

OZAUKEE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Newsletter

April 2020

Lenten Lessons & Anthem Inspiration

STAY CONNECTED

We continue to worship, even when we're apart. Find OCC's worship services every week on the OCC YouTube channel!



[CLICK HERE](#)

This is the OCC newsletter for April 2020, a month during which we will have no in person services or activities at our church facility. We will have no Bible studies, no Sunday morning worship, no gatherings. In many ways, church as we know it is not going to happen in the month of April.

And yet, we are sending out the newsletter because church is continuing. We have always believed and taught that church is not the building or facility. The church is the people and the way those people represent the love of God to one another, to their community, and to the world. The church is not even primarily a gathering on Sunday morning; the church is the unity of hearts and minds around the love of God, and the enactment of that love in kindness, compassion, and service. The calls we are making to one another, the willingness of everyone to help in any way they can, our digital connections, our care for those in need, our donation to organizations reaching out to those affected . . . all of this is church.

Sunday, April 5th, was to be our annual Lenten Lessons & Anthems put on by the OCC Choir and members of the MSO. While we will miss the joy of hearing their presentation, I find great inspiration and encouragement in one of the songs the choir was to sing. The lyrics say:

Rejoice with the rejoicing, and weep with those who mourn. Be patient and forgiving; repair what has been torn. Remember the forgotten; invite the stranger in. Serve each other faithfully until I come again. Love as I have loved you. Serve as I have served. Give as I have given. Be my church. Be my hands and body moving in the world. Live you live your life in blessing. Be my church.

Thank you for being the church, especially in this month, April 2020.

It's not quite the OCC Choir, but click [HERE](#) to hear the song "Be My Church."

See you online, talk to you on the phone, connect with you over email!

Jeff



April Calendar

While all in-person activities and services have been suspended, please mark your calendars for our observance of the Easter season and look for emails with links to online worship services or studies that mark the days in this most holy season of the Christian calendar.

APRIL 5 Palm Sunday

APRIL 9 Maundy Thursday

APRIL 10 Good Friday

APRIL 12 Easter Sunday

Other online meetings and activities will be scheduled as we go.
Thanks for joining us!

From Your Moderator

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Whew! We have all been through a lot lately with COVID-19. We have shuttered the church doors, closed restaurants, reduced work at the office, and have to stand no less than 6 feet from others in public. Now with a lockdown in our homes, we miss physically seeing, hearing and especially touching, hugging, high-fiving and kissing our family and friends. It's all a bit surreal and can be scary if we think about it too much.

But, there have been some good things that can be seen in all of this mess. I have seen families playing outside together, riding their bikes in the neighborhood, and putting up homemade window art for others to view. Some have reached out to help those who are more sensitive by doing errands or grocery shopping for them. It's not easy staying at home when you are supposed to, but all in all I think it has made us slow down and take stock in what is truly important: the health of all of us. We have all had to reconsider what we need to do for others rather than just for ourselves. Staying away from work, school and friends may not be what we want to do, but we know it is best for all.

We know that this will all be behind us one day and I am hoping we can look back on this with a positive thought that we gained something through this struggle. I am thankful that we have the technology to stay in touch with each other by calling, texting, FaceTiming, waving from a window or even writing a letter and sending it via "snail mail." We can learn to take each day at a time and be grateful for the time we have to remind us to slow down and reach out.

Church services and activities are cancelled for a time, but Jeff and Rob are making videos and sending out emails to keep in touch. Jeff, Rob and church council members are making calls to touch base with all of you on a regular basis. We feel it is important to keep in touch with our friends and church family. Please feel free to ask us to pray for you, ask for a helping hand, and ask questions or tell us your concerns. We are here for each other.

I look forward to us all getting together again in person, but until then please stay safe, stay well and stay connected,

Stacey

From Your Treasurer

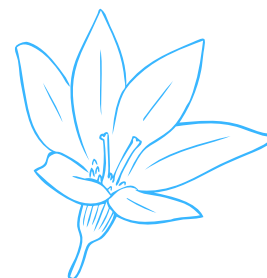
These days I think a lot about the medieval eclipse – the little understood darkening of the sun and the resultant fears of what was to come. But the shadow passed and the inhabitants got through it.

We were reintroduced to the same fears this week when a tornado-style virus threatened our health and lifestyle. What is interesting in the comparison is that the current pandemic does not threaten the features of our planet, only the socio-economic structure of its human inhabitants. Natural features (landscapes, animals, environment, etc.) seem to be unaffected – only our life patterns are threatened. In time, we will get through this, but our economics will certainly be different.

Your trustees and I are watching the impact of the temporary social isolation policies on OCC's finances. Before the shutdown, including all congregation activities, my treasurer's report was positive (except for an emerging stock market-based decline in our endowment and long-term investments). After the "all clear signal", we will rework the 2020 budget.

Please stay well and healthy – we will gather again in our Sanctuary.

Dick Dieffenbach



Happenings

Some adult education and fellowship activities are suspended during the coronavirus crisis.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY is suspended until further notice. This applies to both the Tuesday night group and the Wednesday morning group. Rob will be reaching out to regular attendees digitally, on at least a weekly basis.

SHEEPSHEAD NIGHTS, normally a monthly thing, are suspended until further notice. The game is awesome, as is the camaraderie, but passing cards from person to person while eating popcorn and peanuts just seems like a terrible idea right now.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP, normally a monthly event, is suspended until further notice.

CHOIR REHEARSAL is suspended until further notice. We will miss hearing your singing voices!

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY is suspended until further notice. You are, of course, encouraged to continue knitting at home until we can meet again!



In Other News:

115 Bags of Love Have Left the Building!

Roughly half of those were picked up by Nehemiah Project staff on Monday morning, March 9. That afternoon, the rest were picked up by Advocates staff. Many thanks to everyone who took bags, filled them, and returned them. The young men at Nehemiah, and the women and children at Advocates, are grateful for your generosity!

MacCanon Brown Meal Serves About 100

On Friday, May 13, just days before “social distancing” became the new normal, a team from OCC served sloppy joes, carrots, chips, cookies, coffee, and lemonade to homeless and hungry folks at Hephatha Lutheran Church (18th & Locust in Milwaukee). Many thanks to everyone who bought, prepared, and donated food, and special thanks to the team that went to Hephatha and served: Avery, Jonah, & Michelle Bersell; Dayle & Dick Dieffenbach; Rob Fredrickson; Linda Gavin; Sue Lundsten; and Sue Ann Walczak.

Youth Ministry

GRADES 6-12 (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

To receive text reminders and alerts regarding youth ministry activities,
just text @youthocc to 81010.

OCC's youth ministries are adapting during this coronavirus crisis.

MP3 will not meet in person until further notice. However, Rob will be generating weekly video messages for youth that will be available online on Sundays.

CONFIRMATION CLASS is scheduled to meet on Sunday, April 19. Consider that class session to be tentatively still on. If it is deemed to be unwise to have this session in person, we'll explore digital alternatives. Confirmation students: Please be working on your Personal Credo and your Feedback & Decision form which are both due on April 19.

AGAPE TABLE for college-age young adults in Milwaukee and Madison has been suspended for the remainder of the academic year. Rob will be reaching out periodically to these groups digitally.

The **WCA SPRING YOUTH RETREAT** scheduled for April 17-18 at OCC has been cancelled.

Still on...for now:

The **HOSANNA MISSION TRIP**, scheduled for June 20-26, is at this point still on. Those signed up for the trip should stay tuned for updates. We are certainly hoping and praying that we'll be able to move forward with the trip.

WCA CAMP for grades 3-12, scheduled for July 12-18 at Mt. Morris, is at this point still on. Planning, staffing, program development, etc. are well underway, and for now we're going forward under the assumption that camp will happen. All the details and forms are at wiscongregational.net/camp. Register by May 1 and save a cool \$100!





Outreach Opportunities

Questions? Want to sign up to serve? Contact Rob: rcf474@gmail.com or 414-688-8991.

OCC's community service projects are paused during the coronavirus crisis.

BOOK SORTING AT NEXT DOOR, scheduled for April 6, is postponed until at least May 4.

We are holding off on any future volunteer times at **SOLES FOR JESUS** until further notice.

HOPE HOUSE FOOD PANTRY is scheduled for Saturday, April 18. Please consider that to be tentatively still on. Rob is assuming we stand at zero volunteers for that date right now, so if you'd like to be on the team be sure to let him know.

FAMILY SHARING is scheduled for Monday, April 27. Please consider that to be tentatively still on. Rob is assuming we stand at zero volunteers for that date right now, so if you'd like to be on the team be sure to let him know.

Because in-person worship services, classes, groups, programs, and activities at OCC have been in hiatus due to the virus situation, please do not drop off items for the **BENEVOLENCE BOX** until further notice. At some future point, we will resume collection of Sendik's bags, empty laundry jugs, toiletries, shoes, etc. Stay tuned!

(Special note: While OCC's "official" team-based volunteer activities are suspended during the coronavirus crisis, food pantries and other non-profits focused on vulnerable populations continue to offer critically important services. If you're relatively young, very healthy, and relatively unconcerned about exposure to the virus, feel free to reach out to the director of an organization to see if they're welcoming volunteers at this time. If you need contact info for a particular organization's director, get in touch with Rob.)



OCC Council Members

As we move forward in our journey, let us remember to ...

“covenant together, of our own free will, to love God and to enjoy God forever, to walk in God’s ways, known and to be made known, to study the life and the teachings of Jesus Christ, to live and work together in unity and peace, and to care for those whom God has given us to love.”

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