

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF VERNON, UCC

~ Palm/Passion Sunday ~

March 20, 2016

WELCOME!

Let us enter the city with God today, and sing hosannas to our king. Let us join his parade, surrounded by outcasts and misfits, the blind and the leper. Let us follow the one who brought freedom and peace. Let us shout for joy at Christ's coming, welcoming the broken, healing the sick, dining with outsiders.

Hosanna!

PRELUDE

GREETING (~ Book of Worship, United Church of Christ)

Leader: Hosanna!

People: Hosanna in the highest! Praise be to God!

Prayer

Leader: Christ is with us.

People: Christ is in our midst.

Leader: Merciful God, as we enter Holy Week and gather at your house of prayer, turn our hearts again to Jerusalem, to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that united with Christ and all the faithful we may one day enter in triumph the city not made by human hands, the new Jerusalem, eternal in the heavens, where with you and the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in glory forever. Amen.

READING of the PALM SUNDAY GOSPEL Mark 11:1-11 (p. 47)

Holly Olmstead

BLESSING of the PALMS

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: O God, who in Jesus Christ triumphantly entered Jerusalem, heralding a week of pain and sorrow, be with us now as we follow the way of the cross. In these events of defeat and victory, you have sealed the closeness of death and resurrection, of humiliation and exaltation. We thank you for these branches that promise to become for us symbols of martyrdom and majesty. Bless them and us that their use this

day may announce in our time that Christ has come and that Christ will come again. Amen! Come, Christ Jesus! Let us go forth in peace.

People: In the name of Christ.

TIME with the CHILDREN

***OPENING HYMN** #192

"All Glory, Laud, and Honor"

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

LENTEN WREATH LITURGY

Rick and Holly Olmstead

Reader 1: We have gathered here, week after week, sharing a common quest for a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to close your eyes and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem. How will we greet him? Will we follow him all the way to the Cross?

Reader 2: The power of Jesus is that he lived what he taught, even when it led to his death. He lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient times that conspire to put it out. Where are we in this? What are we willing to risk to follow Jesus?
(Silent time)

Reader 1: As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of rejection and betrayal.
(A candle is extinguished.)

Reader 2: Let us pray:

All: Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own pasts. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbors; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

***GLORIA PATRI**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

JUNIOR CHOIR

"Little Grey Donkey"

(All children are invited downstairs for Sunday School.)

SERMON "A Heavenly Cause" Rev. Suzanne Personette

SPECIAL MUSIC "The Impossible Dream" Leigh/Darion
Rev. Stan Possell - solo

MORNING PRAYER/The LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

CALL to OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Hosanna to the King of Israel" L. Larson

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER of DEDICATION (unison)

We cast these gifts before you, O God, as palms were cast before Jesus long ago. We lay them on your altar in praise, thanksgiving, and joy. Receive them back from our hands, that they may become a greater blessing in your hands. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN #191 "Ride On, Ride On in Majesty!"
(sung to the traditional tune)

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because he has anointed us to bring good news to the poor. He has sent us to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

~based on Luke 4:18-19

***All who are able are invited to stand.**

Join us for coffee and conversation after the service in Fellowship Hall.

The flowers on the Communion Table are given to Phyllis Chase, with love, in celebration of her birthday, by the Deacons.

In Our Ongoing Prayers

Joyce Smith; Candy Buswell; Christopher and Davian Lewis (Candy Buswell's sister and brother-in-law); **Sue Deprospero**, recovering; **John Arthur** (Sue's father); Nancy Bright and family on the loss of her mother, Helen Lane; Rita Cima (Dan Cima's grandmother) mourning the loss of her husband after 65 years; Becca, Glory Hockenberry's friend; Michele, daughter of Althea Madigan's cousin, for healing, and prayers for her doctors; Collette, daughter of Sarah Summers, healing from RSV; Brian, 11 years old, fighting bone cancer; Meg (Bill and Holly Boutwell's sister and sister-in-law) on the aggressive return of a tumor; the homeless; the hungry; Linda Vogt, friend of Marilyn Newton, diagnosed with kidney cancer; Linda Rentler; gun reform; acceptance of religious diversity/skin color/sexual orientation; Terri Karr; Daniel Burnett-Pollack; Debbie Chase; Dick Myer; Margaret Klukas; Gilmay Markunas and family; Paul Westerberg; people struggling with mental illness, and their families; the people of Syria, including the family of Tarek Eid; Heidi Howie; Mason Bower; Michael Turner; Martha Fowler; Michael Bebrin; Cooper Doyle
New additions in bold print

~ANNOUNCEMENTS~

*Greet your neighbor with a hug or handshake,
whichever is most comfortable for the two of you.*

++In an effort to keep the Sabbath holy, we would like to refrain from talking with church leaders about church business before or after worship. If you need to speak with someone, please contact them late in the day or in the coming week.++

If you would like to become a member of FCCV, please speak with Rev. Robin, Rev. Suz or one of our Deacons. We'd like to schedule a New Member Class soon, as well as a New Member Sunday in which we receive new members!

TODAY DURING COFFEE HOUR downstairs in Fellowship Hall

The J*Walkrz are selling **FCCV pens** for only \$1. Proceeds will help us attend the National Youth Event in July.

The Ways and Means Committee is selling **chili** and **cornbread** - \$5 for a pint, \$8 for a quart.

Name Tags: If you ordered one, you can pick it up today from the Scrip-Your-All table. If you'd like to order one, three options are available – magnet, pin or clip. You can also include a hang tag should you belong to a board/committee. A \$3 to \$5 donation is requested, but not required. Order today or contact Kate Fowler at kfowler64@yahoo.com.

FCCV Mugs make great Easter gifts. Stop by the Scrip-Your-All table today and pick one up. Cost - \$10 and money raised helps support church outreach.

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Easter Egg Hunt: 11:30 AM

Junior Choir Rehearsal: 11:30 AM, PF Room

J*Walkrz: 3:30 PM, Fellowship Hall

Pairs and Spares - The Ten Commandments: 2 PM at Rave Theater, Buckland Hills. Cost - \$8.50. Open to all - pairs, spares, kids, teens, families. If interested in attending, stop by the Scrip-Your-All table during Coffee Hour. Remember to use your Rave gift card (available at the Scrip-Your-All table.)

THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

Bible Study: Monday, March 21, 11 AM, Library

Men's Breakfast Group: Tuesday, March 22, 6:30 AM, Vernon Diner

Good Friday: March 25, the Church Office is closed.

Support Group: Friday, March 25, 10:30 AM, Library

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

March 24, 7 PM

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

Sunday, March 27, 6:30 AM

in the Memorial Garden

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday March 27, 10 AM

Wanted - Cheerful Ambassadors for Easter Sunday, March 27: The

Stewardship and Evangelism Committee is looking for individuals, couples or families to greet visitors, members and friends outside the church as they make their way from the parking lots. People are also needed inside to greet and help visitors navigate their way to the elevator or stairs. This only requires 40 minutes of your time from 9:20 to 10 AM. Sign up at the Scrip-Your-All table.

FCCV is enrolled in the **Stephen Series with Stephen Ministries**. A **presentation** about this ministry will be held **Sunday, April 17** at 11:30 AM in Fellowship Hall and training will be implemented as soon as possible. **Many hours of training are required, but Rev. Joanne will make it easy for you to comply** – she will tutor when you can't be there and classes will be scheduled for everyone's convenience. The Stephen Ministry Series is biblically based, psychologically sound, highly enjoyable, and based on the Christian belief that GOD is the "curegiver" and we are the "caregivers." For more information about this ministry, check out firstchurchofvernon.org/stephen.html.

Instrumentalists Wanted to accompany the choir and/or to play a solo. Anyone interested should contact Choir Director Leanne Connolly at 860-462-4694 or lconnolly1825@gmail.com.

Scrip-Your-All Help Wanted! Are you looking for a way to be more involved at FCCV? Consider helping out at the Scrip-Your-All table. Volunteers are needed to man the Scrip-Your-All table during Coffee Hour from 11 AM-noon (once a month or once a quarter - your choice!). You'll be teamed with an experienced Scrip-Your-All volunteer. If interested, stop by the Scrip-Your-All table or contact Kate Fowler at 860-614-9747 or kfowler64@yahoo.com.

Help Needed! Ten youth, college students and adults are attending the UCC National Youth Event in Florida this summer. This event happens every four years and includes workshops, service projects, a day at Disney and, most importantly, worship with UCC youth from all over our nation and the world! The trip is quite expensive – \$909 per person for plane flight and Conference. We have been fundraising but **we still need help**. If you'd like to donate "in memory" or in "honor" of someone specific, please let Debi Hockenberry know when you write your check. Your name will be included in the bulletin on Youth Sunday in September! Thank you!

FCCV Fun-Filled Festival, Sunday, May 22, 2 PM, Fellowship Hall: A fundraiser for the Les Childs Scholarship, sponsored by the Board of Music and Leanne Connolly, will offer light snacks and finger foods while our FCCV family and friends present their talents for us to enjoy. Members and friends (all ages), including their talented pets, are invited to share their talents (singing, playing an instrument, reading, telling jokes, dancing, etc.). If you wish to participate or have any questions, please contact Leanne at 860-462-4694 or lconnolly1825@gmail.com.

The **R. Leslie Childs Memorial Scholarship** is a \$500 scholarship awarded each year to an FCCV church member or child of a member to provide assistance with musical training. Applications must be submitted to the Board of Music no later than April 15. Questions? Contact any Board of Music member.

The youth will be having a **Tag Sale** on April 23. Donations may be dropped off the week of the 23rd. Please keep us in mind while doing your spring cleaning!

Pairs and Spares: Saturday, April 16, 4:30-7:30 PM in Fellowship Hall. **Paint, Sip, Fun.** Cost - \$30. Paint and create your own work of art. Sign-up now during Coffee Hour or online at paintsipfun.com (click on April 16 and our event). Bring your friends. This event is being extended to older children accompanied by an adult (each can sign up or share a painting).

Evening Circle is **collecting items for a Center Road family**. Now that winter is behind us, we are requesting more spring-like items. Suggestions are...books, games, art projects, in addition to household items.

Please Note: To request a visit with one of the pastors, please contact the Church Office at 860-875-7580.

Needed! Our shopping carts (located in the Narthex and Breezeway) are running low. Each month Board of Missions members alternate taking non-perishable food to the Soup Kitchen in Rockville and to the Hockanum Valley Community Council. Folks are also need to help prepare meals at the Soup Kitchen. A sign-up sheet is posted in fellowship Hall.
