations We Prepared for Ourselves." See photo below. The second photo shows Robert reorienting children to the "rules" - one of which is "have fun."



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The church family photo now hangs behind the fellowship and coffee hour table. Accompanying are photos from Clint Cannon's collection of World Service (now Global Service) documentation of humanitarian outreach. Ruth Cannon stands alongside the photo montage. Note the detailed captions which we will highlight in future newsletters. Palm Sunday was our One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) "more than we can imagine" special collection for ecumenical work around the world. So far UCUP has collected \$7,065 for OGHS which will be divided equally between OGHS for the UCC and United Methodist Committee on Relief.



Orchard Tree for UCUP

United Church has been given a tree as a result of our involvement and support of the orchard. Kris Docherty, an orchard volunteer, let us know where the tree is located - the tree is in row 28, 4th tree. They are working on tags for all adopters. It is a Gravenstein tree; they are the first to produce apples and it has been pruned. Harvest time is weather driven. The end of July or early August would be a good time to check on our tree. Picking up windfalls help reduce insects that impact the apples and they do have a dumpster for apples that fall from the tree. Would anyone like to take on management of our tree? Please let Kelly know if this is something you are interested in. Thank you for all your support.



CECILIA SCHILLING—RECIPIENT OF ROBERT D. MONROE AWARE

This award is traditionally granted as a stipend to an outstanding student of the Publishing Printing Arts Program of the Elliot Press at Pacific Lutheran University. It was established by the book Club's Board of Governors to honor the BCW's first President, Robert D. Monroe, passionate book collector, historian, author, lecturer and long-time Head of the Special Collections Division of the University of Washington Library.

Cecelia grew up at UCUP, served as our nursery attendant, and will graduate this May from PLU with a Fine Arts major, and will start her Master of Arts in Education this summer. She is an environmental educator at The Tacoma Nature Center, a steward of the natural world and educator of species native to the PNW. The natural beauty of the PNW is an inspiration to her painting and linoleum carving. She works as the Elliott Press Assistant, focusing on linoleum carving. Check out one of her pieces in Pastor Cathy's office. Congratulations Cecelia on this award and your upcoming graduation.



Interfaith Iftar Dinner

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Doors Open 7:30 p.m.

Program & Dinner 8:00-9:45 p.m.

University of Puget Sound
Upper Marshall Hall, Wheelock Student Center
Tacoma, WA 98416

Join us for an evening of unity as we gather to learn about and support our Muslim neighbors with an interfaith Iftar dinner during Ramadan, featuring speakers and community dialogue.

Dinner is graciously sponsored by the Pacifica Foundation. However, registration is required. Please RSVP at www.associatedministries.org/events/iftardinner2019 or call Sandy Windley 253-426-1506.



One of our dinner groups from the summer of 2016 just keeps on getting together - this time at Tobeby Jones. (missing Kathy & Allen Munn)



EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

We welcomed 32 early risers to our Easter Sunrise Service that we hold annually in the Curran Apple Orchard. The attendance was divided exactly in half - 16 folks were from UCUP, 16 from the neighborhood. Many thanks to Robert Brown, Don Morgan, Duncan Foley, Angie Wolle - for setting up chairs; Tanner Harding - building the "new" Easter fire; Don Thompson - music; Marilyn Thompson and Judy Thierry - serving communion; Angie Wolle and Addy Harding - reading scripture. We were blessed with clear skies, an almost full moon setting, and the sun rising in the



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Easter Sunday the children explored John 20:1-18 as they took the parts of two angels, Mary, two disciples, two roman soldier guards and Jesus as narrated by Cheryl, Addy and Judy. We discussed times they have been excited and ran and were so surprised that something happened that they could hardly believe it. We shared if we had visited a cemetery, grave or burial site as shown in a book on Native American burials copied with permission by Heidi Bohan (2009). These practices are specific to The Pacific Northwest Tribes and villages from the Columbia River to southern Alaska.



The empty tomb ... Mary (Kiera) running from the garden (Jimmy As Jesus standing next to Cheryl) to the disciples (Soren and Wesley) to share the "Good News."

Following worship, our kids embarked on an Easter Basket hunt, filled with a chocolate Easter Cross, and other treasures. Thank you Judy, Cheryl and Addy for teaching, Kris & Rosemary for filling Easter baskets, and Robert for playing the Easter bunny in hiding the baskets.

EASTER WORSHIP

Almost 90 people gathered to worship on Easter. With trumpet fanfare and a full choir loft, our hearts were lifted as we worshiped the Risen Christ - aka "The Gardener". We started worship by remembering the symbols of Holy Week: the oil, the bread, the cup, the cross, the shroud, the stone, and the light. Many thanks to Team 3 for hospitality! Below are a few photos of Easter Sunday.



Peace and Justice



UCUP - AN IMMIGRANT AND WELCOMING CHURCH

The membership of the United Church in University Place on Palm Sunday, April 14, 2019, voted to be an Immigrant and Refugee Welcoming Church. The resolution first presented by the Pacific Northwest UCC and adopted by the General Synod In 2018 provides “extravagant welcome” to the those struggling as refugees and migrants who come to the United States seeking safety, security, freedom and opportunity. Experiencing fear of raids, deportation, and the tearing apart of their families is antithetical to Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions.

The UCC resolution that calls for individual churches to be immigrant welcoming sites Leviticus 19:33-34 (adapted from 23 NRSV): “When an immigrant resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the immigrant. The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the immigrant as yourself, for you were immigrants in the land of Egypt.” In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks of those who will receive the kingdom: “When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger you welcomed me...” Jesus also says (Mark 12:31, NRSV) “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

From the UCC website <http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/GS-31-immigrant-welcoming-denominatinon.pdf> :



This resolution is in keeping with the commitment of the United Church of Christ to provide extravagant welcome to all God’s Children. As negative stereotyping of immigrants increases, becoming an “immigrant welcoming” church provides a critical alternative witness rooted in Biblical and theological principles the United Church of Christ deeply values.”



May 10-12, 2019

PNC-UCC Conference Women’s Weekend
Friday registration begins at 5pm and ends
Sunday at 10am—\$150 per person

FEED YOUR SOUL: WOMEN’S WEEKEND

Register at www.pilgrim-firs.org

May 2019

Every Sunday—10am Worship Service
10:15am Elementary Sunday School

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 12pm Brown Baggers	2 6:00 Finance 7:30—9:pm Choir	3	4 9AM Hunger Walk 3:30pm Helen Engle Mem.
5 Worship 10am	6	7 10am Congregational Care Mtg	8 12pm Brown Baggers	9 7:30—9:pm Choir	10	11
12 Worship 10am	13 6:30pm Board Mtg	14	15 12pm Brown Baggers	16 7:30—9:pm Choir	17	18
19 Worship 10am	20 7pm UP Commu- nity Garden Mtg	21 6:30pm Men's Group	22 12pm Brown Baggers	23 7:30—9:pm Choir 8pm Interfaith Dinner @ UPS	24	25
26 Worship 10am	27 Memorial Day	28 6:30pm SPRC	29 12pm Brown Baggers	30 7:30—9:pm Choir	31	

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 Office Admin: Kelly Krisman



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No matter **who** you are,
or **where** you are on life's journey, you're
welcome here.

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**United Church In
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Weekly

Sundays

10am Worship Service
With Rev. Cathlynn Law

10:15am Elementary Sunday
School (5yrs to 11yrs)

Wednesdays

Noon-2pm Brown Baggers
Luncheon & Bible Study Group

Thursdays

7:30pm-9pm Choir Practice
(Sept—May)

***We are United with God,
United to Love,
and United to Serve Others***

Monthly

1st Sunday of the month
Communion during worship

1st Tuesday of the month
1pm Alzheimer's Support Group

3rd Tuesday of the month
6:30-8pm Men's Group:
"Concerns in Our Hearts & Souls"

4th Sunday of the month
11:45am 4th Sunday Forum



God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST** 