

APRIL 2021 CRIER

2021 - Issue No. 3

The First Church in Marlborough,
(Congregational), UCC
37 High Street
Marlborough, Massachusetts
www.firstchurchmarlborough.org



Dear Saints of God at First Church,

By the time you will be reading this it will have been Easter or Easter week. But I am writing it in the middle of Holy Week. So, what is going on is that I am trying to imagine now what will be, on what has been promised in the past. Confused? Good!

Christians have always had a complicated relationship with time. Based on what has God done in Christ Jesus and what God promised to fulfill in time, we proclaim that that very past and future are available already now. Confused? Good!

Let me try again. During World War II Karl Barth, the great Swiss theologian, tried to avoid direct references to what was going on politically in the world, but tried to have his congregants (and he preached all over Switzerland) focus on the fact that God has placed them in these times for a reason. The reason is not known to us – but is very well known to God, by whose grace and support we will be able to fulfill God's plans for us. In "The Lord of the Rings" at one point the exasperated (and lost) Frodo says to Gandalf: "I wish none of this had happened" to which Gandalf replies "So do all, my dear Frodo, who live to see such times. But it is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is how to live with the time that has been given to us. There are other forces at work in this world", and after these words – they find their way out of the cave.

And thus, is with Eastertide this year. It was not for us to decide to live in such times – this time, and this time only has been given to us. What is our Christian vocation is how do we live: in regret, in the shadows, in the monotony of another day in the midst of a pandemic? Or, do we live our lives as those for whom God rose from the dead, defeated death, and through baptism gives us a glimmer of life everlasting already now? Do we stay in the upper room, locked up, hoping "this Jesus fiasco goes away" (to quote my friend) or do we leave the room, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, remembering that Christ is with us until the end of days?

Weighty questions, Saints of God. Weighty questions to ponder as you sit beside the empty tomb on that (and every) morning. The good news (evangelion or Gospel) is that you are not alone. We never were.

May in the days to come – we all find our way.

Happy Eastertide!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Kaz

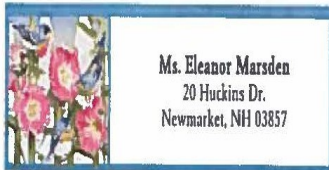
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A NOTE OF THANKS

Mary Steeves would like to thank all of the “church angels” who have called, sent cards and visited her during her rehab and recovery back at home. It has meant the world to her and she is deeply grateful all of her friends at First Church.

EASTER NOTE



To all

God Bless you

Happy Easter

Stay happy, healthy and safe

I am 97 yrs old.

Born and Brought up in Marlborough

Baptized in church and married in church.



HOLY WEEK & SUNDAY SERVICES

April 1 ~ Maundy Thursday at 7pm
(live stream and in person with Covid-19 limited seating)

April 2 ~ Good Friday at 7pm
(live stream and in person with Covid-19 limited seating)

April 3 ~ Holy Saturday at 7:13pm
(Sunset service in the parking lot)

April 4 ~ Easter Sunday 10am with Holy Communion
(live stream and in person with Covid-19 limited seating)

Must email office by 10am on April 1st to reserve a spot as we will max out

April 11 ~ Worship 10am
(live stream and in person with Covid-19 limited seating)

April 18 ~ Worship 10am
live stream and in person with Covid-19 limited seating)

April 25 ~ Worship 10am
(live stream and in person with Covid-19 limited seating)

BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR KAZ

April Tuesday Bible studies on the 13th through the 27th will be held at 10am and 7pm with Pastor Kaz via Zoom. Check our emails sent out weekly for Zoom link information, or contact Pastor Kaz if you'd like to join in (no experience required!).

PASTOR KAZ COFFEE HOURS

April Thursday Zooms on the 22nd and 29th will be held at 11:30am with Pastor Kaz. See the weekly invite emailed to you from Constant Contact!

PASTORAL CARE

Contact Pastor Kaz (203-781-6372) or the church office (508-485-6297) with any personal concerns, illnesses, deaths, prayer requests or to arrange homebound Communion.

UCC ROOTS ~ REMEMBERING OUR HISTORY



Women Often Make a Difference by Rochelle Stackhouse, March 2021

“During the early twentieth century, the education of girls in Turkey centered on teaching skills that would prepare them to be wives and mothers. “Home Economics” dominated the curriculum. Congregational women in the United States wanted to improve education for women.

In 1952 a woman named Helen Louise Morgan (1912-2004), who had taught Spanish at secondary and collegiate schools in the Chicago area, accepted an educational position at the American Academy for Girls in Uskudar, Turkey, not far from Istanbul. She was sponsored by the Congregational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

Morgan was an extraordinary teacher and administrator. She literally transformed girls’ education in Turkey. She introduced a science curriculum, overseeing the addition of labs and faculty to teach biology, chemistry, and physics. She increased programs and classes in the fine arts, and she expanded athletic opportunities for the girls. The library collection increased four-fold under her leadership, the student body grew, and many of the school’s buildings were modernized. Those who worked with Morgan commented that her innovation moved from “a top-down leadership style to more inclusivity, through more faculty committees and an encouragement of student leadership.” In 1994 the school celebrated her ground-breaking contributions by naming a new science building in her honor.

The arts were just as important to Morgan. After leaving Turkey in 1977, she returned to the United States and lived for 25 years in a UCC retirement community known as Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California. There, she helped establish the “Pettersen Intercultural Art Museum” – a special arts collection where retiring missionaries were able to share, preserve and display artistic treasures they encountered during their missionary careers.

Helen Louise Morgan’s devotion to education and the arts invite us to remember the ways women in the United Church of Christ have made a difference in our world.”

stillspeaking DAILY DEVOTIONAL ~ UCC

Rejected Stones ~ by Kenneth L. Samuel, March 28, 2021

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. - Psalm 118:22 (NIV)

“In early 20th century America, many people believed that women were unsuited for public life, and that a woman’s domestic life as wife and mother was ordained by God. Furthermore, a woman’s vote was thought to be represented by her husband, with disdain cast upon any woman who held political views that differed from the male head of her household.

But can you imagine how bereft American politics would be today without the involvement and leadership of women?

During the 1970s and well into the 1980s, when people thought “computer” they thought of large frame structures used by companies and the military. Steve Jobs had the notion that people would discover their own need for PCs once they experienced them. Job’s intent was not only to illuminate people’s latent need for PCs, but to get people to see the PC as an extension of themselves.



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The objections and obstacles to the realization of Job's vision were immense, but can you imagine a world today without smart phones?

Oprah Winfrey confesses that her initial career goal was to be a serious TV news anchor. In 1976 she landed a job as co-anchor of the 6PM news at WJZ-TV in Baltimore. Soon thereafter, WJZ decided she was dull and stiff on the air and noted that she regularly mispronounced words. She was abruptly fired. But can you imagine the media and the movie industry today without the "O" effect?

Popular rejection has never meant the denial of one's genius or one's calling. Rejection often precedes respect, and our crosses do qualify us to wear crowns.."

Prayer ~ Lord, let no denial derail the realization of my destiny in you. Amen

Kenneth L. Samuel is Pastor of Victory for the World Church, Stone Mountain, GA

DEAD SEA SCROLLS DISCOVERY

Dead Sea Scrolls Discovery Reveals New Details About the Bible's Earliest Translations ~ Chip Hardy, March 18, 2021
(Reprinted from Christianity Today)

"Israeli researchers and archaeologists unveiled this week several groundbreaking discoveries, including dozens of biblical scroll fragments that represent the first newly uncovered Dead Sea Scrolls in more than half a century. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain some of the earliest known Jewish religious documents, including biblical texts, dated from the third century B.C. to the second century A.D. The manuscripts were first unearthed in the immediate aftermath of World War II in the caves near Qumran and the Judean Desert.

Even an initial review of the new fragments—which will be analyzed and scrutinized for years to come—offers some exciting findings about how the earliest biblical texts were translated and adapted in ways like our own.

The discovery comes at a time when demand for antiquities has skyrocketed, spurring looting and forgeries over the past several years as wealthy collectors hope to acquire any remaining scraps of the priceless scrolls. Starting around 2002, a number of widely publicized "Dead Sea Scroll" fragments emerged with questionable origin stories. After a series of illegal attempts to acquire artifacts and scrolls, Israeli Antiquities Authority conducted a series of archaeological surveys to reexamine the interiors of the caves along the cliffs of the Judean Desert.

Beginning in 2017, its researchers uncovered two dozen scroll pieces, each measuring only a few centimeters across, from the so-called Cave of Horror near the western shore of the Dead Sea. It's a site where insurgents were believed to have hidden during the uprising led by Simon bar Kokhba against the Roman empire in A.D. 133–136. It gets its name from the discovery of 40 bodies during initial excavations decades before.

Unlike most of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the fragments from the Cave of Horror contain Greek letters. Scholars determined they came from a Greek translation of the Book of the Twelve in Hebrew, what many Christians call the Minor Prophets.

The job of reconstructing the original document is akin to trying to assemble a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle with only a handful of pieces. The largest fragment contains portions of Zechariah 8:16–17, and some smaller bits are identified as Nahum 1:5–6. These pieces appear to be connected to other previously discovered fragments from the same cave along the ancient gorge of Nahal Hever and were part of a single large scroll including all of the minor prophets.



Continued on page 5

The text comes from the oldest physical scroll of the Greek Bible we have, but it likely represents a development or revision of the standard Greek translation—often referred to as the Septuagint, LXX, or Old Greek. Two characteristics found for the first time in this ancient Greek translation correspond in remarkable ways to our modern English Bibles.

First, the newly discovered pieces show a special treatment for the four letters of God's name, the Tetragrammaton (see Exodus 3:14–15). Instead of rendering the name in typical fashion with the Greek word *Kyrios*, the name of God is represented in Hebrew letters written right to left. It would be similar to us using the Hebrew letters יהוה (YHWH) or possibly the Latin *DOMINUS* in the middle of an English sentence.

This representation is significant because using specialized characters for the divine name has carried through to our modern Bibles. Most English Bibles represent the name as “the LORD” with small capital letters, rather than representing its supposed pronunciation Yahweh, as many scholars suggest. This substitution follows the ancient tradition of reading *Adonai*, a Hebrew word meaning “Lord,” or even *HaShem* “The Name,” in place of representing God's name according to its sound.

Moreover, the lettering for God's name is not typical of most of the other Dead Sea Scroll Hebrew manuscripts. It is an even older script, sometimes called paleo-Hebrew, which was mostly abandoned in everyday writing during the second temple period. Think of it as the difference between our modern Latin lettering and the calligraphic Fraktur or Gothic script, or possibly even like Greek letters. Putting these representations into a translated text provides both a foreignness to the writing and a type of reverence for the name's uniqueness.

The second correlation we find in the new fragments is evidence of changing words to try to improve a new translation. The Minor Prophets scroll represents a revision of an older Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The original version was used widely by Greek-speaking Jews in the first century throughout the Mediterranean world, but at some point, a new translation became warranted.

For Zechariah 8:17, the Old Greek translated the first word in the Hebrew text (שִׁיר as a distributive term meaning “each other, another,” which put at the end, similar to every major English version. For example, the NIV reads, “Do not plot evil against each other.”

In the new fragment, the same term is translated by a different Greek word at the beginning. Using an interlinear approach—finding a corresponding word without accounting for the context of its use—the verse starts by representing the same Hebrew word as “man.” It forms an overliteral translation: “As for a man, do not plot evil against his neighbor in your heart.”

It would seem that the efforts to render the Bible accurately into common languages date back to our earliest textual evidence of the Scriptures. Yet this difference anticipates the various modern opinions about how best to represent God's word in our vernaculars.

These texts will undoubtedly launch an array of research in years to come, with other features possibly revealed through multispectral imaging and digital magnification. As a biblical scholar, I can imagine these ancient readers striving to translate the Hebrew Scriptures that we read today and then carrying these meaningful texts into the darkest moments of their history to help them better understand God and their world.

Our connection to these people through this ancient text—now brought forward in tiny pieces, bit by bit—demonstrates the profound human desire to seek God especially in our moments of greatest trial and uncertainty.”

Chip Hardy is associate professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the author of Exegetical Gems from Biblical Hebrew: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation.

Alice Blakeley Scholarship

The Alice Blakeley Scholarship is available to undergraduate students who are members of the church or children/grandchildren of members of the church. Applicants must be under 25 years old and a full time undergraduate college student. The applications are available on the church's website (bottom of the home page under "FORMS"). All applications are **due by 5:00pm on Sunday, April 18, 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.**

Applications must be emailed to Katie Spacek at katiespacek@gmail.com and Liz Mahoney at emahoney88@yahoo.com. Please note scholarship recipients MUST be at Baccalaureate Sunday worship to receive their scholarship!

Women's Fellowship Scholarship

The Women's Fellowship annually awards a scholarship to an active First Church member who is pursuing graduate level studies toward a full time career in Ministry, Christian Education, the Mission Field, Christian Service or Teaching in Christian Higher education. The application form including qualifications and requirements is available by contacting Cindy Vail at vail01752@gmail.com. Please forward the completed application to Cindy Vail, Rachel Heim or mail it to the church Attn: Women's Fellowship. **The deadline for receipt of the completed applications by Women's Fellowship is Sunday, May 30, 2021.**

Womens Fellowship Activities

The second Tuesday in March was predicted to be a sunny and warm day, so the Women's Fellowship resumed their socially distant outdoor meetings. Outdoor meetings were held from July through November, but put on hold during the colder months. Our group gathered in the new City of Marlborough parking lot and enjoyed seeing fellow members face to face while soaking up the sun. We also collected Easter donations for the Marlborough Food Pantry.

Now that warmer weather has arrived, the Fellowship plans to meet monthly at 1:00 PM. The meetings will be held outside until the Fellowship is able to resume meeting in the church. In April, we will be making May baskets to deliver to our shut-ins. Members should bring empty tissue boxes, scissors and items to go in the baskets. An update will be emailed to members the week before the meeting.

Submitted by ~ Laura Lane

Flowers

Flower donations continue to move forward and I am excited to be able to reach out to our congregation for the months of May and June this year to organize altar arrangements. Please contact me at kklynch13@verizon.net if you would like to sponsor any.

We will have Easter lilies compliments of our 2020 donors as we had shut down from Covid prior to Easter. We will not be taking 2021 Easter flower donations and hope to resume such orders next spring when we are fully open again for worship.

Confirmation & Sunday School

The Confirmation Class has been working on finding gratitude in our daily lives. We met in person in the church parking lot for our March meeting. We discussed the events of Holy Week and the significance they have on current times. Pastor Kaz led the Confirmands in singing 'Ah, Holy Jesus', an English paraphrase of a German meditation on Christ's Passion.

The Sunday School continues to run two classes each Sunday. The elementary class has been discussing Lent, how to nurture the love that Jesus taught us, and appreciation for all that we have. The kids are active in class, full of questions and commentary!

Submitted by: Melissa Purnell

CHURCH COUNCIL ~ DIACONATE ~ TRUSTEES

CHURCH COUNCIL

At the time of this writing, the Covid-19 activity in Massachusetts was trending lower and the sanctuary was open for limited in-person worship, Hallelujah. Easter is upon us and we are all looking forward to what the Worship and Music ministries have in store for us.

The Ministries facilitators, along with the at-large members of Council are extremely happy to be able to see that data and be able to slowly re-open the church to our congregation. As the weather continues to improve, more gatherings and meetings, such as the gathering of the confirmands may be moving out of the Zoom window and into the fresh air and hopefully soon into the building itself. We will keep you informed of any changes but every change will need to follow strict guidelines and recommendations from the state and local governments.

If you passed by the church recently, you may have also noticed that much needed roof replacement work was going thanks to the efforts of the Stability Ministries. Council was happy to learn that recent donations to the church allowed for the roof to be repaired completely rather than slowly over time.

During our pandemic times, the Mission and Outreach ministries of the church have not been lax in their efforts. The facilitators have informed the Council that great amounts of food, personal items, housewares, blankets and furniture have been collected by the Sunday School and donated to those most in need. The church also collected donations to support an LGBT Asylum seeker couple who lost everything (including their cat) to a large fire in their home. And finally, with the return of warm weather, we are looking forward to learning about new ideas for reaching out to the community in the spring and summer.

Submitted By: Andy Dunn, Council Chair

DIACONATE (No Report)

TRUSTEES

If you happened to drive by the church in March, you may have noticed Tunnera Roofing working on, and then completing, their work on the last two roofs that we had contracted them to replace. It is a great relief to know that we now have all three roofs in new condition! Other than the roofing project, it has been quiet around the building which is always good news!

Trustee Ministry Team: CaseyLee Bastien, Jeremy Crocker, Paul Hasbrouck, Laurel Hill, George Pellerin, Steve Powers, Sandy Stetson and Linda Warren.

OUTREACH ~ OUR FATHER'S TABLE

We served our bi-monthly dinner on February 18th with 50 'take out' meals to our guests which we ordered from Stevie's Back Road Café & Catering in Hudson. Janice Brailey picked up the meals and we then added rolls, butter, cookies and a bottle of water into take out bags for a complete meal including plastic utensils. My thanks to Tom Sullivan and Verlie Lowell for collecting the plastic utensils; Mary Lambert for packing up the rolls and butter; Laurel Hill and Janice Brailey for helping to pass out the meal bags!

We will be serving a cold lunch 'take out' on April 15th with sandwiches, chips, cookies and bottled water. Our OFT outreach program will through the summer (June 17 and August 19). We always welcome help in any form at any time.

God bless you all! Carol MacEwen

OUTREACH ~ INREACH

DONATION AND KIND WORDS FROM A CHILDHOOD MEMBER

A former member read the article in the March 12th Community Advocate about our fundraising efforts for the LGBT Asylum seekers who were fire victims in Worcester, and she sent in a donation toward our Outreach missions. Nice to hear from the community around us!

"I read the article in the Community Advocate about your efforts to help Luchaine Whyte and his spouse after they lost everything in a fire.

I grew up attending the First Church so I feel a tie to it after all these years. I was taught love rather than fear of a reprisal from an angry God as my husband was in his early years as a Catholic.

I am happy to know that my old church is choosing the path of understanding and compassion of people rather than condemnation.

I am sending this donation to your Outreach program for you to use it however you see fit. It is not necessarily designated for Mr. Whyte's cause but may be used for any helpful cause.

Sincerely, P.M."

PROPORTIONAL GIVING THANK YOU FROM OUR UCC CONFERENCE

"Dear Rev. Dr. Kazimierz Bem,

What a year 2020 was! Your increased generosity during this very challenging year is deeply appreciated! Because of it, and that of your 600+ sibling churches in our Conference, we helped make God's love and justice real and changed the lives of countless individuals in communities throughout southern New England. Please know that we are most grateful to you for increasing your contribution as it enabled us to fulfill our Conference's calling to make a difference in our churches' and people's lives even more. Your increased giving has not gone unnoticed!

2019 OCWM Basic Support+ Conference Dues or UCM	\$8,401
2020 Proportional Giving Contribution received by Jan. 19, 2021	\$8,402

The past year was a one in which the abiding love of God was strongly felt in the connections of friendship and prayer within and among our congregations, and our commitment to living the love and justice of Jesus by: making disciples; loving and serving our neighbors, children, and all creation; seeking racial, economic, environmental, and LGBTQ justice; bringing new life as agents of change; and partnering with all who work for the common good.

In the first year of our Conference's life, a time unprecedented in so many ways, we did far more working together than we ever could have done acting separately. By cooperating, we were able to amplify our individual resources so that we could better empower local congregations to provide life-changing ministries in their communities and live out the love and justice of Jesus.

Additionally, because our new Conference was conceived with flexibility and adaptability as core tenets, we were able to quickly shift our ministry resources to adapt to the needs that COVID-19 with all its physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual deleterious effects required, and anti-racism demanded. As individual churches and as a Conference, we were able to be life giving instruments through which God's inexhaustible, unquenchable love and compassion were made real.

Together, we will continue to support one another through these challenging times. Together, we will continue to respond to God's call to mission and ministry. Together, we will continue to be spiritually united as the body of Christ known as the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Thank you for your generosity and may God bless you and your church in your mutual ministry!

Reverend Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister
Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ"



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1 Maundy Thursday Service 7pm (live stream & in person)	2 Good Friday Service 7pm (live stream & in person)	3 Holy Saturday Sunset Service at 7:13 pm (live stream & in person in parking lot)
4 Easter Sunday 10am Worship & Communion (live stream & in person)	5 Pastor Kaz on vacation	6 Pastor Kaz on vacation	7 Pastor Kaz on vacation	8 Pastor Kaz on vacation	9 Pastor Kaz on vacation	10 Pastor Kaz on vacation
11 Second Sunday of Easter 10am Worship (live stream & in person)	12 Trustees Zoom 7pm	13 Bible Study Zoom 10am and 7pm	14 Pastors on the Vine ~ Part 4 7pm Zoom (Pastor Kaz and Rev. Jon Wortmann)	15 Our Father's Table 5pm (off site)	16	17
18 Third Sunday of Easter 10am Worship (live stream & in person) Deacons Zoom 11:30am	19	20 Bible Study Zoom 10am and 7pm	21	22 Coffee with Kaz 11:30am Zoom	23	24
25 Fourth Sunday of Easter 10am Worship (live stream & in person)	26 Council Zoom 7pm	27 Bible Study Zoom 10am and 7pm	28	29 Coffee with Kaz 11:30am Zoom	30	

**SUNDAY WORSHIP
AT 10:00AM
LIVE STREAM VIA FACEBOOK
AND IN-PERSON (WITH
LIMITED SEATING BASED ON
COVID REGULATIONS)**

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
The church building is closed due to
Covid restrictions.

**Tuesday: 8:00am – 2:00pm
Wednesday: 9:00am – 3:00pm
Thursday: 8:00am – 2:00pm**

**CHURCH OFFICE PHONE:
508-485-6297**

**CHURCH EMAIL:
office@firstchurchmarlborough.org**

**CHURCH WEBSITE:
www.firstchurchmarlborough.org**

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(Congregational)
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