

April 2021

“May you live in

traditional Chinese curse

interesting times.”

Are these “interesting” times a curse or could they also be a blessing? While no one would deny that this past year has exposed our physical vulnerability, it has also revealed the depth of our kindness, confirmed our commitment to care for one another, and demonstrated how the power of love can fuel resiliency. Perhaps the blessing comes when we can view this time as an extraordinary opportunity for needed change and growth, a unique invitation to move forward into a new day in a new way.

As I think back on my life, it has never been *uninteresting*. What do you think, are uninteresting times more peaceful and satisfying? Maybe so, but the truth is that every season of life in every time of life is a fluid, ever-changing current. Along this river of life, everyone encounters both sparkling clear waters of joy and also dark, murky undercurrents of sorrow and grief. Risk flows alongside possibility, and streams of expectation can sometimes carry us into the still water of heartbreak and disappointment. This river of life is always “interesting.”

At this particular point in the great flow of time, many sociologists, historians, philosophers and theologians are agreeing that we are paddling through what may very well be the most interesting time in human history. Whether this is a curse or a blessing will largely depend on how we respond to the shocking revelation that our social/political ecosphere is a very fragile vessel. The stunning events of last year tore away the flimsy veneer that elegantly masked just how vulnerable and at-risk humanity really is. After a grueling year of being smacked around by reality, one thing is certain. We aren't going back upstream. So how do we prepare for what lies ahead? At this great moment in history, can we find great opportunity to rise up? How do we boldly approach these rapidly flowing new currents of re-entry into a post-pandemic world?

Throughout Lent we gazed beyond the shadowed valley of death. In the cold winter darkness, we kept our eyes fixed on a horizon

we couldn't quite see. Yet, we trusted the dawning would appear. We are a resurrection people. It is this kind of unrelenting faith that will guide us along the unpredictable waters ahead. We will orient ourselves on the steady, reliable faithfulness of our God, the God that continually leads us through, animating and reanimating our hope. And even when the river rages, (and it will) threatening to devour us whole, God will show us the way of rescue. All we need do is choose to trust and follow.

We know from experience that TriCon Church, is never static, never uninteresting. Though many unfamiliar with us might question the point, we are a dynamic, transforming, living organism. Our tradition anchors us in the storms but we are carried ahead by the ever-changing, always surprising, winds of the Holy Spirit. Our mission is quite clear, we love God, love one another, love our neighbor and radiate that love beyond ourselves even to the ends of the earth. By grace we have the faith to round the next bend in the river, trusting the living God. In faith we adapt to today's rapidly changing currents. In faith, we dare to defy any alleged curse and boldly envision a future brimming with the promise of God's renewal, a future overflowing with unlimited possibility. In faith we imagine what might be, what could be, what should be, rather than succumb to the death-dealing tyranny of what has always been.

The phrase “Interesting times” is often thought of as a euphemism for frightening times, an age of uncertainty, turmoil and unwanted change. While that may be true, the

deeper truth is that these times of deconstruction are absolutely critical to make room for urgently needed growth. Chaos is the disorder that signals an inevitable and necessary new order.

The truly *interesting* thing about these times is that God eagerly invites us to participate in erecting a new order.

Standing on this pivot point in history, we have choices to make. How might we reimagine our regathering in the beloved community? Could this be a unique opportunity to rethink the ways we worship, how we embody our mission, how we serve those on the margins and broaden our outreach? Might this be a time to reevaluate and recalibrate the way we utilize our resources? What formerly unseen possibilities are now visible and viable to advance the beloved community? Can our idea of church be re-envisioned? Should it?

There is no mandate forcing us to yield to the ancient Chinese curse. This most “interesting time” also offers a most interesting invitation to live into the blessing of resurrection.

I believe that, as the Body of Christ, we can seize this moment to expand our understanding of God’s beloved community. In what ways can the remarkable innovations

and caring creativity demanded of us this past year be carried forward? The time is right to rise up from our quarantined isolation into a renewed and resurrected community, hand in hand with those we serve flourishing together in the abundance of God’s grace, justice and equanimity.

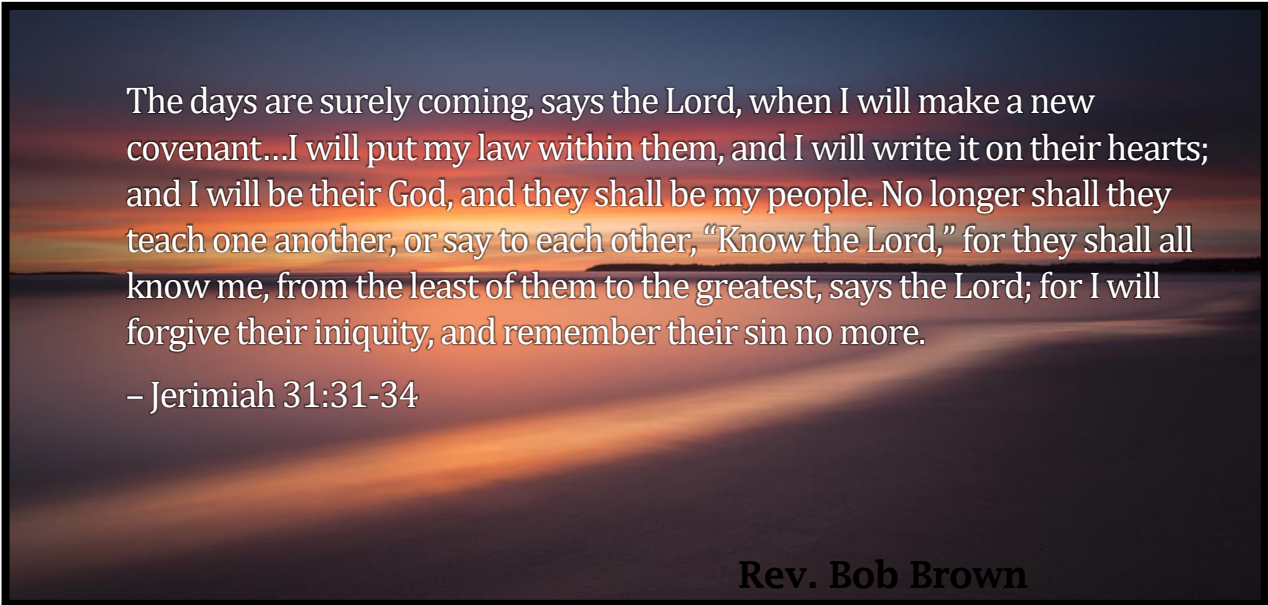
The Way of Jesus is never easy. It requires risking vulnerability, living humbly, seeking reconciliation and practicing gratitude, even when it’s hard. Jesus shows us that God’s yearning desire is for every sorrow, all suffering, loss, grief and pain, to be resurrected - transformed from brokenness to wholeness, from imprisonment to liberation, from death to life. The Way of Jesus is hard and often frightening, but it is forever the way of resurrection. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s transforming power is always available to us.

God is offering something astonishing; a chance to claim what has always been true, resurrection here and now, on earth as it is in heaven. It may look like we live under the curse of a Good Friday world, but the truth is, we are a resurrection people!

In faith and hope,

Bob

Rev. Robert Brown – Senior Minister



The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant...I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

– Jerimiah 31:31-34

Rev. Bob Brown
Sabbatical 2021



Beginning May 1 through mid-August, Rev. Bob Brown will be away on sabbatical. In his absence Rev. Gail Miller will be working with a sabbatical pastor who will lead worship with her and preach about 3 times each month. The yet-to-be-named pastor will work closely with Gail, Music Director, Vickie Wagner, and the staff to offer meaningful Sunday worship services. The sabbatical minister will also cover pastoral care concerns while Gail is away with the Youth Group and on summer vacation.

Barbara Stevens, Rick Johnson & Charity Trembly have graciously agreed to serve as the sabbatical sub-committee. They are an additional support along the way.

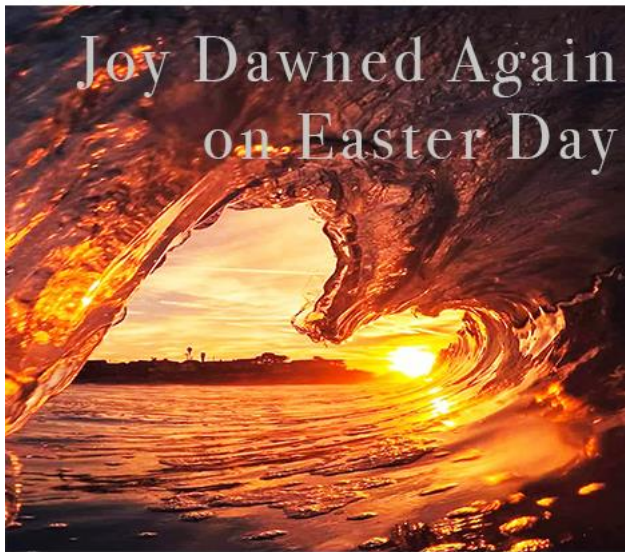


Climate Sunday

April 25, 2021

Bob heads out on his sabbatical, focused on climate and environmental sustainability on April 25th. TriCon's Climate Action Team thought it a great day to celebrate our annual ***Climate Sunday Worship***. Bob's sermon will explore how God created humanity in critical connection with the earth and God called it good. The Climate Action Team will also invite all of us to engage in a variety of concrete climate-aware activities during the summer months. God compels us to care for creation as an act of loving worship. What specific actions might serve as a walking prayer for the healing of the earth?

Join us Sunday, April 25 as we celebrate the beauty of the earth and bless Bob's sabbatical.



“Joy dawned again on Easter day.”

This is the title of an old Easter hymn from the Pilgrim Hymnal. While I love the hymn, mostly, I am struck by a word in its opening line - *again*. Joy dawned *again*. Perhaps a way to find Easter joy, is to find it again; to remember that we have known joy before. To remember that God has been with us; God has blessed us and will bless us again.

As we worship our way from Palm Sunday, through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, I know that I'll crave the joy Easter Sunday will bring. Especially, having walked these dark days of Lent with you – darker than

most years. Beyond the year of COVID many of you have sustained other losses and griefs beyond measure. I believe that the resurrection is the only thing more powerful than our pain, sadness and fear. Joy will dawn – AGAIN!

Years ago I ran across a phrase while working on mission trips in youth ministry: “Choose Joy.” It helped us remain focused on the purpose of our work especially during situations which would more likely produce complaining. But I think there is something for all of us in this exhortation. Perhaps we can keep this saying out of the realm of the cliché by realizing that we can choose joy, because God has given us joy, by giving us something - someone to be joyful about – Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

This is what keeps the church afloat during stormy seasons, carrying her through and keeping her calm when the future is still uncertain. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Perhaps it is as much *remembering* joy as it is choosing joy. Are you ready for some Easter joy? I hope so. If it seems a far reach, try remembering it. And if that too is difficult, know that joy will dawn again on Easter day.

In the hope and certainty of Christ's resurrection,

Gail

Rev. Gail Miller, Minister of Congregational Life





MUSIC of HOLY WEEK



Hymns *All Glory, Laud and Honor*
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Instrumental "Church" Sonatas (Mozart) - strings and organ
We will hear three of the seventeen sonatas that Mozart composed for the Masses at the Salzburg Cathedral. They were recorded live in our sanctuary by three musicians well known to TriCon: Lena Wong, Jane Starkman, and Emily Walhout. These women perform with many ensembles, including Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, Seattle Baroque, Blue Heron, and the Boston Early Music Festival.

Vocal *Hosanna to the Son of David* (plainchant) - Matt DiBattista
Hosanna to the Son of David (Mueller) - Choir by Ars Mueller
For more of this choir's glorious music:
<https://www.benesonarium.com/ars-mueller/>



Lena Wong



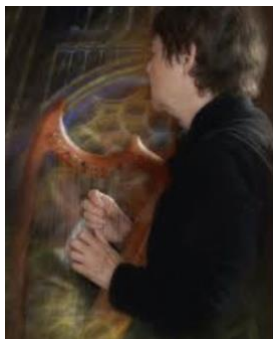
Jane Starkman



Emily Walhout



Instrumental *Phrygian* (harp-voice improvisation) - Ruth Cunningham.
Specializing in improvisational sacred music from various spiritual traditions, Ruth performs and leads workshops in the US and abroad. During the gathering time before 8 PM, we will hear a selection from *Harp Modes*, an exquisite recording for those who meditate with music.
<https://www.amazon.com/Harpmodes-Ruth-Cunningham/dp/B0016677GC>
For further listening:
<http://www.ruthcunningham.com/discography>.



Ruth Cunningham

Vocal *Serenity* (Ives) - Matt DiBattista
With its chant-like melody and gently rocking piano accompaniment, this 1919 musical gem seems to make time stand still. Ives beautifully sets the final verses of John Greenleaf Whittier's *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*.
"O sabbath rest of Galilee, O calm of hills above..."

Go to Dark Gethsemane - Sawyer Lawson

Were You There - Matt DiBattista and Emily Roos



Hymn

O Sacred Head Now Wounded

This hymn will be a musical ‘thread’ throughout the service. Matt will sing the familiar English translation of Paul Gerhardt’s 17th c. German chorale, which was itself based on a medieval Latin poem about Christ’s passion. The hymn’s tune was written in the 16th c. by Hans Leo Hassler as a secular love song. Below is its first verse (translated from German by Dominican University historical theologian, George Faithful):

My mind’s confused within me, made thus by a tender maiden.
I am utterly astray. My heart hurts badly.
I have no rest day and night. I ever lament.
I keep sighing and crying in sorrow almost despairing.

It’s not surprising that, a century later, the tune was paired with Gerhardt’s hymn about Christ’s crucifixion.

What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this, Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever; and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

Instrumental *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* (Reger) - organ.

This German chorale, as harmonized by Bach for his St. Matthew Passion, is familiar to our ears. But in this early 20th c. organ setting by German composer Max Reger, we hear a highly chromatic language that is reminiscent of Richard Wagner. Its 16th c. melody has been appropriated by others over the centuries, including Paul Simon (“American Tune”).

O Sacred Head and *Wondrous Love* (arr. Haan) - Emily Walhout, cello

Vocal

Go to Dark Gethsemane - Sawyer Lawson

Were You There - Matt DiBattista and Emily Roos



Hymns

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Christ Journeys with Us

Instrumental Spirit-lifting Renaissance music by internationally acclaimed ensemble, RENAISSONICS.

The ensemble’s vast repertoire and knowledge of Renaissance dance, chamber music and improvisation has taken them from concert halls to pop music clubs throughout the U.S. and abroad. They have been featured in WGBH’s nationally syndicated *Sound and Spirit*, at Boston’s Christmas Revels and First Night, Plimouth Plantation, and at many Shakespeare and early music festivals. They can also be heard on Ken Burn’s PBS documentary *The West*.

<https://www.renaissanics.com>



Renaissanics



Our service includes three pieces from their CD, *Such Stuff as Dreams*.

We are grateful to the other musicians who enriched our Lenten services:



Joyce Alper

Joyce Alper, English horn and oboe

This Massachusetts native and long-time friend of TriCon taught at the University of North Texas for a decade before returning to Boston. She performs on both modern and historical oboes and teaches oboe, recorder and flute through her private studio:
<https://www.joycealpermusicstudio.com/>



Jaimee Joroff

Jaimee Joroff, Celtic harp is a paramedic and competitive Irish step dancer who traded her dance shoes for harp strings. The Concord native sells books at the Barrow Bookstore, which is owned by her sister. You may have seen Jaimee's one-of-a-kind birdhouses, each created around a work of literature. A cousin of Joyce Alper, she teaches harp at the Boston Irish Music School.
<https://www.thebash.com/celticharp/jaimee-lough>



St. Olaf Choir

The St. Olaf Choir is the premiere choir of St. Olaf College, a liberal arts college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Located in Northfield MN, St. Olaf is the alma mater of Gail Miller and Jim Barkovic, music at W. Concord Union Church. We are grateful that the choir granted us use of their recordings. Director Anton Armstrong writes, "We seek to be a transforming force in society through choral performance, bringing understanding, mercy, justice, peace and hope to a world that desperately cries out for these things."

<https://wp.stolaf.edu/choir/>

A special round of thanks goes to our own Matt Battista, Bob and Sawyer Lawson, and Emily Roos for their music throughout the year. More about them in the May newsletter...





Sundays in April at 10 AM

Worship with us on ZOOM or YouTube

- 4th Easter Sunday! Rev. Bob Brown, preaching
- 11th Rev. Gail Miller, preaching
- 18th Rev. Bob Brown, preaching
- 25th Climate Action Sunday! And Bob's last Sunday before he begins his Sabbatical. Rev. Bob Brown, preaching

Staff Vaccinations – Keeping you informed

We are happy to share that by the time you are reading this many of the staff will have had both of their vaccinations and have moved beyond the 2-week waiting period afterward.



And so, Bob and Gail will be leading Easter's zoom worship from the sanctuary, without masks.

This is a hopeful sign of the joy to come as we move into this new chapter of our life together as church.

TriCon Staff is here for you!

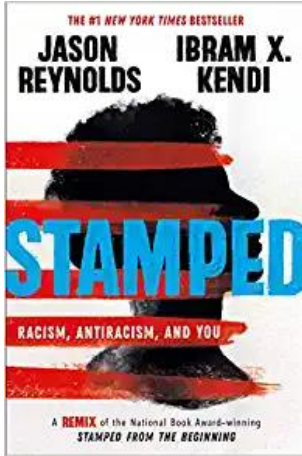
The church building may still be closed, but staff are working in the offices (and at home) and are available ... feel free to call the church office at 978-369-4837. If you don't catch one of us, please leave a message -- it will be picked up and your call returned.

Bob: revbobbrown@triconchurch.org

Gail: revmiller@triconchurch.org

All staff contact info can be found on our website!





Let's Read and Let's Learn!

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You

by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

Written primarily for a young adult/teen audience, this book is written in the language of young people and from the perspective of two Black authors. It may challenge assumptions and interpretations we have of OUR history – especially as New Englanders. The 250 pages is a quicker read than most "histories," but it will connect some dots and give us new eyes with which we can appreciate our brothers and sisters of color.

We'll read the book in April, and then in MAY offer a couple of sessions to discuss our learnings and our reactions. (Previously published discussion for April 6th will not be held at this time.)

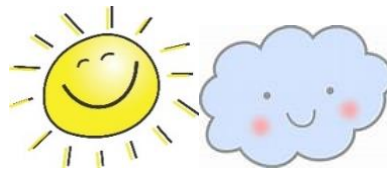
Racial Justice Task Force:

Marcia Ackley, Michele Forinash, Rev. Gail Miller, Ellen Quackenbush, Prescott Stewart, Betsy Swaim

TRICON
COMMUNITY

YOUTH GROUP

WE ARE BACK MEETING OUTSIDE



Wednesday night Discussion Group

APRIL 7, 14, 28

Time TBD

Meet in Courtyard

Sunday night Youth Group

APRIL 11 and 25

Time TBD

Meet in Play yard



Congratulations to last month's "Where in the World" winners!
We hope you enjoyed the surprise gift cards in the mail from TriCon.

Mission Trip 2021 Information

We continue to optimistically plan for our 2021 mission trip. We have shifted the timeline to be summer, specifically June 19-25th. If we are able to take our trip, we will travel by vans to Providence, RI. Some possible mission opportunities may include feeding ministries, homeless shelters, home repairs, small construction jobs, Vacation Bible School and Sports Programs. More information will be shared as it becomes available.



APRIL 2021

While our children's education year may look different this school year, one thing hasn't changed - our mission to continue to find safe, meaningful and fun ways to minister to you and your family.

See below for our April 2021 Children's Ministry line-up. There is something for kids of all ages. Please note that there may be update, or programming additions, so please check Carrie's weekly family emails.

Maundy Thursday, April 1st

7pm – Family Worship with Communion

Good Friday, April 2nd

7pm – Family Worship

Easter Sunday, April 4th

9:00am - Pre-K – 4th Grade Easter Egg Hunt
and Family Worship Outside at TriCon

10am - Zoom **EASTER** Worship Service

Sunday, April 11th

Faith at Home Focus – Jesus, Rise and Revealed

10am - Zoom Worship Service

4pm - SEEKERS and Voyagers Meeting

Sunday, April 18th

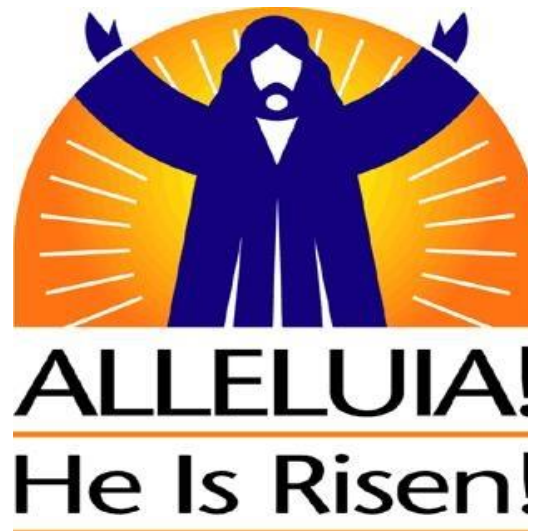
Faith at Home Focus – Community and Condemnation

10am - Zoom Worship Service

Sunday, April 25th

Faith at Home Focus – Philip Baptizes an Ethiopian

10am - Zoom Worship Service



Each week Children's Ministry Director, Carrie O'Brien, emails families Faith at Home practices, details about upcoming Voyager and SEEKER events, news and other programming opportunities. If you are not receiving Carrie's emails, or would like to begin receiving her emails, please shoot her an email at cobrien@triconchurch.org.

Community

A few weeks ago, Betsey Wood shared some thoughts on the past year and what our community of faith has meant to her during this challenging time.

"Almost a year ago when the pandemic started, I began a log - it was a kind of calendar with a list of zoom meetings and things to do. Then gradually I noticed that each week I was adding a quote or a question from the Sunday service or a prayer or conversation from the Women of Spirit.

As the weeks went on and on and we got deeper into the months of COVID, I found myself thinking more and more about what I had written and looking forward to what I might be adding the next week. And now I look back regularly to think about those ideas.

Recently I have been thinking about this series of questions presented to us in a sermon:

What do I want? What am I seeking? What am I afraid to lose? And, what is the need of my soul?

A thought-provoking thread to think about now.

Bob wrote to us in January giving us something we could all do. He said, "we should pray as if our lives depended on it, because they do!" That has been such good advice for me every day since.

Another interesting thing I have been thinking about is what Mariama White-Hammond suggested when she spoke at our service: that first we have to give up what was, in order to make way for what is to be. For me she is talking about thinking in new ways about our church and what it is becoming because of the challenge of the pandemic.

Church during this past year has been a wonderful time of spiritual strengthening and change. Gail reminded us recently, that though we are not together in person we are together in the sanctuary of God's love and for that I feel indeed blessed."

Gatherings at the Church

As the weather gets warmer, we will again be able to have *outdoor* meetings at church, following guidelines on the number of participants (25 max).

As of April 5th, *assuming conditions continue to improve*, the church will be available for *limited indoor* gatherings for up to 10 participants.

Masks and social distancing will be **required** for both indoor and outdoor events. Anyone wishing to schedule a gathering at the church should contact the church office to reserve the space and receive specific guidelines.
jwalpole@triconchurch.org; 978-369-4837





Thursday, April 15th 2pm - Pre-Patriot's Day Zoom

You may think you know all about Patriot's Day but do you want to get the REAL STORY told straight from the horse's mouth? Join fellow parishioners for a fun chance to view Bob Lawson's production of Paul Revere's Horse and hear Bob explain how he and his fellow production crew members film their innovative videos' mixing live actors and life (or almost life-size) puppets. We promise to throw in some jokes too and maybe an encore of Finnegan's Wake!

Thursday, April 29th 2pm - Courtyard Coffee

Join church staff and fellow parishioners for an opportunity to gather and catch up. We will plan to meet rain or shine and adjourn to the parish hall in inclement weather if numbers permit. Bring a cup of tea or coffee, and come catch up!



Men's Anchor Group continues to meet. Please contact Greg Howes for more information. greg@howesinsurance.com



Bible Study resumes March 29th through the month of April, continuing its look at the Book of John.

MONDAY EVENINGS at 7:00 PM

Bible Study is an open and supportive group who enjoy gospel discussions in a friendly and nonjudgmental arena. Please feel free to jump in as you are able. ZOOM Meeting ID is 817 4962 7318 Passcode required, contact Otto Judicke at ojudicke@comcast.net; or Liz Crowell at lbenema@gmail.com.



WOMEN OF SPIRIT

TriCon's Women of Spirit meets on Wednesday mornings, facilitated by Cheryl Shea; and on Thursday evenings, facilitated by Liz Crowell.

Upcoming dates in April:
4/8 and 4/22 at 7:30 PM
4/14 and 4/28 at 7:00 AM

WOS meets on Zoom. Contact cheryl.shea@verizon.net or lbenema@gmail.com for ZOOM invitation details.



Our sympathy and prayers are with the Kearns family in the sudden death of **Gail Kearns** on March 11th. Gail had been a member at TriCon since 1984, and a lifelong advocate of social action. A private family service was held at Sleepy Hollow.



It's not too late to donate to TriCon's special Easter offering, supporting *Friends of Boston's Homeless*.

You can mail a check with "Easter

Offering" in the memo; drop a check through the mail slot in the Walden Street door; or donate through our online giving at triconchurch.org.



Alan and Elise Woodward welcomed their new granddaughter on March 9th. Born to Jeff and Lauren Woodward Cronin, Norah Elise Cronin joins big brother Dylan at home.

Milt and Becky Schwenk have added to their family again, a grandson, Hudson Reed Schwenk, born on March 20th. Hudson's parents are Justin and Carey Schwenk. He joins his cousin, Henry, born to Meredith Schwenk and her husband Kevin on January 9th

Congratulations to the grandparents!



It is also a JOY to announce that **Elise Woodward** has been named Concord's Honored Citizen for 2021.



DIGITAL CHURCH

This past year, we have discovered the blessing of how technology can enhance and sustain our church, its mission, and ministries. It is clear that when we begin to gather in person again, we want to take these blessings with us into the next chapter of our life together as a church. To that end, a Task Force (Peter Nash, Jason Macres, Bob Brown and Gail Miller) is exploring:

Live streaming from the Sanctuary (and ability to watch at a later time/day)

Sunday morning worship and special events and other worship services
Ability to display videos, images and off-site speakers

Video Conferencing at the Church

– to increase participation for those unable to be at the building for meetings / small group gatherings

Classrooms/ Parish Hall

Equipment for showing videos / images / off-site speakers

At Annual Meeting, we put \$30K from last year's surplus into the Technology Fund for this purpose. Ongoing staffing to run the equipment would be done by volunteers.

The Task Force is currently identifying vendors to submit proposals with a goal of installation of necessary equipment over the summer.

Once a proposal has been received and reviewed, **we will schedule a forum to provide specific details and receive input from the congregation.**

April 2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | | Maundy Th. service 8pm | 1 Good Friday service 8pm | 2 Holy Saturday |
| | | | | families join Carrie at 7pm | families join Carrie at 7pm | |
| 5 Joy Downs Again Easter Sunday service 10 AM family service + egg hunt 9 AM | | 6 | | 7 Women of Spirit 7:30pm | 8 | 9 |
| 11 Worship 10am | | 12 Deacons meeting 7pm | | 14 Women of Spirit 7am | 15 Viewing of Pavi Rove's Ride movie on zoom 2p | 16 |
| 18 Worship 10am | | 19 Social Action 7pm | | 21 finance com. 8am | 22 Women of Spirit 7:30pm | 23 |
| 25 Climate Action Sunday Bob's last Sunday before Sabbathical | | 26 | | 27 Women of Spirit 7am | EARTH DAY | 30 |
| | | 28 | | Courtyard called 2pm by in person! | | |



Return Service Requested

TO:

phone: 978-369-4837
fax: 978-287-0406
email: info@triconchurch.org
website: www.triconchurch.org

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