

Newsletter

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST EAST GOSHEN – MAY/JUNE 2020

In this issue:

Pastor's Message	P. 1
Announcements	P. 2
Council Updates/New Staff	P. 3
Worship Details	P. 4

ONE

"It was the worst of times and the best of Times." – A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

That is what I am feeling, so many opposites. Light and darkness, prosperity and despair, suffering and joy, It is difficult to live with peace in the midst of this time of opposites. Singing from balconies, and choirs which can't meet for the fear of droplets of corona virus spreading more than 6 feet. Being an essential worker, in the midst of so many who are jobless, and those who have to work each day and put themselves in harm's way. Having the gift of time with our children alone, to hear their stories and listen to their school work, and yet angst over no break, no separation to remind us how much we do miss them and love them, no place to go to remember where they end and we begin. And then there is the numbers games, the numbers of those dying from this virus, yet the increasing numbers of those leaving the hospital and surviving, and the numbers of people who have not gotten the virus or who have suffered very little. And the good news that for the most part the children for once are being spared, but the aging are dying, the prisoners close to their parole are being set free early, but now face a world with no resources and homelessness a given. We are missing even the people we don't know but who we see in supermarkets, the bank, drug stores, walking down the street. Not being able to acknowledge one another shows all of us that we need each other for this journey of life, and maybe we aren't as independent as we imagined.

Over these 2+ months, there have been many "worst of times" to bring our mental health and outlook to a place of brokenness and distress. I believe we cannot see the best of times in this pandemic, if we don't acknowledge the worst of times for all of us is also real. As in all of life, the truth always sets us free to new hope.

Even amid crisis, we are blessed with bests. All the times we have prayed and lifted up "The world as

one" in our words, we have seen how inter-related and dependent on each other we truly are. We are often fed a secular narrative of "them" and "us" but as one "us" we have contracted this virus and together as one "us" we will find a cure. We look to other countries and places on the globe where numbers are going down and we study them and try to learn from what they have done.

I recently read this bit of encouragement, "If you think you are too small to make a difference, think of being in a tent with one mosquito." Last week one member of our congregation brightened the day of several members living alone, by dropping off a loaf of homemade bread. Some of our young people have been writing with sidewalk chalk in places where other isolated neighbors have been walking. Have you received an unexpected call or note during these weeks from a friend just checking in? Just look how far colorful paper hearts can go and add hope. [In WestChester, businesses, buildings, and private homes have taken up hearts for the world.](#) One mosquito, one person, one act of kindness.

Another best has been the number of folks attending our virtual worship, checking in from afar, some never having worshipped with us, but reaching out to be connected. For one hour we know faith is alive, God is with us, and we can share compassionate love where it is needed.

*What is written in history books for future generations about the 2020 pandemic & the Covid-19 virus, which we are living now, will depend on how we see the whole picture, both the worst and best of this time, and how we remember and learn from these months of quarantine what it means to be one, as God has always called us: **One** in Spirit, **One** in Body, **One** in God's loving embrace and compassionate justice!*

On the journey with you, ~ Pastor Angelee

Mark Your Calendars

May 3 – 4th Sunday of Easter

May 10 – 5th Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)

May 17 – 6th Sunday of Easter

May 24 – 7th Sunday of Easter & Memorial Day Weekend

May 31 – Pentecost Sunday

June 7 – Trinity Sunday

June 14 – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

June 21 – 3rd Sunday after Pentecost (Father's Day)

June 28 – 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Safe Harbor Dinner is May 24

(the day before Memorial Day)

Our dinner at Safe Harbor is still on – sort of! Safe Harbor is designed to house homeless single men and women. Due to current social distancing orders of the pandemic, residents are being housed in a local hotel. We will be donating boxed meals for 20 residents. Details are still in the works, but if you are interested in helping please contact Gloria Rising at glorising124@gmail.com to arrange the logistics.



Stories & Bible Lessons

Since the very first days of physical distancing Cathy Yost has been reading stories and sharing bible messages for children on YouTube. She also has learning based lessons if that would help your children. Pastor Angelee asked if I would share the stories and bible messages with our church families. [Click here for the links](#) if you would like to share the stories with the young children in your life.



Café Script is BACK!

Our Café Script Bible study meets using Zoom at **11 AM on Wednesdays**. All are welcome! Join by visiting this page for details: ucceastgothen.org/events

Amazon Smile!

[Shop with Amazon Smile](#) and use your church as your charity. You get the same deals, and all the information on your current account remains. *Absolutely nothing changes* except that part of your purchase goes to UCC East Goshen as a donation from Amazon.



Volunteer with RSVP

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) & CovAid: Volunteers to provide grocery shopping services to local seniors and adults who are immuno-compromised.

[Sign up for RSVP](#) or [Sign up for CovAid](#).

Garden Opportunities!

It's planting time! Each year the harvest from our Gleaning Garden is donated to help feed local people in need. Beth Anne Keates is looking for volunteers to help with tilling, planting, watering, weeding. You and/or your immediate family can participate and still keep social distance during quarantine. If you are interested in helping, please [send Beth an email!](#)

Prayer Requests

If you have a prayer request, please [email it to the church office](#) and we will be sure to add it to the prayer list!



Thank You!

Thanks to all our building and grounds volunteers who weekly are cutting, pruning, cleaning, sprucing up and caring for our church building and grounds which need to stay in shape for our return soon! Behind the scenes are many angels of the church, you know who you are, and God is watching you and smiling! Thank you!

YMCA Food Distribution

The Brandywine, Jennersville and Oscar Lasko YMCA branches are collecting and distributing food for those in need.

Shelf-stable pantry items can be dropped off on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM at:

- Brandywine YMCA, 295 Hurley Road, Coatesville
- Jennersville YMCA, 880 West Baltimore Pike, West Grove
- Kennett Area YMCA, 101 Race Street, Kennett Square
- Oscar Lasko YMCA, 1 E Chestnut Street, West Chester

To maintain social distancing, simply pull up and our volunteers will collect the items from your car. Items most needed are pasta, rice, peanut butter and cereal, as well as canned fruits, vegetables, tuna and chicken.

If you are in need of food, please complete this [confidential form](#) and the Y will be in touch.

~ Church Council Updates ~

Our last church council meeting was held on Monday, April 20, by online conference call. Several significant items were discussed and agreed to. We received a deposit of \$1,000 from the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. This amount was sent to all UCC congregations in the conference to help financially during the time we are unable to worship physically together and the church, therefore, is unable to receive rental funds from groups who typically have their meetings at our church. After much discussion, the council decided to give \$500 to the West Chester University Resource Pantry. We also decided to wait until next meeting to decide on how to use the remaining \$500.

One of our heat pump/air conditioning units was stolen! Greg Saylor has contacted our insurance company and the police on this matter. We have a \$1000 deductible on our insurance policy. The Building-and-Grounds team is working with Haly Oil to schedule the work. At this time, we expect that to be completed in the next two weeks so that the Sanctuary is back to full capability before any in-person services take place. Council will determine source of funds to pay the deductible. In addition, annual service of all of the heating and air conditioning units will be scheduled this month. Those costs are covered by our annual service contract with Haly Oil.

We have activated the alarm system once again and changed the alarm code as of May 4, 2020. I have notified council members and those who frequently use the church building of the code change. If you need access to the building, contact Linda Ardao.

Financially, we are under budget. We are most grateful to those of you who are continuing to send in your offering. We realize that the virus situation has challenged many financially. Surrey Services has not renewed its rental agreement with us. This means a loss of \$7000 in income yearly. They have said they will make a final decision on whether to renew when we all return to being able to use the building. Beth Saylor took the lead on applying for a PPP loan from the federal government. We received \$9,896.00 in our checking account.

Bonnie Jackson, chair of Congregational life, has been sending cards and delivering baked goods to people in the community. Lucy Barber, chair of Mission & Outreach, is working on a "no contact" food collection. Dawn Lawhon, Christian Ed. chair and Carol Swingle have planned and sent some Sunday school activities.

Great thanks to Pastor Benner-Smith for continuing to provide meaningful online Sunday services and continuing to tend to other ministerial duties during this time of great spiritual need. Roots & Roofs and Sunday services draw participation from those near & far. Much appreciation goes to Michael Hatala, the Yost family, Leslie Siebert and Al Benner-Smith who fill these services with music, scripture and visuals. We hope you will avail yourself and your friends of these meaningful spiritual offerings on Saturday at 5:30pm and Sunday at 10am. They are streaming on ucceastgoshen.org.

Our council will continue to serve and keep you updated on the discussions we have and decisions we make on your behalf. Please stay well and follow guidelines for safety for you and others. Know that your church is here for you. We are just a call or video service away! ~ Linda Ardao, Council President

Welcome our new Music Ministry Director



The Church Council approved the recommendation from the personnel committee at our last online conference meeting of the hire of Mr. Michael Hatala to be our new Music Ministry Director. Michael had previously served as our worship leader for our Roots and Roofs services where he also led the Roots and Roofs band. Michael will continue to provide music for R&R services. He is most enthusiastic, as are we, for providing UCCEG with beautiful, diverse and creative music at our Sunday and special services. We have provided him with a list of choir, bells and special music participants. Please email him, pastor or Linda Ardao if you have an interest in joining the choir, playing bells or providing special music for our services. We look forward to the day when we can all be together physically again to participate in appreciating the sounds of the choir, bells and special music opportunities. Until then, please enjoy Michael's contributions by joining us online at Facebook Live on Sundays!

Farewell and Godspeed!

Reverend Douglas Holder tendered his resignation as of March 29, 2020 citing a necessary change in his living situation and need for he and husband John to return to California. We are grateful for his service to UCCEG. Many of us appreciated his skill and creative playing of both the organ and piano at our services. Because of the Coronavirus situation, we were unable to give him a "Thank you" in person as he was only able to announce his departure at our on-line service on March 18th. We wish both he and John well as they return to California.



Virtual Worship – Sundays @ 10 AM

The words to prayers and hymns will be displayed on the screen so everyone can join in while you watch worship.

[Click here to join worship via FB Live.](#)

Newsletter Submissions

The UCCEG newsetter is published monthly. Submissions are due by the 3rd Tuesday of the month prior to publication to office@ucceastgothen.org.

Your Church Council

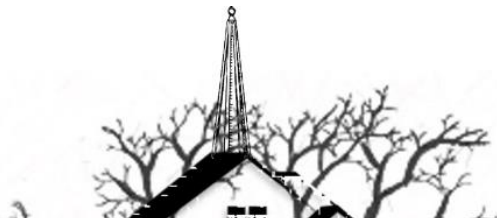
President - Linda Ardao
Vice President - Don Rising
Secretary - Leslie Siebert
Treasurer - Beth Saylor
Assistant Treasurer - *open*
Financial Secretary - Todd Speece
Building & Grounds - *open*
Christian Education - Dawn Lawhon
Church Growth - Al Benner-Smith
Congregational Life – Bonnie Jackson
Mission & Outreach - Lucy Barber
Worship & Music - Bunny Watts

ROOT AND ROOFS

Roots and Roofs is an interactive worship service that we have been able to continue via Zoom throughout the pandemic. This is a great opportunity to reflect, pray, listen, discuss, and share in our faith. We have selected the theme **Resilience and Hope** for our worship series. Each week we have discussed different ways that hope and resilience abound, even in our current pandemic situation. I would like to thank everyone in the Roots and Roofs committee for their ability to adapt quickly to this new platform in order to continue our ministry together. We look forward to having you [join us, every Saturday at 5:30 pm!](#)

Follow us on

<http://www.Facebook.com/RootsandRoofs>



United Church of Christ East Goshen

1201 NORTH CHESTER ROAD
WEST CHESTER, PA 19380

610-692-2951

www.UCCEastGoshen.org



Rev. Angelee Benner-Smith, Pastor

*Michael Hatala, Director of Music Ministry
and Worship Leader, Roots & Roofs*

Jen Troutman, Office Administrator