

BEHOLD!! SMYRNA

March 2024



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Dear Smyrna Folks,

As the year rolls along, we are celebrating more “firsts” with one another. Our first Ash Wednesday service on Valentine’s Day was a simple and gentle reminder of our mortality. Several of those who attended offered thanks for or reflections about what had come up for them during our short time together.

I think one of the reasons Ash Wednesday can be so moving is that it is one of our only Christian celebrations that involve touch. As a cross was drawn on each forehead, I thought how seldom we touch one another with the pure intention of offering blessing, and also how powerful that is.

Our conference minister Rev. Tyler Connelly calls the era since pandemic lockdown not post-Covid but Covid-informed. In these Covid-informed days we can feel squeamish about getting close enough to touch, and for good reason. Continuing to maintain precautions will help us all stay healthy in the long term. And yet, even in these Covid-informed days, safe and consensual touch is a powerful reminder of the gifts of our humanity, as well as the spark of divinity that burns within each of us.

In fact, reminding ourselves of where humanity brushes up against divinity is why we are noticing all of our senses in this Lenten season. We have many opportunities to dull our senses every moment of every day. But keeping our senses sharp by being aware of them as we experience the world, helps us draw closer and ever closer to God.

I look forward to hearing how your Lent experience is going. Do let me know where you are seeing, hearing, **touching, tasting, smelling God’s presence in the world!**

Blessings,
Pastor Jennifer

Ministers: All members of the church

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Sundays in March —

Sunday, March 3

Lent Week 3 - The Sense of Taste

Focus Scripture - 1 Peter 2:2-3

Service of Holy Communion

Sunday, March 10

Lent Week 4 - The Sense of Hearing

Focus Scripture - John 5:25-29

Sunday, March 17

Lent Week 5 - The Sense of Smell

Focus Scripture - John 12:1-3

Sunday, March 24

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 31

Easter Sunday

Lenten Studies continue on Wednesdays (February 28 and March 6, 13, and 20).

During these evening studies (via Zoom), beginning at 7:30 pm, we will watch a short video and then have time for reflection and conversation. We'll be drawing from the series *Marching from Pain to Possibility: A Film Series on the Journey from Wound- edness to Wholeness*. This series features a variety of voices.



What do you know about Smyrna UCC's Library?

Visit our Library



Smyrna has a lending library that's available for anyone to browse through.

Books may be borrowed by writing down the book title, your name and phone # and date borrowed in the designated

notebook. Return books by putting a line through your name with a pen or pencil and reshelving the book using the colored tape on the book's spine as a guide to its shelf location.

Sometime in March the library collection will be brought out of its tucked away living space to display itself in Friendship House for several weeks. Is there a book that you would recommend to others in Smyrna's congregation--a book that has offered you spiritual epiphanies, guidance, or inspiration, or increased your awareness and knowledge of social justice issues? Share titles of your favorite books by dropping them in a box which will be part of the library display in Friendship House. Smyrna UCC's Library will be on the move sometime in March!

On Friday, March 29, Smyrna UCC will be open from 1-3 pm for a Good Friday Prayer Vigil.



Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews to Smyrna's Easter Egg Hunt after worship on Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024. Organized by Christian Nurture/Education.



Bring your favorite potluck dish to share on Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024.

COVID Recommendations

The current CDC's recommendation is that anyone testing positive for COVID should stay home for at least five days and wear a mask for an additional five days. Oregon, however, has loosened the recommendation to say that anyone who has COVID can go out as long as they have been without fever for 24 hours and their symptoms are improving. In addition, they say that anyone with the virus should wear a mask for 10 days and try to avoid immunocompromised people.



As we all remember, compliance with mask-wearing has been a divisive issue ever since the onset of COVID, with some people wearing masks to protect themselves and others, while other people refused to wear a mask under any circumstances. There are currently some people who become ill and do not wish to be tested so that they do not face any restrictions on their lives and activities.

Oregonians are still being hospitalized and killed by COVID (as are others across the world). In January there were about 250 Oregonians hospitalized on any given day and about 60 Oregonians died during the month. While that is a small fraction of the statistics at the height of the pandemic, it is still significant, especially if you or one of your loved ones are among the group affected.

So remember the current Oregon guidelines:

- If you get COVID, stay home until you have been without fever for 24 hours and your symptoms are improving.
- Wear a mask for 10 days.
- Try to avoid immunocompromised people (and remember that you never know which people you meet are immunocompromised).

Above all, try to be a good citizen and avoid spreading potentially life-threatening diseases



Thanks to:

- All the hosts for our Meals-For-7 groups: Elaine and Joel Daniels, Janet Farrell, Barb and Carl Menkel, Karyl Carlson, and Ginger Redlinger & Mary Namit.
- And thanks to all of *you* who attended. It was a wonderful way for us all to get a bit better acquainted. (If you wanted to attend one of the **gatherings and couldn't, let Pastor Jennifer know and we'll make another time to meet up!**)

LONELY? Medical issues? Need Help?

Please visit the Smyrna Resource page. On **Smyrna's website**, www.smyrna-ucc.org, just click the Resource tab



Carl Menkel and Mary Namit put the finishing touches on Pastor Jennifer's new desk set up.

March 2024 at Smyrna

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Feb 2024</p> <table style="font-size: small; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Apr 2024</p> <table style="font-size: small; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> </div>					S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			S	M	T	W	T	F	S		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					1	2
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**No matter who you are,
or where you are on life's
journey, we welcome
you.**

SMYRNA



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

- Paul and Mary Ashton
- Pat Bullard
- Beryl and Dan Fisher
- Genevieve Freeman
- The Holt family
- **Jeannie Rogers' brothers Steven and John**
- Virginia Yoder
- Robin Alexander
- Ginger Redlinger
- Janet Bess Farrell
- Linda Dunn and Barbara Daniels
- Rick and Lavonne Gano
- Anne Stronko and Roger Marin
- Paulette Eyman
- Ethel Henderson



*If you know anyone who should be on the prayer list in the Behold, please let Jeannie or Elaine know.
If they would enjoy receiving cards notify someone in the Diaconate.*

Mission Statement

Smyrna United Church of Christ is striving to be:

- ♦ A place of peace, where we offer to all an extravagant welcome wherever you are in your life journey regardless of your ethnicity, marital status, religion, gender, race, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation, and where we teach the stories of God's love and call on our lives.
- ♦ A spiritual haven, where we accept and care for all people and God's creation in an outreach of grace.
- ♦ A lighthouse of God's compassion, where worship, teaching, learning and spiritual growth take place in community, powered by thought and action.
- ♦ A Christian people, working for God's realm in ecumenical harmony with other people of faith and conviction.