



From the Pastor's Desk

Over the Thanksgiving holiday our family went to see the film *Lincoln*. As those of you who have seen it know, the film is stunning in any number of ways: script, actors, cinematography, and score among others. I highly recommend it to those of you who have not yet seen it.

What struck me as profoundly as the scenes on screen, however, was the fact that the showing we attended (4 pm on the day after Thanksgiving) was sold out. The film had been in that theater for a week and that Friday is traditionally a big shopping day, but apparently all showings of the film that weekend were selling out or nearly so. Harry Potter does not appear in this film, nor do vampires of any kind. This is not an action film or from a blockbuster book. In fact, the film can be a bit slow at times, including long portions of historical speeches delivered by President Lincoln, Rep. Thaddeus Stevens and others. The Civil War action footage is minimal. It is a talky film which requires one to pay attention to the words in order to understand the story. Yet it was the third most popular film in America two weeks in a row.

This fact heartened me considerably at the end of an election season which seemed to value 60 second sound bites over serious, lengthy, complex conversation about the many issues facing this country. The popularity of this film makes me think that my fellow Americans really do have the capacity and desire to take time to think and listen about important things.

We are coming to the season of Advent, a time of waiting and listening and thinking. Perhaps we do not need to rush to Christmas quite so fast, but really can take the time to listen to the scriptures, to the music, to each other, to the Spirit's still small voice still speaking over (or under) the Christmas Muzak blaring incessantly

around us. These are stories which require some reflection and listening, some time. Even in our fast moving society, we still can take the time to listen and reflect; indeed we need to take that time more than ever.

On November 25, Kit led an Adult Forum on Centering Prayer. If you missed it, she would be happy to share the material she gave us with you. As part of that forum, we sat in silence for 20 minutes together. When she first told us we would do that, you could see people beginning to squirm. 20 minutes of silence is a long time! Yet for most of us, that time went more quickly than we ever imagined, and some were not ready for it to end. We re-discovered the gift of quiet listening that day.



We can still take the time to listen and reflect.

I wish for you this season the gift of time spent with family and friends and church family. I wish for you joy and peace and hope in your life. I wish for peace on earth and good will to all. I also wish for you the gift of time spent with God. That might turn out to be the best gift of all. From Gavin, Luke, Leah, Ben and I to you: Blessings for Advent, Christmas and the New Year!

Shelly

Advent Devotional Available

Shelly has prepared an Advent Devotional plan for you to use at home daily between now and Christmas. Copies are available on the Table in the Tower Lobby or by request from the Church Office. You can use this with a home Advent wreath or just with a candle to light. Take some time for prayer and reading in the midst of all your other preparations for Christmas.

Special points of interest:

- *New Sexton*, p. 2
- *Advent Pageant*, p. 2
- *Justice Ministries*, p. 4
- *Redeemer's 175th Anniversary*, p. 6
- *Redeemer Sings!*, p. 6
- *Restructure Update*, p. 7

Inside this issue:

Advent Worship Services	2
Christian Education News	3
Mission Opportunities	5
Generosity Update	5
Friends in Faith	6
Member News	7
Schedule of Events	9



Advent Worship Services

December 2: Our annual visit from Chase Collegiate's Blazing Bells choir, led by Dayna Lee Drake. We will celebrate Holy Communion, light our first Advent Candle, and begin to build our crèche. Kit Novotny will be our preacher.

December 9: We consider the enigmatic figure of John the Baptist this Sunday. Shelly will preach.

December 16: Advent Lessons and Carols featuring the choir singing Durante's Magnificat, liturgical dancers, meditations from Shelly and Kit. Following worship, the Confirmation Class and Youth Group prepare lunch for Chapel on the Green and go down to worship and deliver lunch to those who attend.

December 23: Children's Advent Pageant.

December 24: 5:30 Christmas Eve celebration featuring music by our choirs, lessons and carols, candlelight and more.

December 30:

Family Service (no Sunday School) with more carols and meditations.

Healing Christmas Service

Our monthly Healing Prayers service for December will take place on December 16 at 6:30. This month we will hold a service especially for those who may be finding it hard to celebrate a joyful Christmas this year: those who are ill, those who are grieving, those who have suffered financial setbacks, those who suffer with addictions, those who are infertile, those who are sad or struggling for any reasons. Come to this quiet, prayerful service and invite others you know who need comfort because they can't find joy this season.



Invite a friend or family member to Redeemer!

Welcome To Our New Sexton!

Loretta King will take on a new role at church beginning December 1; she will be our new sexton! As you know, Jeff Owens left to take another job in August, and we have been using a company since then. Trustees decided we would like someone to take care of our facilities who is consistent and understands the church's building and mission. We have a separate contract for lawn mowing and snow removal, so Loretta will care for the interiors. She will have a three month probationary period, at the end of which we will mutually decide if this is the right role for Loretta. Because Loretta is a church member, we request that you respect her ability to continue to worship here by not asking her to do sexton duties or answer sexton questions on Sunday

mornings when she is in worship. There is a clipboard on the closet door in the hallway near the music office where you can write her notes sharing building concerns, and we invite you to do so if you see something that needs care. Keep in mind that Loretta only works 15 hours a week! She also works for Center Church, keeping their Meeting House clean and secure.

Welcome to the staff, Loretta!

Children's Advent Pageant

Yes, this year our children will share an Advent Pageant with us on Sunday, December 23. In words and pantomime, they will tell the stories of Elizabeth and Zechariah, the angel Gabriel and Mary, and what was going on with all our familiar characters leading right up to the birth of Jesus. PARENTS; TAKE NOTE THAT WE WILL HOLD A SPECIAL REHEARSAL ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 FROM 10:00—11:00 A.M.



Advent Pageant
December 23, 2012

Advent Silver Tea, December 9

The Deacons invite all members of the Redeemer community to a Silver Tea to celebrate the season of Advent following worship on December 9 in the Upstairs Parlor. The Tea is potluck, so bring finger foods to share. The Deacons will provide beverages.



Christian Education News

Adult Forums

On Sunday, November 25, Kit Novotny led our Adult Forum in Centering Prayer. This Christian practice is meant to open mind and heart – our whole being - to God. It is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer; it simply puts other kinds of prayer into a new and fuller perspective. During the time of prayer we consent to God's presence and action within. At other times our attention moves outward to discover God's presence everywhere. Below are Thomas Keating's four guidelines for practicing Centering Prayer.

I. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.

- A. The sacred word expresses our intention to be in God's presence and to yield to the divine action.
- B. The sacred word should be chosen during a brief period of prayer asking the Holy Spirit to inspire us with one that is especially suitable to us.
 - 1. Examples: Lord, Jesus, Father, Mother; or in other languages: Kyrie, Jesu, Jeshua, Abba, Mater.
 - 2. Other possibilities: Love, Peace, Mercy, Silence, Stillness, Calm, Faith, Trust, Yes; or in other languages: Amor, Shalom, Amen.
- C. Having chosen a sacred word, we do not change it during the prayer period, for that would be to start thinking again.
- D. A simple inward gaze upon God may be more suitable for some persons than the sacred word. In this case, one consents to God's presence and action by turning inwardly to God as if gazing upon God. The same guidelines apply to the sacred gaze as to the sacred word.

II. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.

- A. "Sitting comfortably" means relatively comfortably; not so comfortably that we encourage sleep, but sitting comfortably enough to avoid thinking about the discomfort of our bodies during the time of prayer.
- B. Whatever sitting position we choose, we keep the back straight.
- C. If we fall asleep, we continue the prayer for a few minutes upon awakening if we can spare the time.
- D. Praying in this way after a main meal encourages drowsiness. Better to wait an hour at least before Centering Prayer. Praying in this way just before retiring may disturb one's sleep pattern.
- E. We close our eyes to let go of what is going on around and within us.
- F. We introduce the sacred word inwardly and as gently as laying a feather on a piece of absorbent cotton.

III. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.

- A. "Thoughts" is an umbrella term for every perception including sense perceptions, feelings, images, memories, reflections, and commentaries.
- B. Thoughts are a normal part of Centering Prayer.
- C. By "returning ever-so-gently to the sacred word," a minimum effort is indicated. This is the only activity we initiate during the time of Centering Prayer.
- D. During the course of our prayer, the sacred word may become vague or even disappear.

IV. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

- A. If this prayer is done in a group, the leader may slowly recite the Lord's Prayer during the additional 2 or 3 minutes, while the others listen.
- B. The additional 2 or 3 minutes give the psyche time to readjust to the external senses and enable us to bring the atmosphere of silence into daily life.

UPCOMING FORUMS

December 9:

At 11:15 Advent Silver Tea followed by a service event at 2:00 pm *Living Our Faith Through Service* - **CHRISTMAS CAROLING** at Mary Wade Home. If you are interested in participating in this project, be sure to sign up. **THE SIGN UP SHEET IS ON THE CE BULLETIN BOARD.** Children are most welcome.



Christmas Caroling at Mary Wade
December 9, 2012

December 16:

NEW! Mission 4/1 Earth invites us to green up, power down, and shout out for the environment. Beginning April 1, the UCC will begin its 50 Great Days of Mission 4/1 Earth, in hopes of reaching more than 1 million hours of engaged earth care, 100,000 tree plantings across the globe, and 100,000 advocacy letters written and sent on environmental concerns. Join Ian Skoggard as we learn more about this exciting action and begin to plan what we can do.

Marilyn Kendrix, Minister of Faith Formation



Sustainability Over “Stuff” This Advent

An update from the Youth Group

This week, members of our Youth Group watched and discussed the short film, “The Story of Stuff” (check it out here! - <http://www.storyofstuff.org>), a clever 20-min animation about our relationship with “stuff” as a consumer culture and the troubling lifecycle of material goods. We talked about how we might respond by thinking globally and acting locally, and remembering Jesus’ words that *where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also* (Matthew 6:21).



It can be hard to avoid the mass consumption of unnecessary “stuff” at Christmastime. This advent season, let’s choose to treasure one another and our planet by making responsible choices as gift-givers, Christians and families. Try eliminating waste with alternatives to

wrapping paper like cloth bags or “up-cycled” newspaper, fairly traded or homemade gifts, purchasing gift memberships to worthwhile organizations, or most importantly: giving gifts of time and love. (For sustainable celebration ideas, see “Low Carbon 12 Days of Christmas,” <http://www.nccecojustice.org/downloads/lowcarbonchristmas.pdf>)

With every sustainable choice you make, you will be giving a priceless gift to the youth of this church and around the world: helping ensure God’s creation is conserved and cared for, for all the generations to come.

Kit Novotny, Seminary Intern

For every sustainable choice you make, you will be giving a priceless gift to the youth of this church.

Redeemer Involved in Justice Ministries

Updates for you on two of the justice ministries in which Redeemer is involved in greater New Haven:

- CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut), the organization which grew up from the old ECCO, involves 27 faith communities from Westport to East Haven in community organizing and has been involved in a number of projects this fall. Small groups have worked with government officials on Health Insurance (seeking an automatic review of rate increases), Education (particularly in Bridgeport around the state removing an elected school board), Drivers Licenses for Undocumented Workers (check the update on Shelly’s bulletin board for more detailed info on this project and why it is important), and now concerns around insurance companies denying payments in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. CONECT has a new lead organizer, Matt McDermott, so expect to hear more about issues of concern in the coming year.
- Project Lighten Up: spearheaded by Alan Kendrix in collaboration with the Newhallville clergy’s Promise Land Project, this project has worked with city agencies, the police department and churches to install new lighting on Lilac Street and now has convinced the city to continue to put all new street lighting throughout Newhallville as an aid to crime prevention. Working with Neighborhood Housing Services and the police department, Alan went to a training project on crime prevention which now involves projects in Newhallville

around yard lighting, dealing with vacant lots, and organizing Neighborhood Watch and community garden projects. This pilot project is very exciting for the residents of Newhallville and has future opportunities for us to reach across the Prospect Avenue hill to connect with our neighbors in Newhallville.

- Both of these projects have had financial and human contributions from Redeemer. Talk to Shelly or Alan if you are interested in being involved.



Redeemer works with CONECT and Project Lighten Up.



Mission Opportunities in December

7th Annual Alternative Gift Fair, December 9 and 16

Crowd-free shopping is coming your way! Come see all of the wonderful and unique gift items from SERRV that will be available for sale in the Sterling Room following worship on December 9 and 16. Divine chocolate bars! They make great stocking stuffers and the Women's Bean Project soup mixes make a great housewarming gift or hearty meal for a cold winter's night. Gift cards supporting the Connecticut Food Bank, the Heifer Project, Church World Service, the Diaper Bank and Habitat for Humanity will also be available.

Decorate our Christmas Tree with Hats, Scarves and Mittens

Christian Community Action is always so grateful for the scarves, hats, mittens and gloves that we bring to them every winter. It warms the heart to see the Christmas tree in our sanctuary covered with your donations of items to warm the heads and hands of those in need. The tree is up! Let's deck it out!

You can play Santa for the Children of Covenant to Care

The Christmas tree in the sanctuary will once again be decorated with paper mitten ornaments bearing the name and age of a child on it. You can play Santa, for a child in need, by taking a paper mitten and buying an age appropriate gift for them. Your gift, which may be the only one this child receives, will surely help to make this Christmas a happy one. Please place the wrapped gift, with the attached paper mitten tag bearing the child's name, under the tree by Sunday, December 16.



Thank you very much and Merry Christmas from your Missions Committee!

The Big Red Bag and "Give Thanks, Give Back"

Last year just before Christmas, the Missions Committee presented each Redeemer household with a special "Thank You" gift. It was a red grocery tote bag bearing the Church of the Redeemer name, the UCC logo and the statement "Give Thanks, Give Back" printed on the side.

It was the Missions Committee's way to say thank you to our amazing faith community for its continued generosity and support. It was also a gift that the committee hoped would be "a gift that keeps on giving." A reminder when grocery shopping to pick up a couple extra food items for the Connecticut Food Bank and to help keep our food closet full for the folks who come to Redeemer looking for emergency help.

If your household did not get a red tote bag last year, the Missions Committee has one for you. They will be available on Sundays during coffee hour.

Please remember to take your bag to the grocery store AND to church.

Cheryl Bergman, Chair, Missions Committee

Generosity Update

The Generosity Committee would like to thank all the members and friends who have, to date, pledged \$142,150 for 2013. We are on our way to a record-breaking year. Let's make it happen. Letters have been sent to those who have not yet returned a pledge form for 2013. Pledge forms may be mailed to or left in the church office or put in the offering plate. We look to 2013 to further live out our call to love God and to love our neighbor.

Bring some fish. Share your catch.

Doby Hall, Generosity Committee



Bring some fish—Share your catch.



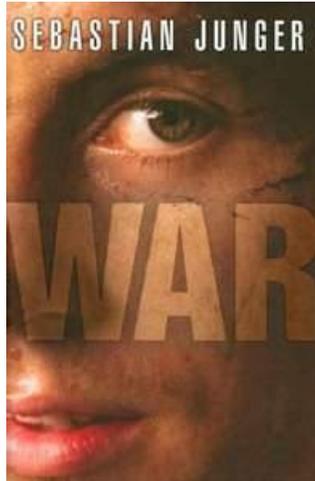
Friends in Faith

Theology on Tap

On December 6 at 6:30 we will gather at Wall Street Pizza for our monthly Theology on Tap gathering. In December, we'll discuss how to "do" Christmas as Christians in the midst of how our society celebrates the holiday. Many groups throw around the saying that we should "Keep Christ in Christmas," but what does that mean? What does Christmas mean to you and how do you keep it? Come and join us!

Noon Book Group

Our Noontime Book Group is currently discussing Sebastian Junger's *War*. This important book includes not only the stories of a battalion in the war in Afghanistan with which Junger was embedded over 15 months, but also reflections on what war does to soldiers and civilians. We will take a break from the book, however, and meet on December 11 at the home of Peg Bixler for our annual potluck lunch and Yankee swap. Please let Shelly know if you are planning to



attend. We'll finish discussing the Junger book on January 8.

Redeemer's 175th Anniversary Coming in 2013

On November 3, 2013 we will hold a grand celebration of the Church of the Redeemer's 175th anniversary. That morning we will welcome the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, Executive Minister of the UCC's national Local Church Ministries office as our preacher! We are also planning a festive luncheon to follow. Other events will occur

Redeemer celebrates its 175th anniversary on November 3, 2013.

in the year leading up to that date, including an opportunity for you to contribute to a special Anniversary Fund about which you will hear more in January. As we anticipate this milestone, let us remember the words of Dag Hammarskjold: "For all that has been, thanks! To all that will be, Yes!"

Redeemer Sings in the Community!



**Senior Choir at Ashlar Village
December 15, 2012**

In December, two Redeemer groups will be sharing song with our community. On December 9 at 2:00 p.m., anyone is invited to come to the Mary Wade Home for a time of caroling. Redeemer actually was part of the early history of this Fair Haven nursing home and has long had members on the Board. Sign up or let Marilyn Kendrix know you want to join us!

On December 15, the Senior Choir will sing at Ashlar Village in Wallingford at 2:00 p.m. Several

Redeemer members live at Ashlar Village and they invited us to come give a concert. Music is part of our mission at Church of the Redeemer!

Annual Seashore Potluck and Carol Sing

All are invited to the home of John and Greta Seashore on Sunday, December 16 at 5:00 p.m. for their Annual Potluck and Carol Sing. People of all ages are most welcome and it's a great time to teach our children the music of Christmas!



Member News

Passages:

Congratulations to **Paul, Holly** and big brother **Quinby** on the birth of baby boy **Berry** (name not yet finalized) on November 29, 2012!

Jonathan Reed

Alexandre Van Tassel

Charles Weller

Pat Youngberg

Happy birthday to those celebrating this month:

Katherine Blossom

Sequella Coleman

Cindy Crooker

Carleton Erickson

Annarose Ferrucci

Courtney Mason

Jack Mirabilio

Carol Nardini

Sherrie Oliver

Luis Pagan

Happy anniversary to:

Kevin Buterbaugh and Claudia Bosch

Pat and Pat

D'Amico

Cliff and Marilyn

Larson

Jonathan and

Sarah Reed

John and Margretta

Seashore

Michael and Peggy

Strickler



Restructure Update

Following our meeting on November 10, a small group led by Church Clerk Charles McEnally has been working on a draft of a new Constitution and Bylaws using the work we did on the 10th. The group has met twice and is making good progress; they will report to the Church Council in January and hope to have their work done by February to present a proposed plan to the congregation at a special meeting before Easter. That plan will include not only the Constitution and Bylaws, but a plan for implementation to be developed by Church Council. We do not anticipate full change occurring until May or June. Your reflections on what happened the 10th or your questions and concerns about how

this restructuring will be played out are invited by way of the poster board and post-it notes available each Sunday in the Sterling Room.

Assorted Notes

Goodsearch Helps Fund Redeemer

If you do a lot of searching or buying online, please consider downloading the Goodsearch/Goodshop toolbars to do this and designating Church of the Redeemer UCC as your beneficiary. We get a couple of pennies per search and more per online purchase. This year we received a check for around \$140, but we can do much better than that. Go to www.goodsearch.com and follow the instructions. It costs you nothing and can help us



Check out
www.goodsearch.com

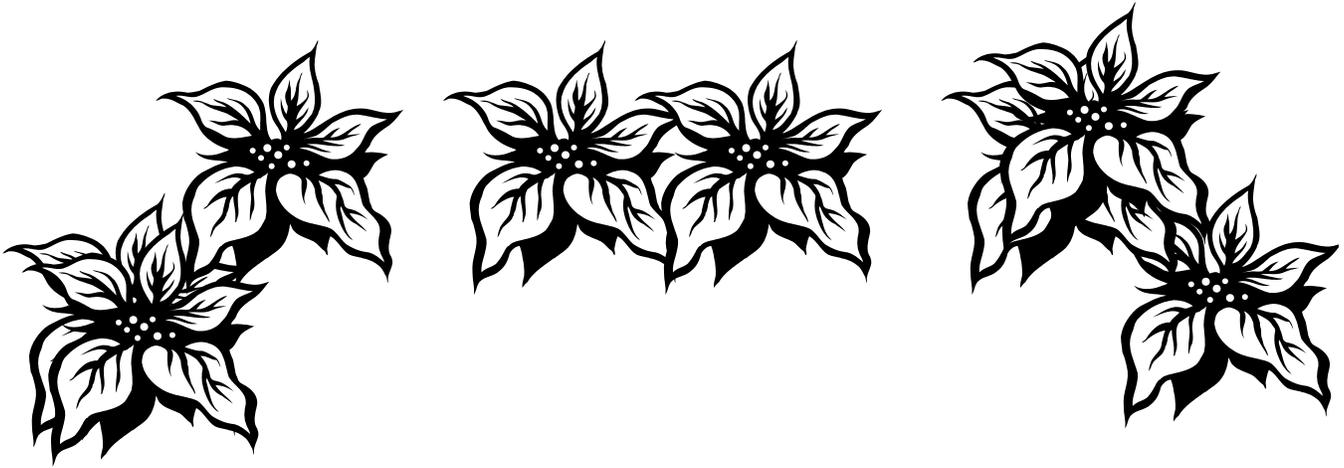
with our work here.

Tablecloths Have Gone Missing!

Did you bring home tablecloths from Redeemer to launder? Two round (rose & blue) and several rectangular tablecloths are missing. If so, please return them to church as soon as possible.

Tablecloths Have Surfaced

Did you leave a bag of tablecloths and napkins in the Church office? If so, please contact Debra.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA PLANTS

This Christmas Season we will continue our tradition of decorating our sanctuary with red poinsettias. Please help in adorning our altar with beauty and blessings of the season by ordering a plant in honor/memory of a loved one.

All orders must be received no later than Monday morning, December 17, 2012.

Order forms with payment may be placed in the collection plate or left in the Church Office.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

From _____

Phone _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

How many? _____

_____ **I will pick up my flowers.**

_____ **Please have the Deacons give my flowers to a housebound church member.**

All plants are \$12.00.

**Remember to include your payment with this order form.
Thank you for your generosity.**



The Church of the Redeemer – December 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 9:25 Children's Choirs 10:00 Worship 11:15 Children's Choirs Rehearse	3	4 7:00 Church Council, Phillips Room	5 7:30 Senior Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary	6 2:15 Staff Meeting, Phillips Room 6:30 Theology on Tap, Wall St. Pizza	7	8 10:00 Deacons decorate Sanctuary
9 <i>Alternative Gift Fair</i> 10:00 Worship/CS 11:15 Kids' Choirs 11:30 Silver Tea 2:00 Caroling 6:00 Confirmation 7:15 Youth Group	10 7:00 CE Committee, Upstairs Parlor	11 12:00 Noontime Book Group, Home of Peg Bixler 6:00 Eat, Drink, Divorce, Parlor	12 7:30 Senior Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary	13 2:15 Staff Meeting, Phillips Room	14	15 2:00 Senior Choir at Ashlar Village
16 <i>Alternative Gift Fair</i> 10:00 Worship/CS 11:15 Kids' Choirs 11:30 Chapel on Grn 11:30 Adult Forum 5:00 Seashore Potluck 6:30 Healing Service	17	18	19 7:30 Senior Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary	20 2:15 Staff Meeting 3:30 Knitting Group, Phillips Room 7:15 Deacons, Missions, Trustees, Sanctuary	21	22 10:00 Advent Pageant Rehearsal
23 <i>Advent Pageant</i> 8:30 Senior Choir 9:15 Rehearse Pageant 10:00 Worship 11:15 Children's Choirs Rehearse	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 2:00 Soloists 3:00 Senior Choir/Girls 4:45 Chancel/Chimes 5:15 Prelude 5:30 Service	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29
30 10:00 Worship	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>					

The Church of the Redeemer

185 Cold Spring Street
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 787-5711
redeemer@snet.net
uccredeemer.org

Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse, Senior Minister
rastackhouse@gmail.com

Jonathan Weber, Moderator of the Church
Henry Sykes, Treasurer
Charles McEnally, Clerk

Marilyn Kendrix, Minister of Faith Formation
Marguerite Brooks, Director of Music

Julia Blue Raspe, Chancel Choir Director
Larry Bishop, Organist

Debra Tangarone, Office Administrator and Financial
Secretary

Geoffrey Johnson, Security
Loretta King, Sexton

Moving With Mary's Song

Let's assume for just a second that the account of Elizabeth and Mary's pregnancies is literally true. By all accounts, Mary was a young teenager at the time—awkward; hormones raging; body growing in fits and starts into adulthood, mind following reluctantly along. Any middle schooler will tell you—it's not easy being Mary. Then, on top of all that, she discovers she's pregnant? By the Holy Spirit? The angel says, "don't be afraid," and at first Mary responds to this astounding news proudly, almost defiantly—"Here am I" - and then . . . she flees. And far away, too. From Galilee to the Judean hill country—50 miles or more. Remember, she's just a kid.

According to the angel, Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, is also pregnant, even though she is quite elderly. Mary immediately bolts (no word of Joseph here) to be with her cousin. Just her greeting is enough to stir Elizabeth's womb, prompting her baby to kick (for the first time?). A bond is forged, and Mary stays for three months until just before Elizabeth's baby (John, who becomes the herald of the Christ) is born.

Why? What did Mary find there that she didn't have at home? Elizabeth offered extravagant welcome and no judgment. Perhaps because of her own experience, she could relate to the young cousin on her doorstep. Whatever the case, Elizabeth clearly offered a safe space to Mary, a place of joy, affirmation and support.

Out of this safe space Mary is able to sing a song of praise, often called The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), that is one of the most



Sing out in joy; cry for justice.

stirring passages in all scripture, simultaneously a song of thanksgiving and praise and a cry for justice.

So, if we want to empower others both to sing praises and call out for justice, let us learn from these two women: they pick up on clues that angels leave; they offer hospitality with out judgment or recrimination; they do not hesitate to sing out in joy but link their song to cries for justice.

When we are non-judgmental, when we are attentive to providing a supportive environment, when we (elders) allow young voices to find their place, and when we (of Mary's age)

seek out the counsel of older persons, we can discover settings across generations in which poems of praise and cries of justice can emerge in beauty.

Rev. Robert Chase, Intersections International, New York, NY