

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MANSFIELD – April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2 10:15am Worship Chime Choir	3	4 10am-Noon Staff Meeting 6:30pm Steering Committee	5 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group 6:30pm QCRR Meeting	6 7:00pm Choir	7	8
9 10:15am Worship Chime Choir	10 9AM –1PM Sewing & Service	11	12 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group	13 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Worship	14 10am Set-Up & Prep for Breakfast Noon-3pm Good Friday Prayer Vigil	15 7am-11 Monthly Breakfast!
16 5:45am Easter Sunrise Service at First Baptist followed by Breakfast 10:15 Easter Sunday Worship	17	18	19 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group	20 7:00pm Choir	21	22
23 9am – New Member Informational Gathering 10:15am Worship with Guest Preacher Rev. Tamara Moreland 12pm All Family Fun Day at Mansfield Community Center	24	25	26 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group	27 7:00pm Choir	28	29 9am-Noon All Church Work Day 2pm Wedding Reception
30 10:15am Worship 2 nd Hour – Steering Committee Nominating and Board Structure Review						

FIRST CHURCH FAITH FORMATION

Beloved of God,

During the month of April, we enter into the most holy moments of the church year, those in which we recall the death and resurrection of Jesus. Over the course of the coming days, we will offer a variety of opportunities to experience the story of Jesus anew and to integrate his resurrection way of living into our own lives. May we know the blessing of God as we journey with Jesus the way of the palms, the cross, and the empty tomb.
Peace to you, Joe

Sunday, April 2 + The Fifth Sunday of Lent

First Hour gathers at 8:45am for a time of sacred art; come to engage in holy creativity. In Worship, we gather around the Welcome Table to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion as we listen for God's Word in John 11 and stories of resurrection, humanity, and life. During Worship Circle, the children also reflect on John 11 with the theme, "Hope Against All Hope." Following Worship, we will be hosting a conversation about the "Strangers: Community Identity Campaign" signs offered by the Windham Interfaith Ministry working group.

Sunday, April 9 + Palm Sunday

Our Lenten First Hour series concludes with a final opportunity to engage in sacred art at 8:45am. In Worship, we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem recorded in Matthew 21:1-11. In Worship Circle we worship with the theme, "Passion Amidst Palms."

Thursday, April 13 + Maundy Thursday

Worship begins at 7pm as we enter into the shadows, fed for the journey at Jesus' Table and recalling the final night of Jesus' life.

Friday, April 14 + Good Friday

Between 12noon and 3pm the Sanctuary will be open with a variety of prayer stations inviting engagement with Jesus' trial and crucifixion. We will also be reading through the Gospel of John over the course of the afternoon. Worshippers are welcome to come and go throughout the time as they wish to meditate and to pray.

Sunday, April 16 + Easter Sunday

At 5:45am we join with First Baptist Church of Mansfield at First Baptist to celebrate Jesus' resurrection at sunrise. Following Worship, First Baptist hosts an Easter morning breakfast.

At 10:15am we gather at First Church to celebrate resurrection life, listening for God's Word in Matthew 28:1-10, renewing our baptismal promises, and feasting at the Welcome Table.

Sunday, April 23 + The Second Sunday of Easter

In Worship, we welcome our Regional Minister, the Rev Tamara Moreland, to our pulpit. Worship Circle reflects on John 2:19-31 and the theme, "Its True!" Rev Moreland will lead a Second Hour for our ministry leaders and officers.

At 12noon, our congregation hosts an All Family Fun Day at the Mansfield Community Center Teen Room. Join in as we continue to celebrate Easter joy through play.

Sunday, April 30 + The Third Sunday of Easter

In Worship we listen for God's Word in Luke 24:13-35 and stories of journey and revelation. Worship Circle's theme is "Followers of the Way." Second Hour is hosted by the Steering Committee as they share with the congregation the Nomination Process for the proposed Governing Board, Ministry Team vacancies, and Officers.

ADMINISTRY

The AdMinistry Team has chosen a new internet service provider – one that charges less, and promises to allow WIFI access from all areas of the Church using a single password. (That password has been posted on the wall in the social hall next to the kitchen.) If anyone discovers a location from which they cannot log on, please contact Louise Wright.

Beginning April 1st, a new cleaning contractor will be providing janitorial services for the Church. AdMinistry negotiated the change, in part, to ensure timely completion of heavier janitorial work that was formerly done by member-volunteers. Jean Bell is acting as liaison with the new contractor. If you have questions or suggestions, see Jean.

Work Day Planned. The Spring Clean-up workday has been scheduled for Saturday, April 29th, from 9:00 – Noon. Volunteers from Eastern Connecticut State University's Eastern Town Pride program will be assisting, but we still very much need Church members: wear old clothes and bring brooms and rakes if you have them. **It is rumored that there will be pizza!**

MINISTRY OF CARING

The Ministry of Caring reports there was a tremendous response to the recent request for toiletries (especially the request for toothbrushes). These items are still needed, and are being collected to make up hygiene kits. The kits are sent each April to Church World Services. We also get periodic requests for supplies of various types for local organizations, so everything the Church collects goes to help fulfill particular needs.

STEERING COMMITTEE

On March 12th, the Steering Committee hosted a Second Hour discussion about proposed changes to the Church By-Laws. Another Second Hour discussion is planned for April 30th. In addition to updating the by-laws to better reflect our current structure, the Committee is proposing that the Church establish a Governing Board, which would engage in long-range planning and assume overall fiduciary responsibility. Thanks to all who attended our second hour discussion regarding next steps for our governance structure and by-laws. We received great feedback that will inform our creation of a final draft.

Ministry teams would still plan and administer programs in their respective areas of operation. Like Ministry Team Leaders, members of the proposed board would be elected by the congregation. A second draft of the proposed by-laws will be available for review prior to the April 30th Second Hour discussion.

Work Group on Conflict Resolution - Thanks to all who are participating on the work group to define our process for resolving conflict. We have had two meetings so far and plan to share a draft at a second hour meeting prior to the annual meeting in June. Please watch for this date - and contact any member of the committee if you have questions or suggestions. The Committee members are: Louise Wright, Deb Richards, Cheryl Chase, Jim McGaughey, Jean Bell, Howard Drescher, Bill Briggs, Julie Menard, Donna Clauson, Pat Felletter and Ann Plumley.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

April 30- Second Hour - Review of the recommended board structure and a nomination process

May 7- Congregational Meeting - Vote on the Nominations Process

June 11- Annual Congregational Meeting - Vote to finalize the governance structure and elect vacant ministry team members and new board members.

FIRST CHURCH INFORMATION YOU NEED

- **Thinking of joining First Church?** Speak with Pastor Joe or Pastor Ann – we'll be hosting an information gathering on Sunday, April 23rd. We will receive new members in worship on April 30th.
- **We are in need of additional ushers!** If you are interested, please be in touch with Dave Little. He can be reached at (860) 423-4674 or by e-mail: little_dna@hotmail.com

- **Looking for Photos of First Church in Action.** Sometimes, a picture really is worth a thousand words – both in a newsletter and on social media. If you have an opportunity to take a picture of a First Church activity, or of one or more of our members engaging in fellowship or community service activities, please consider forwarding the image to Wendy in the Church Office. With appropriate permission, we would like to share what we are doing with others.
- **Care Cards:** Each week we suggest several people or groups who might be strengthened with notes of caring prayer and love. Stationery is provided. We invite you to take a quick minute during fellowship time to write a note, put the recipient's name on the envelope and leave it on the table to be mailed Monday morning. Thank you for this demonstration of our connectedness and love!
- **We're a Tuna Church!** This means you are invited to put a can of tuna fish into the net bag in Fellowship Hall every once in a while. We're committed to providing 30 cans of tuna each month to our local food banks, so add a can of tuna to your shopping list. Your help is greatly appreciated! Please look for dolphin-safe tuna. It is better for all God's creatures! Also, please be aware when purchasing tuna that Greenpeace indicates that Chicken of the Sea brand uses destructive fishing practices. We are also collecting canned fruit. Let's keep up the good work!
- **Reminder:** if you need to reach Pastor Ann or Pastor Joe for an emergency, please call their cell phones: **Ann - 781-223-4914 and Joe - 608-354-3686.** Emails and texts are also another quick way to get in touch with them. They check office messages on days they are at church and irregularly on other days.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

On the environmental justice front, serious concerns are being raised about the effects that recent federal policy reversals will have on global warming. A National Climate March is scheduled for April 29th in Washington D.C. Information about transportation is available at the websites of the Sierra Club or 350CT <http://350ct.org/> In addition to marching, contributions may be made to those organizations to help meet the costs of pursuing legal challenges to the recent changes. People with questions about these efforts can contact Julia Sherman.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

04/01 JOYCE DECYK
04/03 LUCAS BLADEN
EMERSON FEMC
04/06 ADDICUS BAGWELL
04/07 KAREN DRESCHER
04/11 SARA RENZULLI
04/13 KATHLEEN HEALEY
04/15 FATIMAH SALMAN
04/16 MALLORY BAGWELL
04/18 HAMILTON HOLT
04/19 JULIA SHERMAN
04/20 JOHN BAKER
04/22 LOUISE WRIGHT
04/24 SHARON FOSTER-CHALECKI
SHANNON ROSE
04/30 JO-ANNE ROBERTS

**THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MANSFIELD (UCC)
(CONGREGATIONAL)**

Ministers

All the People of the Church

Pastors

Rev. Ann Plumley & Rev. Joseph Blotz

Music Director

Cathie Rowe

Organist

Erik Haeger

Office Administrator

Wendy O'Connor

Childcare Provider

Emily Salman

Church Office Hours Tues. - Fri. 9am-1pm – Closed Mondays

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