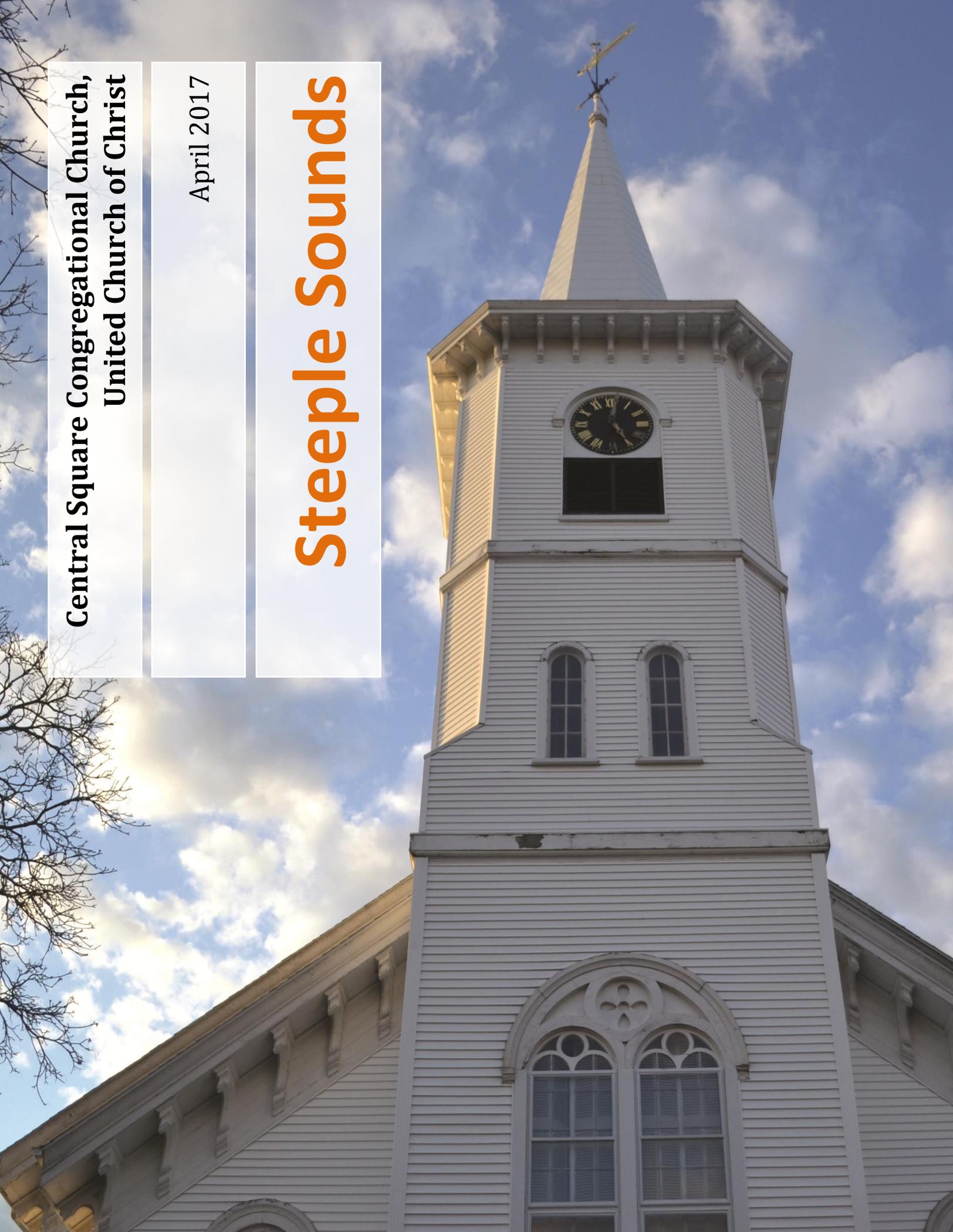


**Central Square Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ**

April 2017

Steeple Sounds



From The Desk of Rev. Beth



I'm not a big fan of pop music, but recently I found the Rihanna song "We Found Love in a Hopeless Place" stuck in my head. Jogging on the treadmill with each step pulsing the beat, I kept singing (internally, of course) "we found love in a hopeless place". As I repeated the chorus, something came over me and I was filled with emotion.

Suddenly, I was standing with Mary Magdalene at the tomb of Jesus.

In the Gospel of John we are told that it was early in the morning on the first day of the week that she went to the place where her dear friend's body had been buried. It was still dark. She found that the giant stone barring the entrance had been moved and his body was no longer present. Mary assumed someone had stolen it and she ran to alert the other followers of Jesus.

It was a hopeless place. Here was the one - many thought he was The One - who had come to free their people. The One who had come to bring hope, healing, liberation. But now he was just like all the others - dead, gone, destroyed. And to add insult to injury, the Empire was not even willing to leave his body in peace. After the state-sponsored execution, their teacher's body was missing. What a horrific scene.

And yet.

Into this hopeless and horrific scene, the God of our ancestors was Still-Speaking. God was still breathing love into even those most hopeless of places. As Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, a stranger approached and asked "Why are you crying?" She thought he was the gardener and immediately began to beg for help, "Sir, if you know where his body is, please tell me!"

The stranger said just one word: "Mary."

Mary - a name that means both "beloved of God" and "bitter." The name of Jesus's mother. The name of more than one of his dear friends. The name of Moses's sister. Beloved and bitter.

When Mary Magdalene heard her name, she suddenly knew. She knew without a doubt that once again love had come. Even to the most hopeless of places. Perhaps especially in the most hopeless of places.

In Christ's Peace,
Rev. Beth

From the Board of Deacons

"Beloved Is Where We Begin"

—Jan Richardson

If you would enter into the wilderness, do not begin without a blessing.

Do not leave without hearing who you are: Beloved, named by the One who has traveled this path before you.

Do not go without letting it echo in your ears, and if you find it is hard to let it into your heart, do not despair. That is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise this blessing will free you from danger, from fear, from hunger or thirst, from the scorching of sun or the fall of the night.

But I can tell you that on this path there will be help.
I can tell you that on this way there will be rest.

I can tell you that you will know the strange graces that come to our aid only on a road such as this, that fly to meet us bearing comfort and strength, that come alongside us for no other cause than to lean themselves toward our ear and with their curious insistence whisper our name:

Beloved.
Beloved.
Beloved.

Holy Week Worship

Sunday, April 9

Palm Sunday Worship – 10am (CSCC Sanctuary)

Thursday, April 13

Maundy Thursday Communion Service – 7pm (CSCC Sanctuary)

Saturday, April 15

Holy Saturday Scripture Meditation – 9am (CSCC Sanctuary)

Sunday, April 16

Easter Sunrise Service – 6:30am (Hanson Farm)
Easter Sunday Worship – 10am (CSCC Sanctuary)

From the Board of Trustees

FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES – SAYING GOODBYE TO AN OLD FRIEND

We're saying goodbye to an old friend. A warm place where many prayers were said by many different people and many refreshments were served at small group meetings, everything from hot tea in formal tea cups to medium priced wine in plastic wine glasses.

In January of 1931, the members of Central Square Congregational Church purchased the house at 81 Union St. to serve as the parsonage for current and future pastors called to our church. I do not know where the parsonage was before that or if there was one. Maybe our current History and Memorials Committee could search our records and tell us.

Eighty six years later, on Sunday, March 12, 2017, the members of Central Square Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, voted to sell the parsonage and to establish a housing allowance for its current and future settled pastors. We joined the 74% of UCC churches that no longer own a parsonage and who pay a housing allowance. We believe by now almost all members know the reason that we made this change. But to reiterate, Pastor Beth and her husband have purchased their own home. We have established a housing allowance of \$1800/month.

With the expiring expenses of upkeep and maintenance on the parsonage, homeowners insurance on the parsonage, the annual Equity Payment we made to our pastors over the last many, many years, etc., and adding in the housing allowance annual total of \$21,600, we will have an estimated needed annual increase of somewhere between \$3000 and \$5000 dollars in the budget. While this is not the end of the world financially, we would hope that our members will close this gap with their pledged giving.

Two HUGE celebrations go with this change. First, we have 13 new members (can I get an AMEN!) who hopefully understand and are in a position to pledge their financial support to the church during our upcoming 2017 to help close that small gap and second, we will have a mortgage burning party on our front lawn sometime this spring. Can I get an amen and an AMEN!!

Super excited about our future, I am,
John Sharland, for the Board of Trustees

Women's Guild & Fellowship

Come Join Us!



Please join the Women's Guild and Fellowship on **Wednesday April 5th** as our own Barbara Morey will present a travelogue on her "Journey to Jerusalem". Reflect back with us 2000 years to when Jesus made his journey to Jerusalem. Refreshments will be served before and during the presentation.

Our business meeting will begin at 6:30 and end at approximately 7:15. Finalized plans for the May Annual Banquet will be announced. Payments may be made at the April meeting.

The Women's Guild and Fellowship would like to thank all members of the congregation who came forward to help us with our Church World Service clean up bucket mission. The supplies in these buckets enable people to manage the overwhelming job of cleaning up after a flood, hurricane, tornado or other disaster here in the United States. In only one coffee hour, non Guild church members volunteered enough supplies to fill one of the buckets to be donated, valued at \$75.

We also want to thank everyone for all their donations to the Annual Spring Rummage Sale. Without the help and cooperation of the entire congregation, we could not do nearly as well. As Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much". So thanks again to all!

Gail Wright, 508-697-7159

Lynn Pietras, 508-824-0855

From the Board of Outreach



Love. Grow. Serve.

When you think about it, and you read our mission statement, there's not much that this church does that is not some kind of Outreach. Whether it's the Heifer project involving Christian Ed, or the Deacons and parish care, it is the CSCC reaching out. Even keeping the church looking nice outside by mowing the lawn and landscaping, which is part of what the Trustees do, to cooking and cleaning inside the church, which the breakfast crew and the Sexton do. It's all Outreach!

Currently your Outreach committee is made of up Kim Wallace, Jack Melcher, David Hanson (members), Rob Basler, Bill O'Neil (co-chairmen), and 3 new perspective members Connie Chandler, Andrea Joseph and Jasvir MacIntosh. Rev. Beth Stotts attends the Outreach meetings as well.

Rev. Beth is working with Outreach so the committee becomes more organized and effective. As a member of the committee, I've found all we do overwhelming. It is challenging to categorize all the outreach that we do. For example, a lot of outreach involves special collection of money. Others are all about food and clothing donations such as the food pantry and Warmth in Cold Places. Once we get all the different projects categorized and portfolios written members can then choose a category that most interests them and get right to work! New members will be able to pick up where retiring members left off more quickly.

Hopefully spring will get here soon, and we will all be mowing our lawns and planting gardens.

God is still speaking,
David Hanson
CSCC Outreach Committee

From the Board of Stewardship



Dear Friend,

Greetings from Central Square Congregational Church, UCC! Our program year is well underway and we are excited by the many activities we have going on in our church and the many ways we plan on engaging with our members and the wider world.

Central Square Congregational Church, UCC is committed to offering a welcoming space for spiritual challenge, growth, and comfort, the transformational effect of which many of you have experienced first-hand in worship services, during weddings and funerals, or in small-group gatherings like our uke camp or book studies. Our openness to new ideas, practices, and insights is creating an environment of hospitality, creativity, and faithful inquiry. Remaining true to our Christian foundation, we are exploring new ways of sharing the love of God with others, what it means to follow Jesus and be peace-makers, and opening ourselves to the movement and guidance of the Spirit. Recent ideas have included more opportunities for mission and activism for all ages, taking up collections for area homeless, the expansion of our food pantry, activities for youth, serving meals at area shelters, and mission trips, among many others.

CSCC is also committed to be a place of community involvement, service, and learning. We open our doors to local groups such as scouts, play-groups, recovery groups, and as well as various musicians seeking rehearsal space. We believe an important part of our mission is offering chances to connect with neighbors at events like our community breakfasts, Living Nativity, Autumn Fest, and our Dine with Nine program. Another core component of our identity lies in providing opportunities for children to explore their spiritual lives, spend time with friends, and find a place where they are both cared for and can care for others. Our involvement with the Heifer Project annually is a prime example of how we strive to bring faith into children's lives.

Over the last year, as I've connected with community members at various events, I've been struck by three common themes that emerge from my conversations, themes that reflect challenges facing churches and communities not just in our area, but around the country. People are extraordinarily busy, and feeling challenged to give all their commitments and interests a fair share of time, energy, and financial support. Aging facilities and their upkeep pose a difficult and expensive reality. Communities are feeling disengaged and neighbors isolated, and there is a persisting fear (and in some cases, reality) of longstanding organizations, businesses, and structures closing and ceasing to exist.

Here at CSCC, we're grateful to be a sanctuary for spiritual and community engagement. However, as we, too, wrestle with the challenges mentioned above, we often find ourselves hesitating to offer and do more lest our excitement exceed our funding. In order to address these pressing problems, we turn to you for additional support. Your contribution can help Central Square Congregational Church, UCC in a meaningful way to allow us to continue to offer the programs, services, and hospitality which already exist, as well as afford us the possibility of creating new ways to enliven and engage with our unique community and diverse world.

We hope you will join us in this most worthy endeavor by making a generous gift to our Annual Stewardship Campaign this year. Your spirit of giving can make a real and lasting difference in the lives of our members, visitors, neighbors, and wider community, helping to ensure we will all find a means of sustenance and support as we endeavor to make a beneficial impact on our world.

Thank you so much for your prayerful discernment as you prepare to make your annual pledge.

Peace be with you and yours,

Rev. Elizabeth Walden Stotts

From Christian Education



Palm Sunday

You are all invited to come and experience the stories of Holy Week through the eyes of the children and youth. Feel the excitement and celebrate Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem by the waving of Palms. Listen and watch as all the stories in between are dramatically shared. Witness the final moments of Jesus' life as we know it. Jesus' last week will be told through scripture readings and dramatic actions. This takes place on Palm Sunday, April 9th during the worship service.

Rehearsal

On Sunday, April 2nd the children will rehearse for the Palm Sunday program during Sunday school and after worship in the sanctuary. It is very important all children attend. We still have roles available for children who have not yet been assigned a part in the program.

All children are asked to report to the lower level of the church on Sunday, April 2nd as soon as they arrive to receive their costumes. If you are planning to attend breakfast we will send the children up to you upon receiving their costume. Since it is a Communion Sunday all children will return to the lower level at the beginning of worship in order to practice their roles.

Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday could you please have your children arrive at 9:15 a.m. to dress for their role in the Palm Sunday program. All children will sit with their families once the service begins.

April Sunday School Schedule & Upcoming CE Events

April 2nd – Rehearsal of Palm Sunday program during Sunday school class and
After Church in the sanctuary

April 9th – Palm Sunday – Children's Holy Week presentation during worship

April 16th – Easter, no Sunday school

April 23rd – School vacation, no Sunday school

April 30th – Sunday school resumes

Heifer Farm Field trip is May 6th. This is an all ages event. Come visit Heifer Farm, we will be taking the animal connections tour that provides some hands on experiences on how animals are important to village life. We will be presenting our Church raised donation during the trip. \$10/pp. children 3 and under are free. Tour starts at 10:30 AM. For more information and signup you can click on the link <https://www.signupgenius.com/index.cfm?go=s.signup&urlid=10C0C4DAEA728A6F94-heifer&useFullSite=true> or email lsmasiello@gmail.com

The Men's Retreat to Camp Burgess is May 19th-May 20th, if you are unable to sleep over you can still attend the days events on the 20th. <https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showRSVPSignUp/10C0C4DAEA728A6F94-1stannual>. You can contact Shane Abboud by email smabboud@gmail.com

Updates from Cabinet

At the congregational meeting on March 12, Central Square Congregational Church voted unanimously to sell the church parsonage. The move was prompted by Rev. Beth Stott's decision to move out of the home in favor of purchasing a new home with her family.

It will be listed with the assistance of Beth Basler, realtor with Keller Williams Realty. Cabinet approved Diane Sheibley (Moderator) and Gordon Brailsford (Chair of Trustees) as the authorized signers on behalf of the church on the transaction.

The Board of Deacons would like Cabinet to keep in mind that an associate pastor will be needed at some point and the church needs to be thinking about ways to hire one. This may not be feasible now but should be in our minds for the future. Also, on Sunday July 9th, the high school graduates will be celebrated.

The Trustees noted that the sound system funds received from the Women's Guild in the amount of \$4000 has gone into the Memorials account. The Trustees will be working with getting consulting input as well as input from Paul Holmes on the best system for our facility.

In other Trustees' work: the Sunday school door was fixed; the file cabinet purchase was approved and will be purchased soon; an electrician will be coming in to add two outlets in the Fellowship Hall; the endowment funds will be reviewed this Sunday at 9 am; and July 28th is the date for the golf tournament. It was also noted that there is a church pew, plus some other items like a snowblower and lawnmower at the parsonage that will have to be removed by the time of the sale, so let's figure out where they should go.

The Board of Stewardship noted that Stewardship Sunday is April 30. They also noted that talk of a new capital campaign has been back burnered for now.

The Board of Christian Education noted that the Mission supper was a huge success. The food was outstanding and everyone had a lovely time. In addition, the Sunday school students are learning Holy stories from the book of Luke, and the Heifer farm field trip sign up is ongoing. The men's retreat isn't getting as much response, and CE is considering teaming up with another church for a joint retreat.

Regarding the Board of Outreach, a delivery of clothing was taken to Penelope's Place, and a donation was made to Mitchell's Monsters. Other work is ongoing.

From the Music Committee: the choir retreat on February 15th was a huge success. The choir learned some new songs and techniques. The Junior choir is doing well, and Julia is also working with the Sunday school kids on hymns that are often sung in church.

On the Growth Committee, Christine Hoyt is almost done getting the banner for the Little League field. Dine with 9 sign ups have been completed! Groups lists will be distributed soon. Progress is also being made with signing up greeters.

The Women's Guild and Fellowship recent brought donations they had collected to the Animal Protection Center. They were thrilled with the amount of items they received. The cleanup bucket was filled with the generosity of the church goers! They also requested permission for a 50/50 raffle at the April 1st Rummage Sale, which was granted by unanimous vote of the Cabinet. Their next meeting topic will be Journey to Jerusalem. Also, the Women's Guild donated \$500 to the mission youth.

Finally, it was noted for the record that EVERY Board and Committee was represented at the March Cabinet meeting. Great going, everyone! Thank you!

Classifieds



Sally Burke is interested in caring for people in the home on an “as needed” basis. She is retired from a nursing career of 35 years as a RV in a hospital setting and have other varied experiences. She’s been a Bridgewater resident for 48 years. Fee is negotiable. If interested, please call her at 508-697-2832 first, or 508-932-6317.

Do you have a service that you’d like to offer to the congregation? Submit your classified ad by emailing office@cscucc.com!

Daily Lectionary Scripture References April 2017 (Year A)

Sat., Apr. 1
Psalm 130 58:1-12
Ezekiel 36:8-15
Luke 24:44-53

Sun., Apr. 2
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

Mon., Apr. 3
Psalm 143
1 Kings 17:17-24
Acts 20:7-12

Tues., Apr. 4
Psalm 143
2 Kings 4:18-37
Ephesians 2:1-10

Wed., Apr. 5
Psalm 143
Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41
Matthew 22:23-33

Thurs., Apr. 6
Psalm 31:9-16
1 Samuel 16:11-13
Philippians 1:1-11

Fri., Apr. 7
Psalm 31:9-16
Job 13:13-19
Philippians 1:21-30

Sat., Apr. 8
Psalm 31:9-16
Lamentations 3:55-66
Mark 10:32-34

Sun., Apr. 9
Palm/Passion Sunday
Palms:
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Matthew 21:1-11
Passion:
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66 or
Matthew 27:11-54

Mon., Apr. 10
Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 36:5-11
Hebrews 9:11-15
John 12:1-11

Tues., Apr. 11
Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 71:1-14
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
John 12:20-36

Wed., Apr. 12
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 70
Hebrews 12:1-3
John 13:21-32

Thurs., Apr. 13
Maundy Thursday
Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Fri., Apr. 14
Good Friday
Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews
4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42

Sat., Apr. 15
Holy Saturday
Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations
3:1-9, 19-24
Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
1 Peter 4:1-8
Matthew 27:57-66 or John
19:38-42

Sun., Apr. 16
Easter
Acts 10:34-43 or Jeremiah
31:1-6
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4 or Acts
10:34-43
John 20:1-18 or Matthew
28:1-10

Mon., Apr. 17
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21
Colossians 3:5-11

Tues., Apr. 18
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Exodus 15:1-18
Colossians 3:12-17

Wed., Apr. 19
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Joshua 3:1-17
Matthew 28:1-10

Thurs., Apr. 20
Psalm 16
Song of Solomon 2:8-15
Colossians 4:2-5

Fri., Apr. 21
Psalm 16
Song of Solomon 5:9-6:3
1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Sat., Apr. 22
Psalm 16
Song of Solomon 8:6-7
John 20:11-20

Sun., Apr. 23
Second Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:14a, 22-32 ; Psalm 16
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

Mon., Apr. 24
Psalm 114
Judges 6:36-40
1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Tues., Apr. 25
Psalm 114
Jonah 1:1-17
1 Corinthians 15:19-28

Wed., Apr. 26
Psalm 114
Jonah 2:1-10
Matthew 12:38-42

Thurs., Apr. 27
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
Isaiah 25:1-5
1 Peter 1:8b-12

Fri., Apr. 28
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
Isaiah 26:1-4
1 Peter 1:13-16

Sat., Apr. 29
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
Isaiah 25:6-9
Luke 14:12-14

Sun., Apr. 30
Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35



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April Calendar

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 26 10 Worship 7:30p AA-FH | 27 6p Girl Scouts - MR 7p NA-FH | 28 8:30 Play Groups - MR 4p Brownies - LL 6:15p Girl Scouts - FH | 29 6p Girl Scouts - LL 7p Trustees-FR 7:30p BSU Choir - ST | 30 10 Food Pantry - LL 7p Al-Anon - MR | 31 Rummage Sale Prep - FH | Apr 1 9 Rummage Sale - FH |
| 2 9 Breakfast - FH 10 Communion 10 Worship 1:30p Webelos - MR 4p Tiger Den - LL 7:30p AA-FH | 3 6p Food Pantry - LL 7p NA-FH | 4 8:30 Play Groups - MR 7:30p Stewardship - MR | 5 6p Girl Scouts - LL 6:30p WG&F - FH 7:30p BSU Choir - ST | 6 10 Food Pantry - LL 10 Staff Mtg - FR 7p Al-Anon - FH | 7 | 8 9 Study - FR |
| 9 10 Worship 11:30 Growth - FR 7:30p AA-FH | 10 6p Girl Scouts - MR 7p NA-FH | 11 8:30 Play Groups - MR 4p Brownies - LL 6:15p Girl Scouts - FH 7p Deacons - MR 7p Outreach - MR | 12 6p Girl Scouts - LL 7p CE - FR 7:30p BSU Choir - ST | 13 Maundy Thursday Thomas Jefferson's Birth 10 Food Pantry - LL 7p Al-Anon - FH 7p Worship - ST | 14 4p Cake Class - FH 6p Webelos - MR | 15 9 Study - FR |
| 16 Easter Sunday 9 Breakfast - FH 10 Worship 11:30 Holy Ukes - FR 7:30p AA-FH | 17 7p NA-FH | 18 8:30 Play Groups - MR | 19 7p Cabinet-MR 7:30p BSU Choir - ST | 20 10 Food Pantry - LL 7p Al-Anon - FH | 21 | 22 |
| 23 10 Worship 2p Webelos - MR 7:30p AA-FH | 24 6p Girl Scouts - MR 7p NA-FH | 25 8:30 Play Groups - MR 4p Brownies - LL 6:15p Girl Scouts - FH | 26 6p Girl Scouts - LL 7p Trustees-FR 7:30p BSU Choir - ST | 27 10 Food Pantry - LL 7p Al-Anon - FH | 28 5p Webelos - MR 6:30p Pack 35 - FH | 29 |
| 30 10 Worship 7:30p AA-FH | May 1 6p Food Pantry - LL 7p NA-FH | 2 8:30 Play Groups - MR 7:30p Stewardship - MR | 3 6p Girl Scouts - LL 6:30p WG&F - Offsite 7:30p BSU Choir - ST | 4 10 Food Pantry - LL 7p Al-Anon - FH | 5 | 6 CE Heifer Trip (Rutland) |

*This calendar is subject to change at any time. For the most up to date calendar at all times, please visit cscucc.org.

Church Administration

Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth Walden Stotts – csccpastor@hotmail.com

Congregational Administrator: Ellen Atherton – office@cscucc.com

Sexton: Rich Sullivan

Interim Music Director: Julia Scott Carey

Treasurer: Larry Brown treasurer@cscucc.com

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