

The Power of Lent!

By PASTOR ERIC O. LEDERMANN

Is it an odd title? “The Power of Lent!” Like Advent, we just wanna skip to the good stuff: Christmas, Santa Clause, egg nog, presents. Bring on the marshmallow Peeps, beautiful spring flowers, colorfully dyed eggs, and mimosa laden brunch—in the name of the risen Christ, of course! But so much is lost when we avoid the less glamorous, the less colorful, the less vibrant stuff in life. Not all of life can be rainbows and butterflies, or mimosas. Sometimes, there is grey; there is dreary; there is ... the storms.

Lent is about facing the storms. It’s about facing the stuff we try to put behind us and seeking learn from them. What do we learn from winning? Nothing without the hard work that might go into it alongside the heavily dished losses. That is the “power of Lent,” as well as the “power of Advent.” Skipping over them like the retail-drugged consumers we often are actually does more harm than good.

Like not dealing with past wounds, we become complacent to our self-

delusion of happiness and winning, only to carry those same wounds into the next relationship, and the next, and the next. Each time we add to the collection of scrapes, bruises, and wounds until everything just hurts.

Much of therapy is about facing the Lenten seasons in our lives—facing and finally tending to those wounds as best we can so far removed from their infliction. Sometimes it’s even about resurrecting those wounds, maybe even cutting them open again so that they might heal better. It’s not too different from re-breaking a bone so it can be set correctly and heal better in the long run. The short run hurts—like hell! But the long-term health is so much better. Is it worth it? For some yes. For some, sadly, no.

Jesus dug up a lot of old festering wounds among the people. They had grown to live with the debilitating limp the Roman empire had caused with its burdensome weight of oppression. They had actually grown so used to it, they didn’t even notice it anymore. The wealthy were able to hide it under their

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This issue of the
UPC NEWS & Current Events
is brought to you by...
the word...

Repentance

To grieve over one’s past and seek forgiveness. From c. 1300, *repenten*, which came Old French *repentir* (11th c.). In Latin, *penitire* means “to regret.” Related to Latin *poena*, meaning “penal.” Yes, a transgression for which we regret. Often used to translate the Greek *metanoia*, meaning “a transformative change,” literally to “turn away.” In terms of Christian Scripture, meaning to turn away from the old ways of sin, be transformed, and turn toward the ways of God revealed in and through Jesus.

LENT

Continued from page 1

colorfully flowing tunics. The poor did what they always do: they just accepted it and moved on. Jesus was re-breaking the bones that had mended at awkward angles. "Go the extra mile!" In other words, don't let them be in control by taking advantage of you. Take control on your own terms. Flip the tables on them. Turn the other cheek and force them to treat you as an equal!

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," Jesus read in the synagogue from the prophet Isaiah. "[God] has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of [God's] favor" (Luke 4.18-19, CEB). Then he rolled up the scroll as everyone silently kept their eyes on him. He gave the scroll back to the attendant. One could hear a pin drop in that space that day. And then his shocking pronouncement: "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it." That's right, you heard him!

He came to re-break the bones and re-open the wounds of oppression and prejudice, the wounds of neglect and ungrace, layers upon layers of wounds that had piled up and bound the people so they could no longer walk freely without much suffering. But this time, at least some of those wounds would be redressed properly; bones would be reset properly; the

lame would now walk!

Lent is a season of learning to walk again. A season of letting go of the old ways of fear, giving us space and capacity to ingest the ever-new ways of God's love for all people; God's hope for us. Yes! God still has hope for us! Can you believe it? Lent is about being set free from the bonds of our suffering so that we, too, might join Christ in a resurrected life!

What kind of a Lent do you want? Do you want to continue to hobble around amidst your suffering? Then do the trendy Lent: give up chocolate or caffeine or something relatively easy. Do you want to be set free? Then do the hard Lent—six weeks of revisiting those wounds you've been carrying around for years or even decades; writing them down; giving them names; staring them down and facing them for what they are: serious and painful, but still trivial next to the gaping love of a God who does not give up on us. Ah, perspective! The power of clear sight to see the truth that, though our wounds have held us back for so long, they are no match for the healing power of God who will patiently teach us how to walk upright again. That is the power of Lent! That is the power of true prayer! That is the power of grace, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. ■

*Be of good courage
and know that you are loved!*

MONTHLY DRIVE 'n' DROP

March 6, 2022 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Normally First Sunday of each month! Drop off at church!

Here are the items needed for TCAA and UPC Refugee Ministry



TCAA needs

- breakfast items
- towels/washcloths
- baby wipes
- travel snacks
- canned goods

REFUGEE needs

- laundry & dish soap
- shampoo
- conditioner
- body wash & lotion
- snack items

Financial contributions may be sent to the office.
Make checks out to "TCAA" and reference "Food Pantry"
or to UPC and reference "Refugee" in the memo



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Requirements:

Announcements: 500 words or less
Articles/Reflections: 1200 words or less
Letters to the Editor: 750 words or less
Submissions may be edited for content,
grammar, and space available.

**Send submissions
by the 20th of each month to:
newsletter@upctempe.org**

Hattie's Book

A Woman's Life In a City's History—Part II

By BEVERLY PHILLIPS

Hattie died in 1990. I published my book about her in 2019. In 2020 her oldest son, Bernard, sent me this picture of the two of us in her dining room. Right away when I saw it I knew which one was Hattie, but it took me awhile to figure out who the white woman was! Several nuns worked with Hattie over the years. For a minute I tried to figure out which one that was. Then I recognized my blouse and sweater! It was me. I don't remember having the photo taken but it was probably in the early 1980s.

In the article I wrote last month I told about how I met Hattie and the connection that resulted: that my family and my church became involved in finding money and things that she needed to serve her neighbors. The Hunger Committee of Chicago Presbytery, with me as the Hunger Action Enabler, were invited by Hattie to take a walk through the ghetto on the southside of Chicago where she lived. We met in Hattie's living room and after she prayed with us, as she always did with anyone who came into that

room or anywhere else, we started our walk.

We walked about half a mile to a three-story apartment building that stood alone in a field of vacant lots, crumbled sidewalks, and decaying streets. It was like walking through a war-torn city. The building had six apartments. The day we visited there were two families living in two of the apartments, while all the others were vacant. The gas to the building had been cut off and the elevator didn't work. The mother of the woman we were visiting had died in this apartment. The fireman who had to

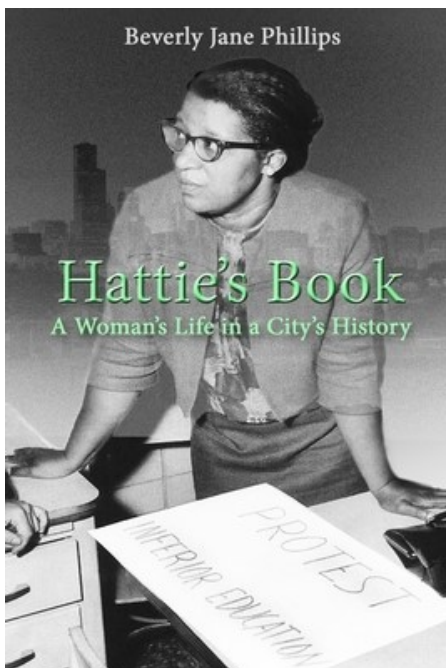
come for her body could not get it down the steep, narrow steps so they moved a hook and ladder truck up to the window and brought her body down in a basket. Her death was a shattering event for this family who had depended on her for so much care.

After climbing the dirty, broken and chipped marble steps to the third floor we entered a small apartment that was immaculately clean. A woman who looked older than her age and her six carefully groomed children between the ages of two and fourteen greeted us. After Hattie made introductions, we took seats in the living room while the children scattered themselves among us. At Hattie's prompting this single mother began to tell us her story.

Four different men were the fathers of these children, but were not currently on



Hattie and Beverly Phillips in the early 1980's.



the scene to help in any way. The mother explained that each time she met a man who flattered her, made her feel loved, and professed love for her children she had another baby and the man moved on. She regretted having been so naïve but at the same time she dearly loved each one of her children.

As we sat there listening to her talk a rat scurried across the kitchen floor. Our hostess explained that it was routine that rats chewed holes by the kitchen window to get in. She repeatedly stuffed the holes with steel wool, but the rats chewed new holes right beside the old ones and came right in.

At the end of our visit, Hattie gathered all of us in a circle for prayer so we could hold hands while we prayed.



S'MORE NEWS

Montlure is rooted in the beauty of creation, providing a safe and nurturing space for all, in order to connect lives through transformation, restoration, and faith exploration.

By KELLIE VON BORSTEL
Camp Director

Dear Montlure Family, Friends, and Supporters, We have some very important information to share.

We have recently learned that our special use permit in Greer will not be reinstated by the U.S. Forest Service at this time, thus preventing us from hosting youth summer camp there in 2022.

As you all are aware, we have been in cooperation with the Forest Service and have been diligently working to comply with the requirements for their fast track approval process when construction is needed in regards to land disturbance. Although we were given every indication to believe that the work would be authorized, completed, and the permits reinstated, the site will now be undergoing a full federal National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) review. This review process is lengthy and the timetable is set by the officials. The process will be entirely handled by the Forest Service as Montlure has already submitted everything they require from us. The good news is, the entire process will proceed with no fee to Montlure.

While we grieve along with you at this news and feel the disappointment and frustration, we are already moving forward with what Montlure does best: Providing an exceptional summer camp experience to children and youth where they find an authentic community to be

themselves, connect with their peers and summer staff, and have space for a transformative experience exploring their faith.

As we received the news from the U.S. Forest Service, we immediately engaged in pursuing a site for this summer. We are very excited about what has transpired. Camp Raymond, in Parks, Arizona (about 25 mins west of Flagstaff), will be hosting Montlure Camp Summer 2022!

CAMP RAYMOND

Camp Raymond sits on 160 acres surrounded by beautiful terrain of the Coconino Forest. The amenities include a low ropes course, archery range, lake, hiking trails for miles, a beautiful outdoor chapel overlooking Sycamore Canyon, and so much more! While we are experiencing some grief, we are simultaneously excited about the possibilities of this new site and look forward to watching our community of campers flourish in the surroundings. (For more information on summer camp please see montlure.org.)

In addition, we are still planning to host multiple work camps in Greer as there is quite a bit of maintenance and cleaning that still needs to be done to continue moving forward. Work camps will begin late spring and will go all the way through the summer months. If you are interested in signing up your church or group, please contact us via email or

watch our website in the coming weeks as we release sign up slots for open work camps.

We are, once again, still committed to the mission and ministry of Montlure. A mission that is not confined to a place, but tied to our wonderful community that campers become a part of. We have proved and demonstrated time and time again that the mission of Montlure is stronger than what any site has to offer. So as we continue working endlessly with the Forest Service, we will also continue working endlessly to provide a program to our campers full of the love, acceptance, and joy that they have all come to know.

You are welcome to reach out to us at any time (camp@montlure.org) or call us at (520)369-2199 with further questions and we will do our best to address your concerns.

We sincerely thank you for your relentless support,

The Montlure Council, and
Kellie von Borstel (Camp Director) ■

NEW SUMMER CAMP DATES:

Senior High: June 19 - 24

Junior High: June 26- July 1

Juniors: July 5—9



Environmental Day at the Capitol

Wed, Mar 16th 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Please join AFN for our collective healing in a virtual space. These healing spaces are for Social Justice & Movement Practitioners, Caretakers, Teachers, Community Members and Faith Leaders. We explore the use of somatics - embodiment work - breathing, storytelling, art, and even movement to unite to create positive change for the common good. [Register here.](#)



Sikh Faith 101—COMING SOON

Mon, Apr 4th 5:30pm - 6:45pm

Join Arizona Faith Network (Theological Dialogue Commission) in a connection of enrichment as we build understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs. [Register here.](#)

Learn more about the Arizona Faith Network by subscribing to the newsletter at:

www.arizonafaithnetwork.org/subscribe



Straight From the Heart Prison Art Exhibit—Saturdays in March 1:30—3:30 pm

Get to know women in Perryville in a new way. The “Straight from the Heart” Art Exhibit featuring art from currently and formerly incarcerated women is coming to Church of the Palms United Church of Christ, King Hall, 14808 North Boswell Boulevard, Sun City, AZ 85351, during the month of March. The artwork on display was created primarily by women who attend the Episcopal worship services at Perryville Women’s Prison in Goodyear. Rev. Kim Crecca of Tucson participated in those worship services for 6 years. Please join us and [RSVP](#) to come see some beautiful artwork and pieces from the heart. Vaccination and N95 masks are required.



Fri, Mar 4th 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Join the anti-hunger and food systems advocacy calls with the Arizona Food Bank Network and the Arizona Food System Network, held the first Friday of the month. More information and recordings of past calls are available at: <https://www.azfsn.org/>

Rise & Shine Bread

“Bread Angels of Tempe”



Rise & Shine Bread
Baking things better.



By ANDREA WHITE

Edible Phoenix magazine Spring 2022 edition just dubbed Rise & Shine bread participants as “Bread Angels of Tempe.”

It all began when I was inspired by a project in Seattle called Community Loaves, which also is a project geared to provide home baking to those in need.

Since the program could not expand to include Arizona, I decided it was my duty to bring the idea to Tempe and start making it happen here.

I joined forces with Michael Hodgins, director of sustainable food systems at Rio Salado Community College’s Café Rio. With some colleagues he helped develop a recipe for an oat and whole-wheat roll, baked as a foursome in a standard loaf pan.

We are always looking for volunteers to help bake the bread. We provide the recipe, bags, ties and labels to indicate the name of the baker. You can bake as often as you like. Bakers then make arrangements to get us the bread and we in turn deliver them to Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) pantry, churches, or other points of distribution.

We have now expanded our efforts to include full size loaves. Our only limiting factor is the number of bakers.

If you have the time and are interested in helping, please sign up at the website, [riseshinebread.org](https://www.riseshinebread.org). You’ll need to be registered (most of you are) signed in and go to the *I’ll Help>Volunteer Calendar*. I’d be happy to orient any of your friends, family or neighbors if they want to help! Please contact Andrea White at awhite@businessbydesign.us or (480) 580-3021. Watch the “how to” video at <https://youtu.be/Go5HLLjTuw>. We could also use financial donations to cover the costs of bags, ties, and labels as well. If you or others would like to support Rise & Shine Bread, donate at: www.riseshinebread.org/ill-help/donate. ■

White Supremacy and American Christianity

*A Conversation with Robert P. Jones and Father Bryan Massingale
featuring Dr. Marcia Chatelain*

By CATHERINE MAY

MSJP Chairperson

Sat., April 9, 2022

12:30 p.m. Opening & Keynote
Conversation
2:00 p.m. Small Group Conversations
3:00 p.m. Closing Remarks & Prayer

Over the past few years, we’ve seen how deeply intertwined U.S. Christianity is with white supremacy. This horrific reality came into view most clearly on January 6, 2021 in our nation’s capital. You’re invited to our virtual, half day conference on White Supremacy and American Christianity with justice-seekers across the country. Presented by the Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice and sponsored by Faith in Ac-

tion and Sojourners. UPC’s MSJP Committee will pay for the first 10 people who would like to attend. Interested? Contact Catherine May, MSJP chair, at (602) 363-4119, or Larry Gardner, UPC Advocacy Team Leader, at (719) 482-6730. *It would be great to have a block of UPCers!*

About the Speakers

Robert P. Jones, Ph.D., is the author of *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* and the founder and CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), a nonpartisan organization that conducts public opinion polls on a variety of topics, specializing in the quantitative and qualitative study of political issues as they relate to religious values.

Fr. Bryan Massingale, S.T.D., is the author of *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* and the James and Nancy Buckman Professor of Theological and Social Ethics, as well as the Senior Ethics Fellow in Fordham’s Center for Ethics Education. Fr. Massingale is a noted authority on social and racial justice issues, particularly in Catholic spaces.

Marcia Chatelain, Ph.D., is the winner of the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in History for her book *Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America*. She is a professor of history and African American studies at Georgetown University and the leading organizer behind the #FergusonSyllabus, an online educational resource that has shaped educational conversations about racism and police brutality since 2014. ■

Who Are You, Masked Person?

Have we met?



By NORM PHILLIPS

Hello, all you masked persons at UPC, all of whom I recognize to be fellow sons and daughters of God! How are you? I trust you have been experiencing more weal than woe during this COVID19 pandemic—both you and those whom you hold close in your heart. When I say “I trust” I do so because my trust is in God, whose will for any and all of us is always goodness (that is weal), never badness (that is woe). It is for each of us to choose: Do I choose to see goodness in my life experiences more than badness or vice versa?

Now, you may well be asking: “Who are you, Masked Person? Have we met? How have you fared during this pandemic?” Fair enough. I’ll answer them in order. Briefly, I hope.

First, my name is Norm Phillips. I am a retired ordained Presbyterian minister and the husband of Bev, also a retired ordained Presbyterian minister, who, I first set eyes on while in seminary with her and proclaimed “ooolala!”; but when I learned that she too was preparing for ordination I grumped “Two ministers in one couple would be one too many.” However, I do believe that God, whose

goodness overwhelmed my sense of not-so goodness joined the two of us in marriage. That was more than sixty wonder-filled years ago.

God also blessed us with a son, Jim, who has had to accept early retirement due to serious health issues and now lives with us. God also blessed us with a daughter, Nancy, who, together with her husband, David Baker, eighteen years ago presented us with our only grandchild, Bailey—a super smart, super sweet, super gorgeous, super athletic and super on and on. (Am I a typical grandpa or what?) The three of them live in Corvallis, Oregon.

Second answer: If we have not met, I look forward to its happening some-time soon.

Third, Jim has struggled with asthma for nearly all his life and now does not go far from home without a supply of oxygen at hand. Bev’s primary doctor suspects she may be asthmatic and has laid out a course of treatment for her. Nancy and David seem to be in good health and continue their work at Oregon State University. Bailey will begin pursuing a college education this fall at Montana State University in Bozeman hoping to one day be an architect.

As for myself, my physical well-being has been greatly improved: my pre-COVID tendency to fall down was dramatically reduced through physical therapy which strengthened my legs; the danger of having a heart attack or stroke was reduced by the implantation of a Watchman device to block blood clots from entering my heart; my weight has lowered by twenty-five plus pounds through daily doses of a diuretic; and, although more and more of hair atop my head has set off on its journey to wherever old hairs go to get a new start, other hairs have formed a beard on my face.

There. Did I answer your questions? Hello? Are you still with me? If you are showing the loving kindness which dwells within you—indeed within us all and I am grateful. I did say I would be brief in answering you. (But doesn’t everyone like talking about oneself when he/she feels valued enough to be heard?) So, again, thank you.

However! One last thing about myself: my number one activity during the pandemic has been reading—lots of books on lots of subjects—and it has profoundly changed me. I am becoming a new person. I am growing in my understandings of God, of myself, and of others like myself, of creation, of the cosmos, of Jesus’ teachings, of the presence and working of the Holy Spirit, of life itself. My head is so full that I feel that it will explode if I do not share what I have found in this pandemic. I pray you will grant me the privilege of sharing some of it with you in future issues of this newsletter. May God bless you in ways both imaginable and unimaginable ■

Mask perk:



No one can tell
when you're yawning

In Reforming the Priesthood, Pope Francis Insists on Middle Ground

By **CLAIRE GIANGRAVE**

Religion News Service

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — With broad strokes and a balancing act, Pope Francis weighed in on the polarizing tensions in the Catholic Church concerning the future of the priesthood. While upholding priestly celibacy as “a gift,” the pope distanced himself from the “perversion” of rigidity while speaking at a Vatican conference on Thursday (Feb. 17).

As Catholic bishops and laypeople in Germany call for a reevaluation of official doctrine on priestly celibacy, female ordination and sexuality, conservatives look at the emerging discussions on the future of the priesthood with a mixture of practical and theological concern.

The sexual abuse crisis has crippled the church’s credibility worldwide and the number of men entering the priesthood continues to dwindle, contributing to what Cardinal Marc Ouellet, the head of the Vatican’s department overseeing bishops, called “today’s priestly crisis.”

Pope Francis insisted on the importance of viewing the facts “with the Lord’s own eyes” and not trying to avoid “the realities that our people are experiencing,” while at the same time not resorting to “a quick and quiet solution provided by the ideology of the moment or prefabricated answers.”

Speaking about “the fundamental theology of the priesthood” at the conference, which was organized by the Vatican’s Congregation for Bishops and the Center for the Research and Anthropology of Vocations, Pope Francis identified “mercenary” attitudes that emerge during crisis.

While one side favors “established ways of doing things,” grasping at the past as if “this determined order could quell the conflicts that history sets before us,” the other pushes to raise “the latest novelty as the ultimate reality” and casts aside “the wisdom of the years,” the pope

said.

“Both are a kind of flight,” Francis said. “They are the response of the mercenary who sees the wolf coming and runs away: either toward the past or toward the future. Neither can lead to mature solutions.”

Pope Francis “is always looking for a balance — no extremism from the right wing or the left wing — he is very much a man of the middle,” Ouellet told Religion News Service. The pope’s speech is “conveying this wisdom of balance in his spirituality and teaching,” Ouellet added.

During Ouellet’s opening address, he said the conference aims to be honest about the challenges facing the priesthood today, “where sexual abuse is only the tip of the iceberg, visible and perverted, that emerges from deeper deviations that must be identified and unmasked.”

He suggested a renewed appreciation of lay ministry, which could lead to a reconsideration of the role of women in the church “in a more open and sensitive way to the charismatic dimension of the

Pope Francis dismissed progressive views favoring ‘the ideology of the moment’ and the conservative ‘rigidity’ that clings to the past, encouraging a third way.

community.”

The pope upheld priestly celibacy as “a gift” in the lengthy speech at the Paul VI Hall but warned that “without friends and without prayer, celibacy can become an unbearable burden and a counterwitness to the very beauty of the priesthood.”

Francis’ comments follow those of German Cardinal Reinhard Marx, the archbishop of Munich, who told reporters Feb. 3 that he supported a renewed study of priestly celibacy and that for some



Pope Francis, left, listens to Cardinal Marc Ouellet's opening address at the three-day Symposium on Vocations in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican, Feb. 17, 2022. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

priests “it would be better if they were married,” not only because of sexual desires but also to combat loneliness.

Marx is considered among the most outspoken supporters of the Synodal Path in Germany, where Catholic clergy, laypeople and employees are airing their hopes and expectations for the future of the local church and beyond.

Francis’ address highlighted his pastoral approach to the struggles facing the church and the priesthood today. Against the “perversion of clericalism and rigidity” the pope said he desired team “closeness,” seeking to live out the faith together in community, in acknowledgment of people’s real experiences and suffering.

“The people of God want shepherds” who offer compassion and concern, with Jesus as the model, Francis said. They do not want “clerical functionaries” or “professionals of the sacred,” he said. In offering practical tips to achieve this, the pope drew from his 50 years of experience as a priest and laid out a four-

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POETRY CORNER

Families

By JEAN JAQUETTE LUCE

*Reflection on the UPC family welcoming the
Pastor Eric O. Ledermann February 2012.*

part 1

As darkness settled, our table was
set
bong, bong, rang them home
they returned to the fold
our family at table
homework in rooms
kisses goodnight

part 2

when pastor retired, an interim time
multiple meetings
introspection, serious and long
then it was time
ten years ago, a call to a pastor
a family began

part 3

seek justice and love
make room at the table
when did you
feel God's presence
times of examen
this ten year anniversary
celebrates
a family together



Pastor Eric wearing his new stole, presented to him by Jim Hershauer, chair of the Personnel Committee, on the occasion of Pastor Eric's 10th anniversary as pastor of UPC. The stole was purchased by the Personnel Committee, the Board of Deacons, and with the help of the Rev. Shelly Moe.

POPE

Continued from page 8

pillared approach.

Closeness to God is the first prerequisite, Francis said, and essential to "learning not to be scandalized by whatever befalls us" and to protecting ourselves from "stumbling blocks." Second is closeness to the bishop, which while centered on obedience, includes "discussion, attentive listening and in some cases tension," he said.

Pope Francis' loosening of the Vati-

can's hierarchical structures that bridled bishops has led to a vibrant uproar of opinionated bishops taking to the pulpit and social media to voice their views — sometimes in opposition to the pope. Priests should "feel free to express their opinions with respect and sincerity," Francis said, but for their part bishops must "demonstrate humility, an ability to listen, to be self-critical and to let themselves be helped."

The pope's final tip was to seek frater-

nity with other priests, which he said requires patience and setting aside arrogance and envy. For those seeking a quick fix or fast results in the quest to reform the struggling Catholic priesthood, Pope Francis counseled caution.

"Sometimes it seems that the church is slow, and that is true," Francis said, "yet I like to think of it as the slowness of those who have chosen to walk in fraternity." ■

Theological Themes and Ethical Values in the Best Picture Nominees

By DR. EDWARD McNULTY

Special to the Presbyterian News Service

Oscar buzz is in full swing now that the list of nominees has been released. This year there is a full contingent in the Best Film category. I was gratified to see that three on my Top Ten list have been selected as contenders for Best Picture. There is still one film that I haven't seen, the Japanese feature film "Drive My Car." It will be at least a week until I can catch it at a Cincinnati theater, so I will proceed without it.

The mini-reviews below all are short out of necessity, but the titles all have links that will take you to a full review of the film. In my journal Visual Parables, the review also includes a set of questions for individual reflection or group use.

"Belfast" (PG-13)

The great director/actor Kenneth Branagh looks back at his boyhood in the Irish city with fond affection for his Protestant parents and loving grandparents. He was playing in the streets with his Catholic and Protestant friends when the troubles began. Because his father would not join the anti-Catholic demonstrations, the family came under such pressure that they had to consider leaving the country. The themes of family solidarity, the important role of grandparents in a child's life and the need for understanding and acceptance between different ways of faith make this a wonderful film for entertainment and discussion.

"Coda" (PG-13)

This film is an interesting take on the insider who also is an outsider, at least to her family. Seventeen-year-old Ruby Rossi is the only hearing member of her Deaf family, which includes her mother and father, Jackie and Frank, and her older brother Leo. Thus, to them she is an outsider, even though she can freely converse with them through American Sign

Language. But when a teacher discovers she has a great talent for singing and encourages her to accept a scholarship at a music school, she is torn between her family and her aspirations. She is the interpreter when her father takes the family fishing boat out for a catch, and the Coast Guard has warned him that for safety reasons he must have an interpreter aboard at all times.

Aside from the dilemma of choosing between two mutually exclusive goods, the film is also great for exploring family relationships and the strength that comes from the family in a moment of crisis.

"Don't Look Up" (R)

This satirical dark comedy reminded me of Neil Postman's insightful book "Amusing Ourselves to Death." The media has led us to trivialize and commodify everything so that we forsake or ignore truth in our quest for material happiness. The film's U.S. president, so concentrated on her career and the next election, fails to hear the dire warning of our scientist heroes that a comet will collide with the Earth in a few weeks. When they try to get out their warning on a TV interview show, they are not only last in the guest line-up, but the hosts are obsessed about the romantic life of a shallow singer so that they too fail to heed the dire warning. This is a funny parable of Isaiah's message, later quoted by Jesus, that the people have eyes but don't see. (See Jeremiah 26.7-9, Isaiah 6.1-10, and Matthew 13.10-16.)

"Dune" (PG-13)

Wisely deciding to make two films of Frank Herbert's huge novel about the distant future, Director Denis Villeneuve tells half of the rise to power of Paul Atreides, the son of Duke Leto and Lady Jessica, who have come to rule over a desert planet called Arrakis. The Emperor prizes the planet because it is the sole source of melange, or spice, without which intergalactic travel would not be

possible. Conflict and betrayal arise because the former overseer of the House of Harkonnens will not give up his rule—and there is also the Freman, the native inhabitants who resent being colonized by anyone. Thus the theme of colonialism lie beneath the action, reminding one how the resource-rich countries of Africa have been misused by outside powers. A couple of the characters are mystical, reminding us that there is more than the physical eye can see in the universe. Paul's mother Jessica voices an insightful observation about fear that people of faith might relate to Psalm 27. (Psalm 7.9 and 27.3)

"King Richard" (PG-13)

This film covers two important themes: the struggle of African Americans for equality in a society opposed to their inclusion, and the role of a father in raising his family. And, come to think of it, the necessity for planning and persistence if carrying out one's plans, as exemplified in two parables by Jesus, Luke 14.25-35 and Luke 18.1-8.

Tennis, despite the efforts of Arthur Ashe, was still a "white man's sport," and emphasis needs to be placed upon man, as Richard Williams was the father of two daughters. Long before Serena and Venus were strong enough to hold a racket, their father was working on his plan to get them into the top-notch training program that would gain them entrance to the profession.

It may take a village to raise a child, but to develop an African American's two daughters into champions in the virtually all-white sport of tennis, a father of extraordinary strong will and boldness is required. Richard Williams is certainly that kind of a father. As such he is dubbed "King" in the title, as this film detailing three years in the lives of real-life Venus and Serena Williams makes clear. Those discussing this film should

See OSCARS on page 11

OSCARS

Continued from page 10

take note that his wife Brandi calls him out when he goes overboard and steps in to help Serena when her husband devotes most of his energy to promote Venus.

“Nightmare Alley” (R)

Film noir accepts the medieval doctrine of the total depravity of humanity, and in this second adaptation of the 1946 novel by William Lindsay Gresham, we see how depraved a man can be — and of course a femme fatale as well, noir writers agreeing with Adam in Genesis 3:12. A vagabond man who might have killed his father joins a carnival, where the owner and class acts are at the top and the chicken head-eating geek are at the bottom of the micro-society — as well as the customers regarded as suckers to be conned. Our anti-hero, like Macbeth, over-reaches himself as he rises to the top, and, led by a smarter woman, falls to the bottom. Some have regarded both the novel and the film as a scathing critique of what was touted after World War II as “The American Dream,” something worth pondering and discussing after you watch the show.

“The Power of the Dog” (R)

The film is set in the West of the early 20th century, but its anti-hero, for whom the Marlboro Man seems like a wimp, is still obsessed by the super macho cowboy once his mentor. When his brother brings his new wife and her gay teenage son to the ranch, Macho Man initiates a campaign to humiliate and drive the wife mad as he cultivates the boy he scorns to join his coterie of ranch hands. However, in an ironic twist, it is the boy who has the last laugh in this study of toxic masculinity, homophobia, and revenge in which Macho Man does himself in.

“West Side Story” (PG-13)

This retelling of the story of Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” is given a fresh treatment in Stephen Spielberg’s remake of the 1961 film classic. For 60 years I have been recommending the earlier “West Side Story” as suitable viewing and discussion for Advent. The hatred between the teenage Puerto Rican gang the Sharks and the Italian Jets and the cops’ scorn for both well represent the fallen world that Christ came to redeem. Tony in his song “Something’s Coming” matches the longing expressed by Israel

in “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” and the haunting song “Somewhere” describes well the world of love and acceptance that Christ ushers in. Although I prefer the original in which the lovers sing this last song as a duet to the new version in which Rita Moreno sings it alone, this new version better expresses the Latino culture and ethnic prejudice so amusingly expressed in “America.” The hint of reconciliation between the two groups may be a dilution of what was expressed by the Prince of Verona at the end of the original, but it is still there as both Jets and Sharks pick up Tony’s body and remove it from the street. Thus, the film is as relevant to our divided, hate-filled society as ever.

Each of these nine films offers us an opportunity to explore ethical and theological values. Many churches now have a film group, just as in an earlier age they would have had a book discussion group. If your church does not, maybe it’s time that it did. Don’t just read this; do something about it. ■



Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) 2022 calls us into solidarity to restore, protect, and expand voting rights in the United States and to realize human rights around the world. As people of faith, we know each person to be created in God’s image, imbued with dignity and having a voice that demands to be heard, heeded, and treated justly. We arise in unity, holding up a mirror to leaders of nations, putting injustice on display and tearing down the veil of oppression that obscures

the beautiful, God-born light shining from within us all.

We bear witness to a global increase in violent repression of journalists, activists, rights defenders, and social leaders. Political leaders around the world

are using the pandemic as cover to boldly steal power and silence opposition through intimidation, torture, and murder. Our government is comfortably complicit in such abuses for economic gain and in the name of “national security,” but true security demands that human rights be protected everywhere. We are summoned by the Holy Spirit to act immediately in solidarity with the world, insisting on an end to repression and drawing attention to God’s image reflected in the rich di-

versity of humankind.

As we gather in 2022, we are called to reflect the urgency and determination found in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s words. In his “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence” speech, he reminds us, “We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the *fierce urgency of now*. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late.”

As people of faith, we are called to meet the challenges of this moment. ■

About EAD

Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a movement of the ecumenical Christian community, and its recognized partners and allies, grounded in biblical witness and our shared traditions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Our goal, through worship, theological reflection and opportunities for learning and witness, is to strengthen our Christian voice and to mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues. More info at advocacydays.org.



I-HELP

Until there's a place called HOME

UPC now hosts I-HELP every week, Friday through Sunday. Our faith partners and Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA) help provide meals. UPC provides meals the third Friday and the following Saturday of each month.

For info on volunteering, contact Jill Russell, Bonnie Henry, or Cathy Richardson



ONLINE WORSHIP

REGISTER TODAY!

(In-person Worship began Aug 15th)

www.upctempe.org/worship

A confirmation email will be sent with a login link that is unique to you!

Services also live streamed to www.upctempe.org/YouTube.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK

(1-800-273-8255)

Talk to someone.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States.

En Español: 1-888-628-9454

Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

HATTIE'S BOOK

Continued from page 3

Hattie held one of my hands and one of the little girls held the other. When Hattie finished praying, she very quietly called my attention to the little hand that was clasped in mine. Her fingers were webbed! Only the very tips of her fingers were visible beyond the webbing. It became clear immediately that with this deformity this precious child would not only have difficulties picking up and holding things, but also would suffer curious notice from adults and ridicule from children.

When we were back in Hattie's living room she explained that the webbed fingers were the result of the mother's poor nutrition when she was pregnant with this baby. Even though she had just met us, Hattie was not shy about asking if there was any way we could provide for surgery to remove the webbing.

The first thought I had was the Shriners Hospital for Children in Chicago and all the free medical work they do

for children. Part of the hospital's mission is to provide the highest quality care for children with special health care needs, among them orthopedic needs. By making several phone calls, I was able to get the little girl accepted for an evaluation at the hospital with surgery to follow. All the mother had to do was take her to the hospital for the evaluation and follow up.

When I shared this good news with Hattie, she advised me that from then on we needed to let the mother take the initiative. She never did. She never followed through even though the surgery and treatment were free and her daughter's hand would be repaired. She was afraid to. She was afraid to because she and her little girl would have to ride buses and trains for eight miles through several areas of Chicago to the hospital which was on the Near North Side. She was afraid because white riders would be riding the trains and buses, and they would be passing through white neighborhoods. She was also very afraid of having white people take care of her

beloved daughter. Her fear was based on the dangers white people represented in her own personal experience and in the history of Black people in the United States.

It was a big disappointment but a review of the history of the treatment of Black people in Chicago soon taught me that her fears were justified. ■



Beverly Phillips, author of *Hattie's Book*

Worship Volunteer Schedule

Below is the schedule of worship volunteers for the next month. If you are listed and have a conflict, you are asked to please find a replacement and then contact Ruling Elder Sada Reed, co-chair of the Worship Committee.

To volunteer or get on one of the rotations, Sada Reed! Thank you!

March 2022

Sanctuary Readiness Team Larry Seubert

Mar. 6—1st Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Helen Griffin
Children's Moment Helen Griffin
Worship Tech Chris Trella and Jim Niemann

Mar. 13—2nd Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Chris Casanova
Children's Moment Chris Casanova
Worship Tech Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Mar. 20—3rd Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Vicki Jacobs
Children's Moment Pastor Eric
Worship Tech Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Mar. 27—4th Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Molly Winkler
Children's Moment Molly Winkler
Worship Tech Chris Trella and Jim Niemann

WANTED: Anyone interested in learning about audio and video production and to serve as worship techs for upcoming hybrid in-person/online worship services. Training provided. Contact Chris Trella or Pastor Eric to volunteer!

April 2022

Sanctuary Readiness Team Larry Seubert

Apr. 3—5th Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Jean Luce
Children's Moment Pastor Eric
Worship Tech Chris Trella and Sada Reed

Apr. 10—Palm Sunday

Liturgist Jan Felton
Children's Moment Jan Felton
Worship Tech Chris Trella and Bianca Osorio

Apr. 14—Maundy Thursday

Liturgist Kathy Wagner
Children's Moment Vacant
Worship Tech Vacant

Apr. 17—Easter Sunday

Liturgist Lawn Griffiths
Children's Moment Vacant
Worship Tech Vacant

Apr. 24—2nd Sunday of Easter

Liturgist Paul Green
Children's Moment Paul Green
Worship Tech Vacant

Welcome to the 225th General Assembly from Lament to Hope

The 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is this summer, but plans are well under way for the denomination's hybrid gathering. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is knee-deep into working on how to combine in-person committee meetings with online plenaries and how to conduct those at the Church's Louisville office. Visit <https://ga-pcusa.org/> regularly to see what's new.

June 18 - July 9, 2022

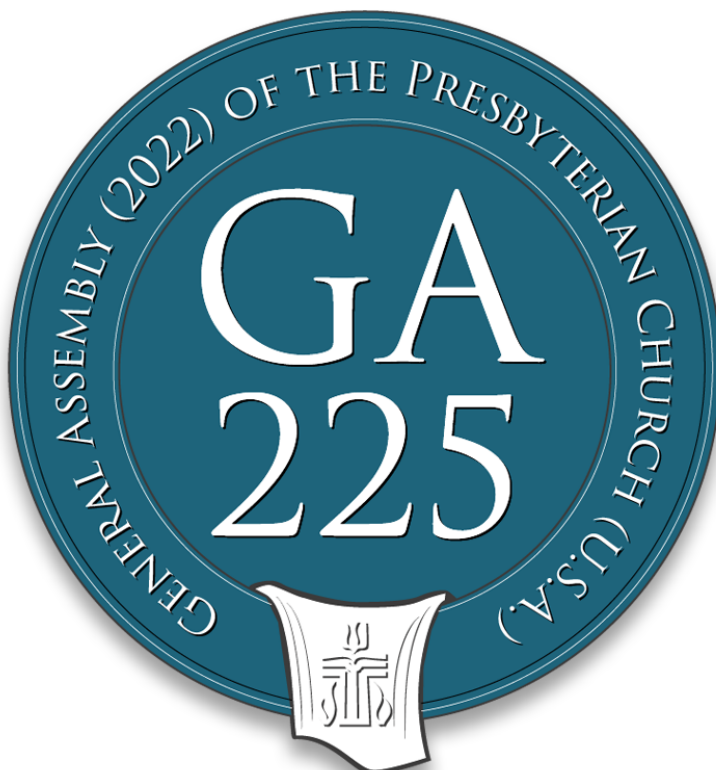
Hybrid - Committee sessions in Louisville, KY,
Plenary sessions online.

Have Questions?

Contact GA Meeting Service

Email: gameetingservice@pcusa.org

Phone: (888) 728-7228 x 2417





- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Bill Sheldon | 20 Jey Young |
| 5 Allison Johnson | Doug Hawkins |
| Lauren Horne | Katie Casanova |
| 7 David Hardy | Fred Boyd |
| 9 Nicholas Vale | 24 Margaret Branson |
| 11 Chip Silcox | 25 Kayla Horne |
| 14 Dana Prestly | |

If you see a birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please let the office know as soon as possible.

Stay Informed on All-Things-Presby!

PC(USA) News

Available in a daily or weekly digest format. www.pcusa.org/newsupdates

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Weekly E-focus Newsletter

News and views from our presbytery. pbygrandcanyon.org/subscribe-to-efocus.

PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

Housed across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court in what is referred to as "the God Box," the OPW is the PC (USA)'s advocacy and information center in Washington, D.C. Sign up for OPW Alerts and be an advocate! www.votervoice.net/pcusa/home. Learn

more about the OPW at:

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington.

Presbyterian Historical Society

Organized in 1852, the PHS is the oldest denominational archives in the U.S. and serves as the national archives for the PC (USA) and its predecessor denominations. PHS exists to collect, preserve, and share the story of the American Presbyterian and Reformed experience. www.history.pcusa.org.

The Presbyterian Outlook

An independent magazine covering all things Presbyterian — \$19.95/year, 18 issues. pres-outlook.org

Presbyterians Today

Award-winning denominational magazine published by the PC(USA). Also available in a free twice monthly e-newsletter. *Get a free 1 year subscription!*

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today



Remember prayer...

- ✘ **Homebound:** Evelyn Colby, Elaine Murray, Helen Alderson
- ✘ **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** in the U.S.
- ✘ **Communities** bearing the weight of violence in their streets and neighborhoods
- ✘ **All affected by COVID-19**, especial those who are hospitalized and their families, and the families of those who have died.
- ✘ **Medical personnel** and first responders who continue to be on the front lines of battling COVID-19
- ✘ **Indigenous People** who are especially suffering under the weight of COVID-19 and hundreds of years of subjugation.
- ✘ **Teachers and students** as they continue online and in-person.
- ✘ **All of creation**, and for the strength to stand up for environmental conservation
- ✘ **Elected & community leaders**, that they can bring peace to our nation and world
- ✘ **Military personnel**, stateside and abroad
- ✘ **Peacemakers/Mission Workers**, particularly the Rev. Leslie Vogel and the Rev. Mark Adams, Jocabed Gallego, and all at Frontera de Cristo.
- ✘ **Our nation and world**—praying for peace
- ✘ **Immigrants**, especially those separated from families
- ✘ **UPC Officers:** elders, deacons, trustees
- ✘ Those who are **suffering and are marginalized**
- ✘ Those struggling with **mental illness**

UPC Calendar

Submit corrections, additions, or deletions to the church office at (480) 966-6267 or upc@upctempe.org.

Check online for updates or to subscribe on your computer or device:

www.upctempe.org/calendar

March 2022

Wed, Mar 2

Ash Wednesday

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service

Thu, Mar 3

- 11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)
- 7:00 pm CE Committee (ZU)

Fri, Mar 4

- 2:00 pm I-HELP
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Mar 5

- 9:00 am Baseball Card Show (FH)

Sun, Mar 6

1st Sunday in Lent

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 11:00 am Youth Group (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Mar 7

- 11:00 am The Artist's Way Cohort (ZP)
- 4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Administration Committee (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Mar 8

- 7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Finance Committee (S, ZU)

Wed, Mar 9

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:30 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Mar 10

- 7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Mar 11

- 2:00 pm I-HELP
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Mar 13

2nd Sunday in Lent

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 11:00 am Youth Group (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Mar 14

- 11:00 am The Artist's Way Cohort (ZP)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Mar 15

- 6:30 pm CIO Committee (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Board of Trustees (ZU)

Wed, Mar 16

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 1:00 pm Chinle Circle (MR)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Mar 17

- 11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (ZU)
- 11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)

Fri, Mar 18

- 2:00 pm I-HELP
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Mar 20

3rd Sunday in Lent

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 11:00 am Youth Group (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Mar 21

- 11:00 am The Artist's Way Cohort (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Board of Deacons (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Mar 22

- 7:00 pm Stated Session (S, ZU)

Wed, Mar 23

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Fri, Mar 25

- 2:00 pm I-HELP
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Mar 27

4th Sunday in Lent

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
- 11:00 am Youth Group (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Mar 28

- 11:00 am The Artist's Way Cohort (ZP)
- 6:30 pm PW Kayenta Circle (MR)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Mar 30

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
- 7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Mar 31

- 11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)

Fri, Apr 1

- 2:00 pm I-HELP
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Apr 2

- 9:00 am Baseball Card Show (FH)

Sun, Apr 3

5th Sunday in Lent

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)

See CALENDAR, page 16

Location/Room References:

(CH)-Choir Room (CR)-Conference Room/Office (COR/Rm7)-Community Room (FH)-Fellowship Hall (HSR)-High School Room (MSR)-Middle School Room (K)-Fellowship Hall Kitchen (L)-Lounge (MR)-Meeting Room (N) Nursery (PO)-Pastor's Office (Rm#)-Room Number Indicated (S)-Sanctuary

UPC NEWS & Current Events

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CALENDAR

Continued from page 15

11:00 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
11:00 am Youth Group (Rm 9)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Apr 4

11:00 am The Artist's Way Cohort (ZP)
4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
7:00 pm Administration Committee (ZP)
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Apr 6

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Apr 7

7:00 pm CE Committee Meeting (ZU)

Fri, Apr 8

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sun, Apr 10

Palm Sunday

4:00 pm Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2, 4-6)
9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
11:00 am Children's Bible Time (ZP)
11:00 am Youth Group (Rm 9)
11:00 am ACE (S, ZU)

Mon, Apr 11

Holy Monday

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2, 4-6)
11:00 am The Artist's Way Cohort (ZP)
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tuesday, Apr 12

Holy Tuesday

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2, 4-6)
7:00 pm Finance Committee (ZU)
7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)

Wed, Apr 13

Holy Week

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2, 4-6)

9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
5:15 pm Online Social Hour (ZU)
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
7:30 pm UKIRK @ ASU (Starbucks MU, ZU)

Thu, Apr 14

Maundy Thursday

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2, 4-6)

11:30 am PGC Theological Reflection Group (ZU)
7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)
7:00 pm Maundy Thursday (S, ZU, YT)

Fri, Apr 15

Good Friday

2:00 pm I-HELP
8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Apr 16

Holy Saturday

Sun, Apr 17

Easter Sunday