

West Charlton United Presbyterian Church
1331 Sacandaga Road, Amsterdam, NY 12010

Non-Profit Organization
Galway, NY 12074
Permit #8



The Beacon



WEST CHARLTON UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 882-9874 www.westcharltonupc.org March, 2011

Pastoral Reflection:

It's at my doorstep, knocking gently but constantly, until I let it in. It refuses to relent, persisting despite the elements: Warmth, Sun, Cold, Rain and lots of Snow. Even the wind won't drive it away. Nearly each day I pass by and something inside me pauses, frozen in some sort of fear, entirely unsure of what to do about it. Why couldn't I face this long ago? It's time.

Was it always so familiar? It seems we are old friends. And every day it takes more space, in my mind and in my life. Silently it envelops me and I try to hold my breath.

I cannot prevent the inevitable. It's in my lungs, my heart and my being. It seeps into my soul. With wide eyes and shaky hands, I reach out for more. And though I struggle to know what it is to truly be at home, somehow I know I am drawing closer. Yes, I am drawn in and held. And now I learn to return the embrace.

Is the chase really over? Or will I run again?

You see, redemption comes slowly at times. Restoration takes a lifetime. One day I run full force down the narrow path. Another day I stray aimlessly on the wide open road to nowhere. It's usually lined with bright lights and distractions that seem harmless at first, but then sink their deadly hooks into me before I can fight back. Most days I am somewhere in between, my path weaving in and out of what I know to be God's will and what I know to be the result of my own complacency.

All the while if I am quiet enough I can hear the footsteps as I am pursued. It scares me, stirs me, shakes me, comforts me takes me apart and puts me back together. To be pursued is a paradox in itself, because it implies that I ran or moved away in the first place. Somehow it always comes as a surprise that God is still after me, no matter how much of a mess I've made of myself. I don't always know why I run, but I do know why I stop. It gets me every time. And as much as I grapple to learn what it is to be holy and to allow myself to be examined, judged, loved, restored and set on the right path, I also experience a faithfulness and love for me, just as I am.

In Lent I will be in the place I call home (WCUPC) and I will hear what God the LORD will speak, for God will speak peace to us and my hope is not to turn back to folly. Surely salvation is near to those who love God that glory may dwell in our community, in us. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from Heaven. (Psalm 85:8-11)

The Season of Lent

The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism at the Easter Vigil; in many communities of faith it remains a time to equip and nurture candidates for baptism and confirmation and to reflect deeply on the theme of baptismal discipleship.

The Paschal Mystery

What we hear during Lent is the power and possibility of the paschal mystery, and that the way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death. To appropriate the new life that is beyond the power of death means we must die with Christ who was raised for us. To live for Christ, we must die with him. New life requires a daily surrendering of the old life, letting go of the present order, so that we may embrace the new humanity. "I die every day!" asserts Paul (1 Corinthians 15:31). Resurrection necessitates death as a preceding act. The church's peculiar Lenten claim is that in dying we live, that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death. To be raised with Christ means one must also die with Christ. In order to embrace the resurrection, we must experience the passion of Jesus. The way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death of the "old self." In dying, we live.

Therefore, at the beginning of Lent, we are reminded that our possessions, our rulers, our empires, our projects, our families, and even our lives do not last forever. "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). The liturgies throughout Lent try to pry loose our fingers, one by one, from presumed securities and plunge us into unknown baptismal waters, waters that turn out to be not only our death tomb, but surprisingly our womb of life. Rather than falling back into nothingness, we fall back on everlasting arms. Death, how can we fear what we have already undergone in baptism?

It is the power of the resurrection on the horizon ahead that draws us into repentance toward the cross and tomb. Through the intervention of God's gracious resurrection, lifelong changes in our values and behavior become possible. By turning from the end of the "old self" in us, Lenten repentance makes it possible for us to affirm joyfully, "Death is no more!" and to aim toward the landscape of the new age. Faithfully adhering to the Lenten journey of "prayer, fasting, and almsgiving" leads to the destination of Easter.

Pray these prayers with me each day during Lent: <?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

March 13-19

(Lent 1) You planted us in an abundant garden, full of good fruit to eat. Even when we disobeyed your word, taking fruit from the tree of knowledge, you loved us still, covering our nakedness and forgiving our sin. (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-7)

(Lent 1) Tested for forty days in the wilderness, Jesus taught us to seek nourishment in your word, to worship and serve you alone, and to commit our lives to your providence and protection. (Matt. 4:1-11)

(Lent 1) Give us the free and abundant gift of your grace, so that sin and death may have no dominion over us, but we might have forgiveness and fullness of life in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 5:12-19)

March 20-26

(Lent 2) You made a covenant with our ancestor Abraham, promising to make of him a great nation, and a blessing to all the families of the earth. (Gen. 12:1-4a)

(Lent 2) Out of your great love for the world, you sent Jesus, not to condemn, but to save, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but have eternal life, born again from above by water and the Spirit. (John 3:1-17)

(Lent 2) By faith, make us children of Abraham, justified by the righteousness and grace of Christ, so that we may share the blessings of your covenant people. (Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17)

March 27-April 2

(Lent 3) Even in the wilderness of sin you guide our way. Though we quarrel with one another and question your promises, you satisfy our thirst with water from a stone. (Exodus 17:1-7)

(Lent 3) Jesus offers living water for our thirst, a wellspring gushing up to eternal life. We believe that he is the Messiah, the Savior of the world, and we seek to worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:5-42)

(Lent 3) In our suffering, give us the strength to endure; through our endurance, build in us the character of faith; and by the gift of faith, fill our hearts with a hope that will never disappoint us. (Rom. 5:1-11)

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom

Flowers for the Chancel

If you are interested in giving flowers to be placed on the Chancel on a Sunday during the year— please contact Sonja Greenhill at 882-9462. Please fill out the form and give it to Sonja or mail it to her. Please check with her to make sure no one else has chosen the Sunday you would like to give. The flowers can be taken by the person giving them, or they can be given to a person who is a shut-in or someone not feeling well.

The following florists will deliver on Saturdays. You do not need to be here when they are delivered. The flowers will be placed in front of the cross in the Sanctuary.

Sweetbriar Florist located on the corner of Lake Road and Hermance by Galway Lake : 882-5132 or 882-3676.

Country Florist is located at 225 Kingsley Road in Burnt Hills: 399-2850

Bloomfields Florist is located on Rte 30 in Amsterdam, just past Pizza hut going north: 842-2000

March	
Flowers for the Chancel given by the following:	
March 6	Louis and Georgia Haller "In honor of loved ones"
March 13	Hume and Christine Donnan "In memory of their Parents"
March 20	Helen and John King "In honor of loved ones"
March 27	Karen and Kevin Straut " Good Wishes for Easter"

Flowers for the Chancel

I, We : _____ Would like to have

flowers placed on the Chancel on _____ (Date).

Any special celebration or memorial for which you are providing these flowers:

Please give to Sonja Greenhill. Sonja can be reached at 882-9462.

March

Lay Readers

- 6 Susan Phemister
13 Penny Heritage
20 GERALYN De La Fleur
27 Marcie Page



Greeters: Mary Jane Armer & Marilyn Miller

Ushers: Karen & Kevin Straut
Lou Haller & Chris Nelson

Happy Birthday to all those who have a birthday in March including the following:

Chris Donnan, 3rd
Olivia Cooper, 7th
Megan Vrooman, 7th
Neila Nowicki, 11th
John King (Ballston Spa), 19th
Artie Tompkins, 19th
Amy Shadlock, 27th
Gloria Wood, 27th
Margi Jones, 28th
Serenity O'Brien, 29th



Report of the Deacons

The Board of Deacons is responsible for the church's ministry of care and hospitality. Among its tasks are preparing the elements for communion (22 times in 2010), hosting fellowship following worship (generally monthly, with weekly fellowship shared during the summer months) and delivery of donated food to the Galway Food Pantry once a month.

The deacons also send cards to church members for birthday and other occasions including illness, bereavement, graduations, and times when encouragement is needed. They also prepare and deliver meals for people who need that help due to illness or disability and visit people in hospitals and nursing homes. The deacons arrange for the church's leadership of worship services at Maplewood Manor, the Saratoga County Nursing Home 4 or 5 times a year.

The deacons also have at least one representative on all the standing committees of the church and change the paraments (the cloth on the communion table and pulpit) to coincide with the colors of the church calendar and deliver Chancel flowers to shut-ins when they are asked to do so.

In 2010, the deacons were Suzanne Arnold, Sharon Bellamy, Mary Goldstein, Monika Gonzalez, Georgia Haller, Helen King, Linda McConchie, Megan Vrooman and Jean Weed. Terms have ended for Megan and Georgia and we thank them for their dedicated service.

~ WCUPC March 2011 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Session Meets 7:00 PM	2 Deacons Meet 7:00 PM		4	5
6 COMMUNION 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service Sunday School & Child Care 11:45 AM Adult Bible Study Flowers: Lou & Georgia Haller	7	8 Louise Smith Circle 9:30 AM	9 ASH WEDNESDAY 7PM Service	10 Work Day/Night 9-11 AM 6-8 PM	11 World Day Of Prayer	12
13 COMMUNION 1 st Sunday in Lent 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service Sunday School & Child Care 11:45 AM Adult Bible Study Flowers: Hume & Chris Donnan	14	15	16 Helen Killough Circle 7:00 PM	17	18	19
20 COMMUNION 2 nd Sunday in Lent Food Pantry Sunday 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service Sunday School & Child Care 11:45 AM Adult Bible Study Flowers: Helen & John King	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 COMMUNION 3 rd Sunday in Lent 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship Service Sunday School & Child Care 11:45 AM Adult Bible Study Flowers: Kevin & Karen Straut	28	29	30	31	Notes:	