

**The Pioneer**  
**'Preparing for others to follow'**

Preble Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
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April 2023

**A Simple Prayer**

Lord make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred....let me sow love.  
Where there is injury....pardon.  
Where there is discord....unity.  
Where there is doubt....faith.  
Where there is error....truth.  
Where there is despair....hope,  
Where there is sadness....joy.  
Where there is darkness....light.  
O Devine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled....as to console  
To be understood as understand  
To be loved....as to love.  
For  
It is in giving....that we receive  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
It is in dying...that we are born to eternal life.

....St. Francis of Assisi  
A Prayer of Challenge

## MY THOUGHTS TRAVELING THE ROADS OF LIFE

I had the pleasure of working with one of our magnificent churches this past weekend on conflict and transitions at a snow-covered retreat center in the central-ish part of the state. It was everything reminiscent of a Thomas Kinkade painting. Everything was peaceful, serene, and had an overarching feeling of calm and all that is right with the world. Upon arriving, I stood outside of my car, I breathed the air in deeply, closed my eyes, and appreciated the natural gift around me. Then, I headed inside to join everyone else where I was greeted with hellos and questions of my drive to the center. I started with how glorious the scenery was and then someone asked about the roads. Without a second thought, my mind shifted to rattling off the myriad of issues I had reaching the meeting spot. The snow, which was so lovely to look at from my car window upon arrival, was a pain in the butt to drive through as it was intermittently falling and melting. I would drive through a portion of the trip with my windshield wipers on and then suddenly realize the snowing had stopped. I would feel a sense of relief that I could see the road ahead more clearly only to then feel the tires slide just a bit when I needed to hit the brakes. It was snowing from above, but the melted snow was creating pockets of ice and puddles of water in a variety of places that couldn't be tracked. "Dang!", I said out loud, "You wouldn't think I loved being here as much as I do if you only heard the story of the journey! You would think I could curse this place and never want to return!"

But that wasn't the case. Despite the icy patches, despite the unpredictable weather, and even despite the having to drive over downed power lines – when I got there, it was beautiful. AND, there was still more work to do. The journey wasn't over – I was just able to reach a plateau and take a deep breath. Enjoy the moments of peace I was granted before getting back to work. As it turns out, we did some intensive and deeply therapeutic work that was engaging and energizing. Then, guess what? Tired, hungry, and feeling the weight of the day all we wanted to do was eat and tuck in for the night. But no one was staying overnight at the retreat center. We all had journeys to make that would take us back through the snow, across the ice, and over the downed power lines. There was no way to escape that. The only thing we could control was how we responded to the moments of rest we were given.

Stress isn't optional. Difficult journeys aren't always mappable. AND still, God gives us moments to stop and breathe. To pause and take in how far we've come. To do more work in order to prepare and be better equipped for the next leg. The journey up was a gift. The rough terrain and the uncertain curves allowed me to understand that I can be both frightened and keep moving forward. The still moment outside of my car was a gift. To show me that although frazzled I can simultaneously be grateful for the signs and wonders around me that remind me to breathe and be aware of ongoing life. The work done with the group was a gift. I would be lying if I didn't acknowledge that even as a facilitator, I need teaching. God allowed me to journey with them through their conflict and transition so that I could not forget that to be human means to always encounter conflict and transition. Neither should be avoided for a healthy existence. Lastly, the drive back was a gift. It was easier this time around because I had driven the road before. I wasn't so familiar with it that I knew every twist and turn – but I was familiar enough with it to know that safely reaching my destination was possible.

What was your latest journey? What part of the trip are you on? Is the road ahead unknown and frightening? Are you being given a moment to take it all in? Are you being asked to do the work in order to keep you fueled for the future? Or, are you traveling a road you've already been down that still requires faith and tenacity? Well, to be clumsily cliché, I will just say that from my perspective: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey – you are welcomed by God with signs and wonders abounding to affirm your current location.

- Rev. Shernell J. Edney Stilley  
Associate Conference Minister

*Easter 2023*

*Why Do You Weep? John 20:1-18*

*Mary Magdalene goes to Jesus' tomb. He is not there!*

*But there are angels there, asking her, "Why do you weep?"*

*Why would any of us weep under these circumstances?*

*The death of a close loved one.*

*Religious powers reigning that orchestrated this death.*

*Political powers that manipulated the facts and that caused this death.*

*Circumstances out of our control.*

*Friends who can't be trusted.*

*Body is missing.*

*Dreams shattered.*

*That feeling of being abandoned by God.*

*We are blinded by our grief.*

*And yet...*

*This is but a moment. But it's THE moment.*

*The moment that reveals the illusion of what we think Life is.*

*The moment that truly unveils the grand plan of Jesus' presence as a human being, here on Earth.*

*The moment that gifts us more than a glimpse into the heart of The Divine, but rather extends an open-armed, joyous and loving invitation into the Oneness that is Divine Living Spirit.*

*Thy kingdom come, thy Will be done, transforming us on Your Earth, our place of physical existence, to us in Your Heaven, our place of spiritual existence, where we are truly One.*

*Let us be joyful and celebrate!*

*Blessings of Joyous Easter ~*

*Blessings ~*

*Martha Gallagher*



***Flowers Given in Memory or to Honor Loved Ones  
For Easter Morning Service***

Steve Briggs - In Honor of Millie Briggs

Bradley Baldwin - In Memory of Lois Waffner

Richard Martin - In Memory of Jean Martin  
and in memory of Susan Martin

Janet Jeffers - In Memory of Peter Jeffers

Trudy Masters - In Memory of Loved Ones

Cindy and John Steger - In Memory of William and Virginia Steves and  
Murray and Dorothy Steger

Marilyn Stoker - In Memory of Max Stoker

Wes and Sue Swayze - In Memory of Loved Ones

Dan and Pat Twentyman - In Honor of Marilyn Stoker

Par Twentyman and Mary Podsiedlik - In Memory of Bill and Betty Runge

Jeanne Underwood - In Memory of William T. Underwood

Philip Wetmore Jr. - In Memory of Philip Wetmore Sr. and Lillian Wetmore

Lee Higginbotham - In Memory of Joyce Buckannan

Chris and Karen White - In Memory of Lynn and Isabel Webb  
In Memory of David White

Cheryl, Wendy, PJ and Debbie Whiteman - In Loving Memory of  
Paul Whiteman



*April Worship Schedule*

April 2<sup>nd</sup>: Lois Haas  
9<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Vern Groves  
16<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Brenda McCutcheon  
22<sup>nd</sup>: Service of Remembrance for  
Jean Stoker  
23<sup>rd</sup>: Rev. Barbara Schwartz  
30<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Barbara Schwartz



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Thank you for supporting our missions each month.



Activities for Preble Seniors  
April 2023

April 5<sup>th</sup>: Luncheon at noon with speaker,  
Carrie Kane on Nutrition  
15<sup>th</sup>: Cards @ 6:00pm with Pizza  
19<sup>th</sup>: Luncheon @ 6:00pm with  
Cards/Bingo  
26<sup>th</sup>: Exercise at 1:00pm

ALL EVENTS ARE AT THE PREBLE  
FIRE STATION.



Here is an update on what the Trustees have been doing. We recently got quotes on new tile flooring for the food pantry, utility kitchen and men's bathroom in the front foyer. That project will get started on the first week in April. All three floors will require a total of 675 tiles at a cost of \$7.00 per tile. That includes removal of old tile and installation of new tile. If you would like to buy a tile at \$7.00 to cover this cost, please send a check to PUCC, designating flooring.

In other news, the manse received a new coat of paint on all the rooms inside and the wood floors have been refinished. We are now awaiting new tenants. Thank you to Cathy Scott for helping with the painting.

## April Celebrations



- April 1: Lou Scott  
5: Shirley Coffin  
6: Jack Brown  
12: Gab Gilfilian  
16: Kevin and Julie Baldwin  
Anniversary  
19: Brian Masters  
20: Susan Swayze  
22: Bailey Baldwin  
26: Greg Gallup  
28: John Henry Brown



*Joy in the Morning*

*By Joy Niswender*

In his book of daily meditations {"Listening to Your Life"}, Frederick Buechner quotes a different version of the Twenty-Third Psalm that I found fascinating:

"God keeps me as a shepherd keeps his flock. I want for nought. I bleat with hunger and he pastures me in meadows green. I'm thirsty, and he leads me forth to water cool and deep and still. He hoists me to my feet when I am weak. Down goodly ways he guides me with his crook, for he himself is good. Yea, even when I lose my way in shadows dark as death, I will not fear, for he is ever close at hand with rod and staff to succor me."

A simple version, it retains, in down-to-earth language, the basic truths, affirming that Christ's guidance and love for his children can see them through anything life can through at them. Refreshment and courage

for the journey can be ours by simply asking, and we need not travel in fear. We all need to be reminded of that in those times when we feel abandoned. The sun will shine again, and we need not dwell in the dark.

### A "Souper" Thank You

Dear Friends at Preble Congregational Church,

Thank you for your "Souper" donation to the food pantry. We will put it to good use helping those in our community who are in need.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl Paccia  
St. Leo's/St. Patrick's  
Food Pantry



#### 2023 Church Council Dates

Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm  
Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm  
Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm  
Annual Meeting  
January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024