



A United Church of Christ/  
United Methodist Church  
& a LGBTQIA  
Welcoming Congregation

UCUP

April Newsletter

2021

## HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

### MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 1 - 6:30pm

Throughout Lent, we have been on a journey through the Dark Woods of our lives. The Dark Woods are those times when uncertainty, emptiness, being lost and temptation become companions. No one is immune from these aspects of life. Not even Jesus. The story of Jesus' final days in this human life is a story of a journey through a dark night of the soul for all those that surrounded him. On Maundy Thursday we will journey with Jesus and his followers as they gather in the Upper Room, into the Garden of Gethsemane where he was arrested, to Golgatha where Jesus was crucified. We will receive reflections from dramatists who reenact what it might have been like to have been present for the last 24-hours of Jesus' earthly life.

Bring to your worship space a candle, elements for Holy Communion/The Last Supper, and a cup of water (symbolic for washing your hands/feet).

Many thanks in advance for making this service possible: Neva Laurie-Berry - artistic director, vocalist, and tech support; Duncan Foley - videographer & visual artist; Roger Balcom, Chris Berry, Pamela Maddess, Tom Milligan, Judy Thierry, Anigie Wolle - dramatists; and Jeff Andersen, Stuart Lane, AJ Milleret, Tom Milligan, The Small Family Singers, Don Thompson - Worship Production Team. (Photos below are from recording in sanctuary)



### GOOD FRIDAY, April 2 - 6:30pm

On Good Friday, we come to the foot of the cross to offer our prayers of lament. Robert Brown recently shared this reflection from UCC pastor Rev. Loren McGrail, currently serving in Palestine. *"When those we love die or are crucified, executed, or blown up, we must join Mary and the women at the foot of the cross. We must lament and weep. Some say we go to the foot of the cross to lay our burdens down so Jesus can lift us up. I say we go to witness, stand guard, to vigil, or fall apart. We cannot celebrate Christ is Risen unless we are willing to stand at these places of death and destruction, of unspeakable and unbearable violence. Our prayers for another way forward must be uttered here in song or silence, in the company of others, or in the shattered shelter of our own broken heart."*

Join us on Good Friday as we pray and lament the state of our world, for those who have died from COVID-19, for the present violence in our world. On Good Friday, we embrace our humanity, our weakness, as well as our courage, and the human story of death to new life. We embrace the challenge we face when keeping vigil with those we love, and whom God loves, in times of suffering.

### EASTER SUNRISE, April 4 - Gather 6:45am, Worship 7am

It is the second year we will miss holding our annual Easter Sunrise Service in Curran Apple Orchard, but for those who wish, we will join with a couple other churches to hold a very short, physically-distanced worship opportunity, to usher in Easter morning Alleluias.

Join us as we gather at **Jack Hyde Park** (near Chinese Reconciliation Park) with First Tacoma UMC and Mason UMC.



## EASTER WORSHIP, April 4th - 10am on zoom

A year ago, no one would have anticipated that we would still be meeting virtually for worship. And while we miss gathering together in person, other gifts have emerged for this “new normal for this season of life” and so we gather virtually for Easter Worship for the second year in a row.

In the fall of 2019, we planted daffodil bulbs in loving memory of the saints who have gone before us with rich symbolism of planting in the darkness of fall and waiting for God’s surprise in the spring. Those bulbs are blossoming for the second year into bright beautiful daffodils.

*In the bulb, there is a flower; in the seed an apple tree,  
in cocoons a hidden promise, butterflies will soon be free.  
In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

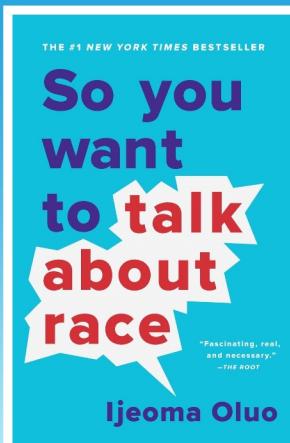
We still don’t know when we can emerge from our cocoons to safely worship together. But as Easter people we trust that all will be revealed in God’s time, as we continue to live the resurrection promise.

Join us on Easter morning at 10am to remind ourselves of our faith-filled hope and promise that:  
**CHRIST IS RISEN!!! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!!!**



**JOIN US!**

**SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10AM FOR OUR LIVE ZOOM WORSHIP SERVICE!**



### **Book Study - "So You Want to Talk About Race", Ijeoma Oluo Wednesday nights, April 28th - May 26th - 6:30pm - on zoom**

Join our next book study on dismantling racism. We will be reading Ijeoma Oluo’s New York Times non-fiction bestseller, “So You Want to Talk About Race”. Oluo guides readers of all races through subjects ranging from intersectionality and affirmative action to “model minorities” in an attempt to make the seemingly impossible possible: honest conversations about race and racism, and how they infect almost every aspect of American life. Our goals as a church community is to become more aware of the privilege we carry, become more empathetic about matters of race, and engage in more productive anti-racist action to actively dismantle racism in ourselves and our community. Are you interested in learning how to explain white privilege to your white, privileged friends? Do you want to continue this difficult journey to becoming more anti-racist? Oluo offers language to engage in constructive and confident dialogue with each other about how to deal with racial prejudices and biases.

Join Nora de Sandoval & Angie Wolle as your co-facilitators for 5 Wednesday nights for this engaging study.

# FROM OUR PASTOR

As I write this newsletter article, I am reflecting that one year ago, on March 23rd, Gov. Jay Inslee issued a *Shelter in Place, Stay Home, Stay Healthy* decree. A year later, my heart is troubled. Even as we have shared collective grief over the vast number of deaths from and trauma created by COVID-19 - one statistic fell in 2020 - the number of mass shootings in the US. Seattle Times Columnist, Danny Westneat wrote on 3/24: *With the coronavirus pandemic seeming on the wane in America, an epidemic it displaced is suddenly back, with a vengeance - the one in which troubled males go out and buy a gun - still easier in many places than it is to vote - and then committing mass shootings of unsuspecting strangers in public places.*

In the last week, when 18 people died in two mass shootings, it was a stark reminder of the cost of gun violence. The massacre in Atlanta was motivated by misogynistic, anti-Asian racism, but each shooting was enabled by a society that is rooted in white supremacy and toxic masculinity that makes it difficult to build sensible policies which restrict access to weapons.

This week Rev. John Pavlovitz wrote an article after the shooting in Boulder, CO: "The irony is that these victims survived living through an unprecedented global pandemic. They endured shutdowns, job losses, economic hardship, and social restrictions. They had made it through isolation, fear and grieving. But they could not survive America's gun epidemic. That proved more fatal than the virus.

"Long before a single case of the virus had been diagnosed, or before we became acquainted with the words *COVID-19, social distancing or flattening the curve*, we'd been well acquainted with *AR-15s, God and Guns, and thoughts and prayers*. Our hearts broke time after time with Columbine, Sandy Hook, Charleston, Colorado Springs, Las Vegas. Orlando, Parkland, and countless other mass murders, followed by a flood of outrage that subsided with strident resistance to changing anything.

After the entire world has put this pandemic in its collective rear view mirror and begun to find some normalcy, we will be left with a shared sickness in America that we cannot seem to inoculate ourselves from because too many are willing carriers of it. The coronavirus has historically brutalized the planet, but in the end it will pale in comparison to the fact that this nation treasures guns more than people. This national epidemic will keep killing us until we stop it."

Everyone is carrying some anxiety as we begin to emerge from a global pandemic in which we experienced collective trauma - not to mention the trauma of the insurrection at the Capitol, racial disparity, economic uncertainty, isolation, and now more mass shootings. We don't always allocate space and time to grieve in the midst of personal or national tragedy. This is where our faith offers a model of praying the Psalms in lament, recognizing that grief requires grace, patience and forgiveness for ourselves and others.

Many people are receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and some are thinking about "returning to normal". But normal is relative. For many communities of color, normal was terrible. As difficult as this past year has been, it opened our eyes to some of the ways "normal" should never return. As people of faith, how can we use the pandemic as an opportunity to make long-lasting changes?



Our faith offers a vision where life is sacred - we wear masks and keep physical distance to protect one another, we dream of a day when no one takes the life of another. As we begin to emerge from a global pandemic, can we also advocate for policies that value communal safety over the profits of weapon-makers and where compassionate action of "Policy & Change" can accompany our "Thoughts & Prayers"? Can we also strive to be increasingly anti-racist?

I had hoped to write a more uplifting article about Easter and new life, but I recognize that I am/we are still in the Dark Wood of Lent as we approach Holy Week. May God be with us all.

# FROM OUR PRESIDENT

## THOUGHTS ON BUNNIES AND BEAVERS



Easter is approaching, and I should be thinking about the Easter Bunny and the Easter messages of hope and new life. But instead of bunnies, I have Beavers on the mind. You see, Beavers have been very present in my life lately. So please indulge me while I deviate from the church script.

First, in Steilacoom's Farrell's Marsh, a family of very busy beavers has been building an impressive dam that has raised the water level of the pond, flooded trails, and created quite a stir in the town. Don, our dog Gus, and I walk in the marsh almost every day and have been observing the changes wrought by the beavers. While the high water levels are killing some of the trees, the expanded marsh is also creating new habitat for birds and other wildlife. It's a fascinating metamorphosis. Townsfolk who monitor the beaver dam activity are working to maintain a small diversion stream to keep the water level from getting any higher, and prevent downstream flooding from a burst dam. The industrious beavers continually try to dam up the diversion, so it's a constant dance to keep the waterworks working. Last week Don and I joined a work party to spread wood chips and reclaim sections of the flooded trail. We'll see how long the trail improvements last!

And second, my alma mater, Oregon State University, is shaking up the collegiate sports world on the basketball court. The OSU Beaver basketball program is stunning "Beaver Nation" fans with wins in the NCAA March Madness tournament. The Beavers started the season ranked 12th in the PAC-12, and went on to win the PAC-12 tournament, earning a berth in the national tournament! As I write this article, the men's team has secured a place in the "Sweet Sixteen," and the women made it to the second round in the tournament before losing to South Carolina. The women have had a winning program for several years, but this is the first time in 39 years that the men have advanced past the first game of the NCAA tournament. That's a really long time. That almost goes back to the days when I attended many of the home games in Corvallis with my dad. My father was on the faculty at OSU and was a lifelong devoted fan of the Beavers. He never gave up on them, through years of disappointments and more than a few losing seasons. That's just how we Beaver fans are – we don't give up, and always hope for a better season ahead.



The true beavers of Farrell's Marsh and the Oregon State Beavers of sports share a common trait: they are indomitable. The marsh beavers keep fortifying their dam and creating new habitat in a wooded haven that's wedged between the town of Steilacoom and Joint Base Lewis McChord. They will not be deterred! The beaver, the largest rodent in North America, has battled back from being decimated in the early days of the fur trappers and now has a healthy population. The OSU Beaver basketball teams (men and women) have fought their way out of a legacy of losing, faced incredible challenges of continuing to play a sport at a highly competitive level during a pandemic, and are competing – and winning — at the national level.

I admire the grit of both, and opine that they offer lessons for us as we grind (or gnaw) our way through this pandemic, travel our journeys through the dark wood, and find our way to new life, new beginnings, and new victories.

And so, my friends, whether you celebrate with the Easter Bunny or, as in my case, the noble Beaver, remember, "All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low, and some sing higher. And some just slap their tail, or chew, or gnaw, or anything they've got now...."

Alleluia, Happy Easter, and Go Beavers!!!

Marilyn Thompson,  
President

In a recent sermon during Lent, Pastor Cathy invited the congregation to think of those moments when they have been thunderstruck. A rich conversation on zoom chat and during fellowship time followed. Tom Milligan found this poem he had written many years ago about being thunderstruck. Thanks Tom for sharing this with us.

### CLOSE ECHOES by Tom Milligan

Someday at sunset  
light and water wave  
would dance for you  
    if you were lucky—  
    show you a skittering  
    shadow of light on the sand.

The light would be falling  
a certain way from the sky,  
    the water translucent  
    so you could finally see  
    the dance they keep doing

    and something like  
    a warm-blooded  
    snake of glowing gold  
    undulated up and down  
    the beachfront to the west.

You knew this no sundry  
    innocent trick of the light—  
    you knew that surely  
    what you looked on lived,

    dancing in  
    ripples writ large—  
    as if to gather up  
    a name,

    some word we haven't  
    thought of yet;  
    some word meaning  
    pulse of wonder,  
    that carries close echoes  
    of thunderstruck, and joy.



Staff Parish Relations has posted the job description for the role of Office Administrator and hope to hold interviews soon. SPR is grateful to Kelly for her faithful work with us and that she will be helping us make the transition to a new Office Administrator. If you have any questions please talk with Joe Becker, chair of SPR, or Chris Berry, Jim Fohrman, Dawn Foreman, Sheila Higby, Judy Thierry, (members of SPR), or Pastor Cathy.

### *A Heartfelt Thank You*

This was my first job after many years of being a stay-at-home mom. I was so thankful that you were willing to take a chance on me, as I felt my "real world" job skills were a bit rusty. Everyone has always been nothing but incredibly welcoming, helpful, supportive, and gracious (even when I inevitably fumbled). UCUP took the craziness of inventing a new way of doing church practically overnight, all in stride. You were able to quickly adapt to online worship during the pandemic and not just survive, but thrive. I can see the care you all have for each other over zoom each Sunday. It has been a joy to witness, thank you. I have truly enjoyed my time with UCUP because of each of you. Thank you for allowing me to serve you and be part of your lives. I'll miss you!

*Kelly*

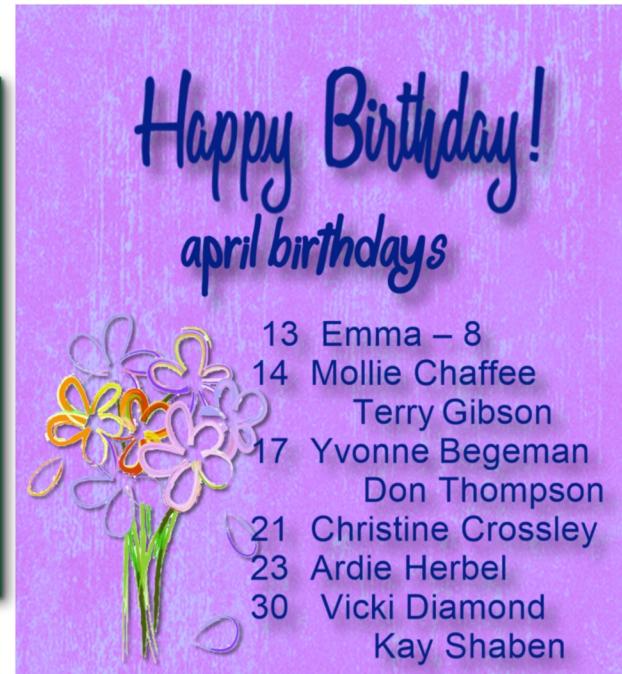


HAPPY SPRING!!! Look around, there's signs of it everywhere...and those of us living in the Pacific NW have much to be thankful for...and Easter is only a few days away – we have much to be thankful for.

Prayers are requested that Cindi Bodie's visits with Jimmy and Jeremiah will take place as planned.....and prayers for support for pipers, Susanne and Seamus, tests show that he has lung cancer.

We give thanks that a number of us have been able to get vaccinated against COVID-19.....that Sharon Britcher, Doris Larsen, Win Bjarke, JoAn Walston and others are no longer under 'lock down'....and that thanks to daughter Cindy, JoAn is now able to come to church, via ZOOM.

We were told recently that Kelly Krisman, our office manager, will be leaving us soon, just in case that time comes before the next newsletter, I want to thank her now for all her help. Best Wishes to you and your family, Kelly.



- 13 Emma – 8
- 14 Mollie Chaffee  
Terry Gibson
- 17 Yvonne Begeman  
Don Thompson
- 21 Christine Crossley
- 23 Ardie Herbel
- 30 Vicki Diamond  
Kay Shaben



We acknowledge that our church grounds are on the traditional land of the Puyallup Tribe. Along Grandview Street is 'taka' as the S'klallam Tribe world pronounce their word for salal. This is a photo of the leaves of the plant. You may be more familiar with salal as the broad leafed greenery often used in bouquets. For the PNW forest ecology it has diverse roles.

Interested in a fuller discussion of this native of the Pacific Northwest within steps of our church door? Check out an article:

"From Forest to Florist: Harvesting Salal on the Olympic Peninsula" in the spring 2021 edition of *Douglasia* as published by the Washington Native Plant Society.

[https://www.wnps.org/content/documents/editorial-comm/douglasia/2021\\_45\\_01\\_spring\\_douglasia.pdf](https://www.wnps.org/content/documents/editorial-comm/douglasia/2021_45_01_spring_douglasia.pdf)

Judy Thierry, on behalf of both Greening and Holy Grounds Committees.  
(Photo by: Walter Siegmund, Creative Commons, Wikipedia)

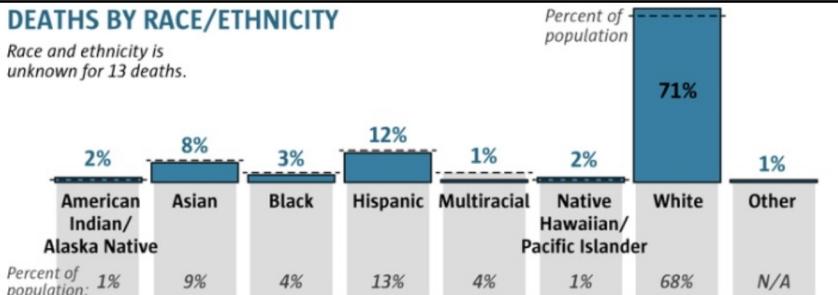
# Peace and JUSTICE



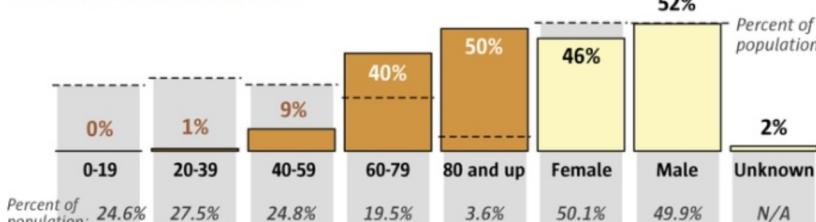
A pandemic by nature is a long event shared by everyone and is our every day. It is in our conversations, scheduled vaccination plans, mask wearing, hybrid schooling, halted travel, constrained family visits and our collective sorrow. We lament the 5000 citizens of Washington who have died of the virus, the losses to families and the great work by our EMS, health care workers, journalists and public health officials.

## DEATHS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Race and ethnicity is unknown for 13 deaths.



## DEATHS BY AGE AND SEX



Sources: Washington State Department of Health, Washington Office of Financial Management (2020 population estimates)

EMILY M. ENG / THE SEATTLE TIMES

A look at demographics portraying the loss by age, race and ethnicity. Takes out the myths and reality — age indeed is a tremendous risk factor and why vaccines were and are so necessary in the elder population.

## LIVES REMEMBERED



## MAILING A PLEDGE CHECK TO THE CHURCH?

UCUP has a newly approved policy regarding USPS mail and its timely, confidential and appropriate distribution, to our Pastor, board, committee chairs and Narrows Coop.

Use the person's name and/or title to get it to the right person. Mail with pledge checks enclosed goes to the financial secretary (FS). You can write: "Attention FS" and it will get to Don Thompson, our financial secretary.

*Example:*

United Church in University Place  
Attn: FS  
3912 Grandview Dr. West  
University Place, 98466



## How the American Rescue Plan Will Affect Small Businesses and Individuals

Our payroll partner, Gusto, has posted a well-written article regarding the recently passed American Rescue Plan Act. Their blog post organizes information about the act into quick links so you can easily find the sections that apply to you.

If you're curious about when to expect your stimulus check and how the legislation might affect you or your small business, please follow this link: [https://gusto.com/blog/business-finance/american-rescue-plan?utm\\_source=reco\\_center](https://gusto.com/blog/business-finance/american-rescue-plan?utm_source=reco_center)



# In Thanksgiving and Celebration

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

**Shalom UCC, Richland**  
Richland WA

**Magnolia UCC**  
Seattle WA

**United Church in University Place**  
University Place WA

**TOP 100**  
BASED ON PER CAPITA GIVING

Congratulations on behalf of the United Church of Christ – One Great Hour of Sharing! Your church has been named a **Top Giving OGHS Congregation**, based on the 2019 giving year.

We are grateful for your generosity and the generosity of the other top giving churches listed in the 2021 OGHS Planning and Resource Guide, available online.

Link:<https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-OGHS-Guide-for-Website.pdf>

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SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO ABOVE ADDRESS

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