

April 2020
Faith UCC
970 N. Loop 337
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Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

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In Brian McLaren's book "We Make the Way By Walking" he recalls and re-imagines the disciples walking on the Road to Emmaus. They are discussing the recent events in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified and buried and the women's news that the tomb was empty and Christ was risen. They are joined by a mysterious man who they tell the story to and who interprets it in the light of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. They reach their home in Emmaus. It's late and they invite the stranger in.

They sit at the table for a simple meal. The stranger reaches out and takes the bread, gives thanks for it, breaks it and gives a piece to each of them. In an instant it hits them all at once, this isn't just any stranger this is JESUS, risen from the grave! They look down at the bread and back up again and Jesus is gone!

They all start talking at once. Was this just a vision? Was it real? They ask each other, "You saw him too, right?" "Maybe a vision means seeing into what's more real than anything else." They decide to rush back to Jerusalem that very night to tell the other disciples.

On their previous journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus they had been perplexed and sad over recent events. Now they were perplexed but tingling with life and hope. They almost felt resurrect themselves!

When they got back to Jerusalem McLaren imagines the encounter this way, "We talk as fast as we walk. We recall Jesus' words from Thursday night [Last Supper] about his body and blood. We remember what happened on Friday when his body and his blood were separated from one another on the cross. That's what crucifixion is, we realize: the slow, excruciating, public separation of body and blood. So we wonder, could it be that in the holy meal, when we remember Jesus, we are making space for his body and blood to be reunited and reconstituted in us? Could our remembering him actually re-member and resurrect him in our hearts, our bodies, our lives? Could his body and blood be reunited in us, so that we become his new embodiment? Is that why we saw him and then didn't see him -- because the place he most wants to be seen is in our bodies, among us, in us? "

Now this is truly something to ponder the next time we have communion!

Grace and Peace, Pastor Scott

Easter Drive Through Communion

Given the "shelter in place " advisory we will NOT be doing the Seder Meal on Good Friday or go to Vesper Point, or have the breakfast/Easter Egg Hunt and the regular 10:30 Easter service on April 12th.

It is going to be a very strange Easter this year for all of us. I have attended and led Easter services for the last 40 years or more without ever missing even one Easter service. Most of those years there was both an early and a late service. I will very much miss our being able to be both physically and spiritually present to one another this Easter at Vesper Point, at church for the breakfast/Easter Egg Hunt and the regular service with communion and other activities.

We will transmit a Palm Sunday and Easter service via zoom. at 10:30 a.m. It will be posted to the church website later.



At the conclusion of the Easter Sunday service I will be in the church parking lot offering drive through communion using these sealed juice and wafer cups. Drive through any time between 11:30 and noon to receive communion. You can either partake in car or take it back home.

See the article in this newsletter from our ecumenical partners with some wonderful suggestions of how to celebrate Easter at home and in doing so join sisters and brothers around the U.S. in doing so.

Per the National Council of Churches request I will ring our church bell at Noon.

April Birthdays

4-4 Valerie Oates

4-5 Mel Hutzler

4-6 Jan Hutchings

4-15 Camdyn Martinez

4-21 Taylor Leonhardt

4-23 Michelle Perry-Clark



If your birthday is not on here let Pastor Scott know so we can get you on here for next year!

Thank You Letters

A thank you letter were received from Eden Hill for the \$1,060.22 we contributed in 2019 and another for our January 2020 contribution of \$185.72..

A thank you was received from Back Bay Mission for our contribution of \$185.72 in January.

Slumber Falls Camp sent thank you letters for a contribution of \$385.44 in July 2019 and for an October 2019 contribution of 371.43.

A thank you was received from Daniel Miller for the \$50 gift card the church gave him at Christmas. (Our thanks to Daniel for playing the piano at the church!)

Some Great Idea On How to Celebrate Easter In the Midst of the Covid-19 Crisis From Our Ecumenical Partners

March 30, 2020 To the leadership and members of Christian Churches in the United States of America:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus the Christ! We come to you in a spirit of unity during this difficult period of time with an invitation to join together in witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus for all in the United States to see.

On Easter, we celebrate the power of Christ to overcome evil and death. As proclaimed in the Gospel of John, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it (John 1:5)." This is the message of Easter and, despite any differences we may have among us, this year may be the perfect time for all of us to come together to make witness to Christ's resurrecting power

. Holy Week is April 6-12 for Western Christians and April 13-19 for Orthodox Christians. If we are still being asked to remain physically separated from each other and our worship spaces, would you consider inviting your congregations to do one or more of the following as a witness to our jointly held faith in Christ?

- **Share in a home foot-washing with those with whom you are quarantined on Holy Thursday to replicate Jesus asking his disciples to serve each other.**

- **Share in prayers at home on Good Friday and blow out a candle to symbolize the crucifixion**

- **Hang white Christmas lights (or other lights, or electric candles) on Holy Saturday and turn them on Easter morning in time for what might have been your Easter Sunrise service.**

- **Hang the attached template of "He Is Risen" poster (last page) (maybe colored by your children) in your front window or on your front door**

- **Write in chalk on your driveway or sidewalk the words, "Christ is risen!" • Ring your church bells at noon on Easter Day.**

- **Step outside with the persons with whom you are quarantined and offer a prayer of thanksgiving.**

- **View an additional online service of a church of another racial or ethnic background and offer your prayers for that community.**

Attached to this letter you will find a poster you are welcome to share with your membership, and a template of a cross with a discarded shroud. We hope the United States of America will see our witness of unity this year and be invited into the resurrection faith of Easter. Share this letter to your networks and social media, and please join us. Sincerely,

Christian Churches Together, Rev. Carlos Malave

Churches Uniting in Christ, Bishop Teresa Jefferson Snorton

The National Council Churches, Mr. Jim Winkler



Faith UCC to Participate in the United Church of Christ Tree Planting Campaign for the Faith Climate Action Week

Over the course of 50 days in 2013, the United Church of Christ planted over 141,000 trees as part of Mission 4/1 Earth, which Faith UCC participated in. We planted the two large Crepe Myrtle trees on the edge of our north parking lot. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22nd, this year UCC is seeking to **plant over 50,000 trees in ten days from April 17th to 26th**. Trees, one of God's precious gifts, provide us not only with beauty, but we depend on them for the air we breathe and the stable climate we inhabit.

Faith UCC will participate in three different ways:



1. We will participate in our UCC Global Ministries partnership with Theological Education by Extension in Zambia which will train new Climate Ambassadors who will plant trees on our behalf in communities across Zambia. Faith UCC will be taking up a special offering to support this program. **For a donation of \$12 they will plant one tree on your behalf in Zambia** and you will help support this program. Deadline to donate is April 26. Write "Trees" on the memo line.

2. Faith UCC will be **planting a tree on our church grounds in memory of Ken Triesch** on Sunday, April 26th.

3. **Church members are encouraged to plant a tree in their yard or elsewhere.** You can also make a donation online to one of the 4 UCC National projects or a project of your own choosing. Here is a link for the UCC programs <https://www.ucc.org/plantatree>

The UCC is expanding the scope of its collaborative efforts in 2020, the Ministry of Environmental Justice for the United Church of Christ has partnered with Interfaith Power and Light to make this tree planting campaign part of their **Faith Climate Action Week**

SOS New Building Update

As you may or may not know, the whole "move to a new building" process began when the board realized that our current building is completely inadequate for our growing needs. The wireless internet system does not travel from the back of the building to the front because of the refrigerators and other items sucking the signal away. The front client area is completely inadequate given the need for client privacy during intake, and comfort while they wait for their food. We had to purchase a shed to help store the food we gather at the food drives. Parking is complete chaos. We have to use the church parking across the street to accommodate the cars during board meetings, and park on the street as well. The driveway is inadequate to handle the SA Food Bank trucks so they can do deliveries. Sanitation (ie hand washing and disinfection during these corona virus times) is woefully inadequate in the front area. There are probably more inadequacies but I can't think of them now.

I hope to show you in future what the space next door will look like when it's done. In so many ways it will be an improvement over what we have now, especially in the areas of clients' privacy and comfort. There are separate men's and women's bathrooms in the front area. There are several private rooms for client intake and recertification. What I see as a huge benefit will be a "drive through" arrangement so clients can drive their cars around the back and have their bags loaded into their cars in a quick and private manner, then they would drive the rest of the way around the building and out onto the street. This will not happen immediately after closing, but they have a plan to renovate the building quickly and at least get the client intake over to the new building as soon as possible. We will also be building a new warehouse on the other side of the new building to replace the one we're in now, and use our current building as storage till then. As far as funding, in addition to a loan from Prosperity Bank, we are getting grants for much of the purchase and renovation costs, and the vacant lot on the corner will be sold as soon as feasible for a considerable percentage of the overall cost. The old warehouse lot will also be sold. The realtor who facilitated the sale has donated his fee to save us money. The architect from the SALT team has donated the plans for the new space, and the team will do the renovations at no charge. Other avenues are being considered as well. There will be more information coming, but this is what I know so far. Blessings to all the volunteers while we work through this!

In Faith, Mike Z

PS from Pastor Scott: SOS has staid open during this crisis to help the neediest in our community. Faith UCC staffed it on our usual day on the third Friday of March, March 20th, from 1-4 p.m. SOS provided food for 16 families, many of them coming for the first time to receive an emergency food alotment. We will be back there on Friday, April 17th from 1-4.



Heart of Texas Association News

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Heart of Texas Association Spring Meeting has now been moved from April 4 to Saturday, May, 16th. We anticipate that the meeting will be a **Zoom video conference** instead of a face to face gathering. Because we will not have people driving long distances to meet, we will **start signing in at 10 am and begin at 10:30.** We will be finishing by lunchtime. Our thinking is that, by that time, many of us will be more familiar and comfortable with meeting electronically. It is possible that, by then, smaller groups may be able to gather at some churches to be together for the meeting, although of course that is something we cannot predict. As we get close to the meeting time, we will be sending out instructions for using Zoom. We are looking at some easy to use tutoring videos for those who are not experienced, and we will be offering an early chance to login to be sure everyone has a chance to learn how to use it. We anticipate having either one or two Ecclesiastical Councils, and we feel the sharing time among our churches will be more important than ever.

The United Church of Christ **National Youth Event** registrations for this coming summer have been **suspended indefinitely.** I have read on the Southern New England Conference website that the event is being postponed until 2022, but I have not received verification of that yet. We certainly will send out more news as we have it. Many of our youth were planning to go, and we want to support you in attending this outstanding event when it can happen safely.

At this time, Darrin Holub is scheduled to be installed as the Pastor of St John's UCC in Burton on Sunday morning, April 19th. That installation is on hold at this time. We will be announcing whether this will happen on schedule or whether it will be postponed. We look forward to joining with St. John's and Darrin to celebrate his ministry with them with joy when they are able to hold this service.

Gary Olsen, the Lead Pastor of Rolling Hills Community Church in Lago Vista, retired in February after many years of excellent ministry. The new Lead Pastor, Matt Ritter, has served the church since 2017 as the Associate and Family Pastor. Our prayers are with Gary as he begins this new phase in his life, and with Matt, and Rolling Hills as they start a new time of ministry.

Mary Wilson, Pastor of Church of the Savior in Cedar Park, was scheduled to retire this month after seventeen and a half years in ministry there, with Palm Sunday as her farewell service. Crystal Silva McCormick has been called to ministry as their new minister. In light of the COVID-19 restrictions on gathering for worship, Mary has offered to extend her ministry for a few weeks. Our prayers are with Mary, Crystal, and Church of the Savior as they navigate this time of change together. We stand with them in celebrating Mary's vibrant ministry there and in joyously welcoming Crystal as their new pastor.

Bethany Congregational in San Antonio is welcoming Jacqueline Moncrief as their new minister. Pastor Jacque will have an unusual start there as April begins, helping the church put together a service via internet to begin her ministry. Welcome, Pastor Jacque!

I am grateful for the hard work, caring, and substantial work our pastors and churches are doing to put together online worship services and to reach out to members and friends. We are in a challenging time, and our ministry with one another is perhaps more important now than ever.

Blessings in Christ, Liz Nash, Association Minister



Welcome Rev. Dr. Campbell Lovett to the South Central Conference

Submitted by the SCC Board of Directors

Beloved Friends,

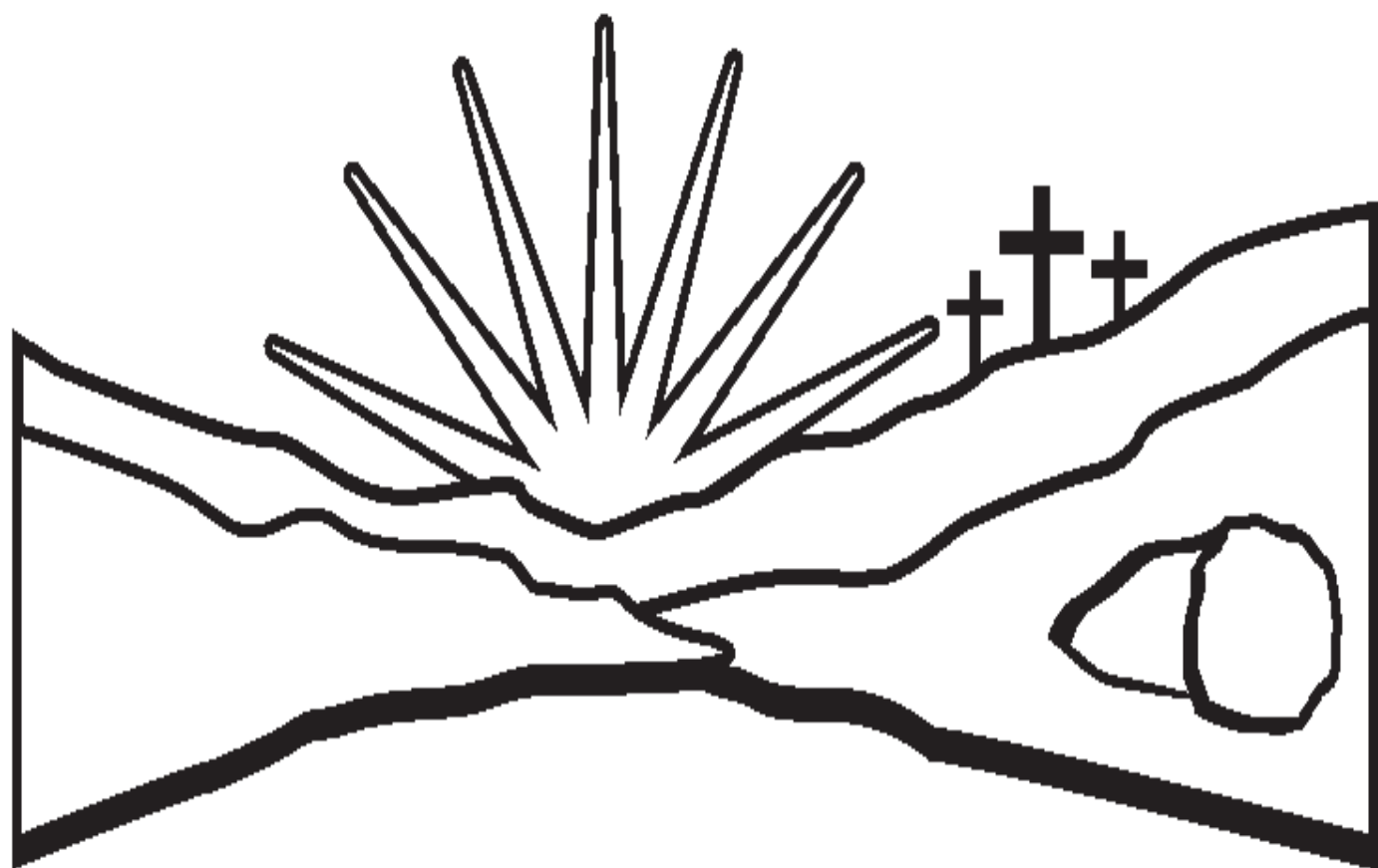
The Board is excited to announce that Rev. Dr. Campbell Lovett has been contracted as Consulting Conference Minister effective April 1, 2020. Campbell will be working remotely quarter time for SCC from April 1 – Sept 30. After which, the Board may contract with Campbell for a full-time Interim Conference Minister starting October 1, 2020 in which he will be located in the SCC area.

Campbell Lovett, a third-generation pastor, recently completed almost eight years as the Conference Minister of the Michigan Conference, United Church of Christ. Before beginning his Michigan ministry in 2012, Campbell served as an Interim Minister, Pastor, Co-Pastor, and Senior Minister at both historic and new churches in New England and North Carolina. In addition to leadership positions at Association, Conference and National settings of the UCC, Campbell has served on the boards of agencies promoting food independence and community organizing.

Campbell's ministry with Conferences is grounded in, and guided by, the statement of purpose of the Central Atlantic Conference:

The conference exists to provide its associations, churches, clergy and laity with an extensive and varied support system, challenging them to a higher, broader and deeper vision of Christian ministry; strengthening and sustaining them in their efforts to be faithful in mission, and linking them to wider church agencies and to each other. It strives to lift up and celebrate our unity in Christ, the gift of our heritage and the richness of our diversity; and to be an agent of mission in our society and the global community.

Campbell and his spouse, Eileen, a quilter and creator of liturgical stoles, reside in New Hampshire, and are the parents of two grown sons, Samuel, a university chaplain in Worcester, Massachusetts; and Nathan, a lawyer in Washington, DC.



HE IS RISEN!