

Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD
PASTOR: REV. DR. ROBERT R. LAROCHELLE

IN THIS ISSUE

- A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR
- TREASURER'S REPORT
- CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT
- TRUSTEES REPORT
- DEACON'S REPORT
- IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH
- A LIGHTER MOMENT ...
- BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
- MISSION
- SUNDAY SCHOOL / CHRISTIAN ED
- THE BARN
- EARTH DAY
- OTHER ACTIVITIES
- CALENDAR

A Message From Our Pastor

As you read and I write this report, we are drawing near to the joyful feast of Easter. The experience of Easter is at the heart and soul of the experience of Christian faith. With this in mind, what is really important to realize is that these special holidays (a word drawn from the phrase “holy days”) must not be seen as “one day” experiences. The joy attached to days such as Christmas and Easter are really the source for all of us taking the meaning and depth of those days and living them out through all of the other days of our lives.

Living out this Christian faith which we affirm in weeks we call holy and a holy day we call Easter all takes place through a variety of expressions and activities. Most importantly, it takes place through the way we live out our everyday lives. HOWEVER, as those

who place faith in the life and the teachings of Jesus, it is important for us to know that living out this faith of ours, this Christian faith, is really all about the willingness to both embrace what Jesus taught and to do our very best to put this all into real life practice. Recognizing this includes the reality that this is not always easy, especially in a world which all too often draws on hatred, bigotry and selfishness in the ordinary living out of life.

This is why it is so important for those of us who are connected to a church to do the best that we can to be what I would call JESUS CENTRIC. Religion is often identified with rules, regulations, laws and doctrines. To be honest, there is room for this in the life of one's religious faith. HOWEVER (and this is important), first and foremost for those of us who in our freedom call ourselves Christians, is a serious, in depth reflection on what Jesus TAUGHT and the impact his teachings had on WHAT HE DID.

Sometimes, this reflection can be quite confusing. This is why it is important for several things to take place in the living out of our faith:

--Making time for prayer. This might include helpful, formal prayer, the use of good meaningful prayer resources (I will explore this in further length as we go forward) and simple, quiet moments in which we acknowledge and direct ourselves into the presence of the divine, that which Dietrich Bonhoeffer described as “the beyond in our midst”.

-- Finding ways to put our faith and our prayer into practice. The quite familiar question: “What would Jesus do?” serves as a helpful resource for all of us as we ask questions about how Jesus lived His life and why He did what He did.

--The starting point for prayer is to be open in mind and in heart and to be straightforward and sincere. It is NOT to be caught in simple routine. Prayer is centered in communication from our hearts!

While at the time of reading this, the official feast of Easter is drawing to an end, EASTER ITSELF IS NOT. The experience THAT IS EASTER constitutes the center of this faith we call Christian, this Resurrection faith that impacts both our personal lives and the life of this community that goes by the name of church.

As I conclude this report, I encourage you to both read and to reflect on this amazing passage from the 24th chapter of Gospel of Luke, verses 13—35, written to describe an episode that took place AFTER Jesus was CRUCIFIED, DIED and WAS BURIED (words from the Nicene Creed).

This passage is posted below.....

May you rejoice in this season of Easter,
Pastor Bob
Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle

PS: Citing the Bible scholar John Dominic Crossan about the passage below, consider his words: “Emmaus ALWAYS happens”

Luke 24: 13-35 The Walk to Emmaus

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” 19 He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.” 25 Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. 28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” 35 Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

May we continue to live out the joy that is Easter,

Pastor Bob

Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle
Designated Term Pastor

Treasurer’s Report

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 224.00	\$ 250.00	90%
R22—Pledges	\$ 2,729.00	\$ 3,166.67	860%
R23—Contributions	\$ 1,150.00	\$ 875.00	131%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 352.34	\$ 1,933.33	20%
Capital Campaign	\$ 454.00	\$ 500.00	91%

Thru February 29

Church Council

Church Council met on Tuesday evening March 19th at 6:30 and discussed numerous items the following are some of interest:

- Pastor Bob reports that he has made home visitations and he spent time on a recent Sunday morning in the Sunday School.
- He has been pleased with the attendance at his educational programs held after church and is very grateful to those who have attended and participated
- He also discussed the services available during Holy Week including in person, online and ecumenical services
- On Easter morning prior to church, he will lead a service for the residents of Woodland Springs at that facility
- The Treasurer reports all bills and obligations have been met the ending checkbook balance is \$2503.50
- The Clerk reports that our membership number has been reduced by 2 and stands at 62. One loss was the passing of Dan Irish and the second was a transfer to another church by Debbie Reynolds
- The Diaconate reports that there are currently 6 households on our “check in” list and flowers and an Easter card will be delivered to each of them.
- We have a new deacon starting after Easter, Teresa Raymond has volunteered to help us out as we were understaffed. Thank you, Teresa.
- There will be gluten free wafers for communion available for those who cannot have gluten.
- Palms have been ordered for Palm Sunday
- Trustees report that Banner water has tested our water and it is fine. This test is necessary in order to serve food etc. to the public
- Spring Work Day will operate as the fall one did, there will be a sign up sheet with jobs that need to be done and you can sign up and complete that job at your convenience.
- The oven has been cleaned and a new igniter installed, a new SOP explaining the steps to lighting it will be posted soon.
- The Barn will open for the first time this year on April 13th weather permitting
- Financial Secretary Reports that income is still running behind compared to the same period last year, we are down by \$1438.04
- Sunday School/Christian Ed. Reports an addition to our Sunday School and now have 11 children enrolled
- The Nursery is ready to go; no one has use for it as of yet but it is open and ready to use
- Pastor Bob met the children in Sunday School on March 10th, had a lesson on the Last Supper and communion, had a great question and answer session with the kids
- March 15th had movie night in the church library with 10 children and 12 adults’ very nice time
- Looking ahead, explore the possibility of a Youth Group
- In late April/early May we’ll go on a hike after church in Willington
- Michele Sedor is planning a summer get together with the children and families at her Sun Valley spot
- We will be doing a tour of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry with interested families so the children can better understand why it’s important to donate to them
- Lastly, we will reach out to our people on the check in list to see if any of them need our help with spring clean up

That is some of the highlights of our council meeting for March.

Bruce Ladr
Moderator

Trustees

Banner water came and took a water sample. Everything tested fine for well water and we will continue to get that done yearly.

Work day this Spring will be similar to how it was last Fall. A sign up sheet will be put in the kitchen and all volunteers can do their roles when they have the time to do so. This was pretty successful last year.

Both furnaces were inspected and we received our boiler certificates. All of our yearly maintenance is complete except for our fire extinguisher inspection which happens in September.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Greaves Board of Trustees Chair

Deacons

There are currently six households on the check-in list for diaconate. Easter is one of our major holidays where we have deacons bring something to let them know we are thinking of them, and chat. We will be delivering Easter flowers to those households with cards, before Easter.

We have a new deacon, who will be starting after Easter. Thank you to Teresa, for volunteering to join diaconate!

We have purchased gluten free wafers for Communion, from the same company we get our communion cups from. We now have someone who attends weekly, who has Celiac's disease and cannot have gluten. Please know that these are also allergen free, for any guest we get who may have food allergies. We will check on the box to be sure they can have it, if any guest has a dietary restriction.

Finally, as it is coming up this Sunday, please know that palms have been ordered for Palm Sunday, from The Growth Company in Enfield. Last year they provided us with super fresh palms, and it is good to be able to support more small businesses.

Submitted sincerely in the Peace of Christ,

Sarah R.G
Head Deacon

In And Around The Church ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers of healing for Christine ... prayers of safe travel for Kara and the Stafford High group touring Washington DC ... prayers for the people of Palestine and for an end to the armed conflict in the Middle East ... continued prayers for Donna, Doris and Sarah ... prayers for Lucy who suffered a fall ... prayers that Al's tests go well ... prayers that Dick's chemo goes well ... prayers for Mark, Al, Melissa, Liam and Austin ... prayers for Joe and Florence Demars... prayers for Bethany's last weeks of pregnancy and a safe delivery ... prayers for Lulu's father to be healed as God wills it ... continued prayers of healing for Eddie Breton and Bob Campbell ... prayers for answers to serious health issues my brother-in-law is having ...prayers for better health ... prayers for the family of Victoria Avery ... prayers for safety for Alex as he obtained his driver's license last week ... prayers for Ginny, Pat and Christine ... prayers for healing for Bob and Mary Kay ... prayers for World Peace ... prayers for all who struggle with addiction and mental illness and their families ... prayers for the Dignazio, Krar and Raynock families ... prayers for the family of our dear friend Chuck Flynn who lost his battle with pancreatic cancer ... prayers for Auntie B on the delivery of baby McCarthy ... prayers for Josie on chemo ... prayers for our Christian brother and sisters in Israel ... prayers for my family and mom, Claire, as she ages ... prayers for the children suffering in war ... thanks for all my blessings ... prayers of thoughtful joy on what

would have been my 47th wedding anniversary ...

Celebrations: a joy that Aiden is home for the week ... joy for the Cheny Tech boys basketball team in the State Championship ...

A Lighter Moment. . .



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Thanks to Benoit Paquette 01-08-2002

HE'S BACK UP IN HEAVEN WITH HIS FATHER NOW, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ... "WHAT GOES UP, MUST COME DOWN"

Birthdays And Anniversaries

April Birthdays

April	1	Kristina Depault
	9	Andrew Greaves
	12	Bruce Ladr
	17	Bill Gowdy
	19	Alaina Bolieau
	19	Jayce Sharma

April Anniversaries

None

Missions

Huge thanks to you, our church family, for providing the items and cash to allow the Crystal Lake Food Pantry to offer a complete Easter Family Dinner to six families who are experiencing food insecurities at this time. Erin, the food bank coordinator was so grateful for our contributions. We also delivered twenty-six pounds of miscellaneous food items to them for their ongoing food pantry service. Let's see if we can exceed that amount for the April pantry delivery. Your donations may be put in the red shopping cart located in the Narthex on any Sunday although we have chosen the third Sunday of every month to be our "Food Bank Sunday".

Delivery will be that Tuesday morning. We are blessed with our ability to reach out to those in need and we thank you all for your generosity.

In God's Love,
Your Missions Committee, Judy, Linda and Michele

Spring Flea Market

The Spring Flea Market will be held near the Barn on May 10 and 11, 2024, with rain dates May 27 and 28. The barn will also be open that weekend.

Linda

Christian Ed / Sunday School

We are now at 11 students in our Sunday School. Due to this growth we added three teacher aides to help out Judy, Kathy, and myself when we have more than 5 students in our classrooms. Thank you Sarah, Michele, and Sue for volunteering.

As a reminder our nursery is open and ready to go for anyone who wants to use it. We were wondering if anyone had a baby monitor set for us to borrow. We wanted to set it up in the sanctuary and the nursery so any parent or volunteer could hear the sermon. Please let us know if you have one for us to use or test out.

On March 15th we had a movie night in the library which included 10 kids and 12 adults. It was a lot of fun and we look forward to doing more things together.

Andrew, Kathy, and Judy Christian Ed

The Barn

Hey everyone the Barn will first open Saturday April 13th. If anyone has any donations please call me at 860 716 7057. You can also leave them under the porch next to the Little Shop and text me/ or anyone who has a barn key so someone can make sure they don't get rained on. I plan to open once a month but if anyone else ever wants to open please feel free to do so. The dates it will be open are

April 13th(rain date April 27th)

The May Flea Market

June 8th (rain date June 22nd

Duck race in July

August 10th (rain date August 17th)

September Flea Market

October to be determined based on weather.

Thank you, Andrew

Activities at Other Churches in Town

St. Edward Church Ladies Guild is sponsoring a Polish Dinner night. It will be held at 5:00 PM on Saturday, April 13, 2024 in St. Edward Hall, 27 Church Street, Stafford Springs. Donation will be \$15 per person. Tickets are available by calling the Parish Office at 860-684-2705 or Pat at 860-684-9419.

Grace Episcopal Church is sponsoring a Spaghetti Dinner. It will be held on Saturday April 13, 2024 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM in our lower parish hall at 7 Spring Street, Stafford Springs. Donation will be \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 10 and under. Reservations can be made by calling 860-684-2824 by April 12th. There will also be a raffle.

Lighting of the Cross for April

In loving memory of **Barbara Kellem** by her family

Town-Wide Clean-Up/Earth Day

On Saturday, April 20th (Earth Day), the town of Stafford is doing their yearly Town Clean-up! Choose any area of town that needs some TLC- there will be a sign-up to collect litter from the church grounds as well. You can grab garbage bags and other supplies from Hyde Park starting at 8am, and dispose of the litter at Hyde Park until noon. Then from noon until 2pm, Stafford will celebrate the clean-up and Earth day with a picnic in the park.

Our church will have a table there and, besides our yearly pot-a-plant station, we hope to educate passerby on environmental issues that people in the congregation may be passionate about. Please get in touch with Sarah if you have an environmental issue you are passionate about!

Sincerely,
Sarah Roman Greaves



April 2024

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Little Shop - 10 - 2
7 Worship Service 9:30 AM	8	9	10	11	12	13 Little Shop - 10 - 2 Barn Open
14 Worship Service 9:30 AM	15	16	17	18	19	20 Little Shop - 10 - 2 Earth Day Activities
21 Worship Service 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday	22	23 Church Council 6:30 PM	24	25	26	27 Little Shop - 10 - 2
28 Worship Service 9:30 AM	29	30				

Calendar