



## March 2022 Newsletter

Hard to believe this week we went from T-shirt weather to a predicted foot of snow today, but that's New Hampshire! The good news is that I noticed (before the snow hit!) little leaves of green beginning to pop up out of the soil of the Bell Garden and spotted the red-winged blackbirds returning to the marsh behind the library, making their mating calls. Spring is not far away!

Also coming soon is the holy season of Lent. From the earliest centuries of Christianity, those wishing to be baptized on Easter morning would undergo a time of preparation characterized by prayer, study, and examination of life. The time period of 40 days was a reminder of the Hebrew peoples wandering in the wilderness learning to walk in the ways of God, and of Jesus' time of temptation. It wasn't before very long that the Church encouraged all Christians to utilize this time for spiritual renewal.

I encourage you to do the same. What spiritual practice might help you draw closer to God at this point in your life? Perhaps with spring coming it might be taking a daily prayerful walk outside, looking for signs of new life and praying that new life might come about in you. There is still time to sign up and join the zoom study about the Sermon on the Mount starting Wed. March 9. Are there opportunities for volunteer service or ways you might be able to reach out to help someone you know in need? And I suspect it is beneficial for most of us to pray about things we need to "let go" of, whether it be practical ways to simplify and declutter our lives or things like guilt and shame. If the Rite of Reconciliation (confession) might be helpful for you to do the latter, I am available.

Blessings on your spiritual journey this Lent! Carolyn

## *WORSHIP*

**Covid and Masking** – Thank you all for being willing to “mask up” during this pandemic to protect the most vulnerable in our congregation. Just the other day the state indoor masking restrictions were lifted. The infection rates are falling rapidly as we move out of the Omicron surge. At the same time, we are still have the “red” significant risk rating. Usually there is a clergy meeting with the bishop on the first or second Thursday of the month. I’m hoping to get some guidance as to when we make mask wearing optional. Talking with Pam about music and Lana as the head of the Altar Guild, we decided that since Lent is a period characterized by austerity, we will continue to limit some of the music and the use of wine. Then on Easter we can celebrate!

**Ash Wednesday** is March 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be services at the church with Holy Communion at noon and at 7 PM. The 7PM service will also be available on zoom. The zoom invite will be sent out on the first.

**Hybrid services** – Thanks to the Property Committee for purchasing and installing a new larger TV for the sanctuary. Having the zoom option for worship has not only enabled those from other states, those with compromised immune systems, and the homebound to attend, but has allowed worship to continue when we’ve had so many snow/ice days this winter. We are looking into a possible new camera set up so as to remove the tripod from the center aisle.

**Music** – It has been a tough year for the choir with members away or ill. If you want to help with singing or an instrumental piece, especially with Easter coming up, talk to Pam.

## *ANNUAL MEETING*

We had an efficient Parish Annual Meeting January 23<sup>rd</sup>. The officers were all re-elected. Dick Dean was elected to serve on vestry. Maria Posey volunteered to serve an additional term as parish delegate, and Diane Soucy was elected as an alternate. Financially we have a deficit, but it is expected to balance out with the help of money held in reserve from the previous year.

## *OUTREACH*

**Kagan Family Offer:** The Kagan family, who paid for our kitchen renovations and enabled us to establish a partnership with Lancaster Elementary School, has offered to help finance any community outreach effort to help those in need. The vestry will be discussing this on our spring retreat, but we welcome all thoughts and ideas. What are unmet needs in our community? Since our mission is often centered on children, are there ways their well-being can be enhanced? Keep your eyes and heart opened as we discern this offer. Bear in mind that even though we may be limited in numbers, it is a good thing to partner with other people and efforts in our community.

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – Sermon on the Mount**

The past couple of years we have used study series put out by Amy Jill Levine. “AJ” is an orthodox Jew who teaches New Testament, and so sometimes brings a unique perspective to the stories and teachings in scripture. She has a great sense of humor, and her books are geared towards those beginning to study scripture and so are easy to read. The Sermon on the Mount is a 6-part series we will be offering on Zoom Wednesdays at 7Pm starting March 9. Let Carolyn know if you are interested.

### **PROPERTY**

Richard Boucher donated a computer to use for Zoom services in the sanctuary.  
George Younker has installed and reprogrammed thermostats for energy efficiency and has been doing a lot of shoveling this year!

Two wonderful baptisms in January – Ethan Moss and Coltan Decker!

