

Contact

Bring on April showers for the May flowers

Only a God of great wisdom could have created plants of such great beauty



One of the wonders of the modern world is the technology in our cell phones, laptops, personal computers, televisions and other mobile devices.

One of the curses of the modern world is that same technology increases our screen time, but reduces our Mother Nature time.

Translate: When is the last time you spent quality time with a real flower? But why bother stepping outside to your window sill or perhaps to a special table or desk to see the real McCoy when you can conjure them up instantly on your computer, laptop or smart phone?

Oh, c'mon! It's nowhere near the same experience or same thrill. But let's admit it: Artificial flowers have steadily crept into our lives and replaced live ones. Even in church.

Why? Well, they are much more realistic looking and can keep their shape and lustre far longer than real flowers. After all, who wants to keep changing the water for live plants or picking up the messy floral detris or dead leaves?

It is much cheaper to have artificial flowers that you buy once and perhaps clean every year or so.

Finally, in an era of rising hay fever and other allergies, who's going to sneeze or get a runny nose next to a silk gladiola or chrysanthemum?

Flowers have been important in my life for three main periods: My childhood and my mom's love of flowers; my two years of study at Connecticut College that included plant taxonomy and botany; my 15 years with my former partner, Art.

Before I lead you down the garden path, let's look at some well-known Bible verses about flowers.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." – Isaiah 40:8

Or how about Matthew 6:28:
"And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

And finally 1st Peter 1:24 :
"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers; the flower wilts."

If Nature is God's first Bible, what three lessons do we learn from those Scripture verses?

Well, the Isaiah contrasts the everlasting nature of God's word with the temporal substance of stalks of grass and flowers.

The Matthew text asks if God clothes the lilies of the field, will not our Lord take greater care of us? Those are words of assurance.

So, now the tale of how flowers played a role in my life at an early age. I grew up on a four-acre retired farm – it was always a small affair with two acres of mowed grass that doubled as a golf course for dad.

While my dad tried his hand at vegetables – he had a black thumb – mom had great success with irises, Rose of Sharon, periwinkle, asters, portulaca, hollyhocks and salvia.

By 1970, I was a Human Ecology major at New London-based Connecticut College, which has a greenhouse.

One section had orchids; you could watch the winter snowflakes melting on the glass while ensconced in the steamy, tropical heat inside.

Twenty years later, my former partner and I back-dated a large, 1915 center-hall Colonial into a mid-19th century Victorian mini-mansion.

We went crazy with gladiola, Kansas gayfeather, daisies, day lilies, petunias, purple cone flowers, salvia, lilacs, lily of the valley, daffodils, roses, tulips and my favorites: giant peonies.

Soon, the sanctuary will be filled with flowers for Easter. Let them remind you to spend time this Spring with the outside varieties in God's garden.

*Blessings, Pastor Tom
Interim Pastor*



2021 Holy Week Schedule

Church of the Redeemer will begin Holy Week on Sunday, March 28 with our PALM SUNDAY SERVICE in the sanctuary beginning at 9:15 am.

The MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE will be held in the sanctuary at 7 pm on April 1. Communion will be served.

Our GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE will be held in the sanctuary at 7 pm on April 2.

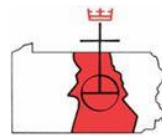
Join us in the sanctuary to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord on EASTER SUNDAY, April 4, at 9:15 am. Communion will be celebrated.



2020 Recorded Holy Week services will be available online on our website at www.redeemerchurchucc.org.

Members who have honored loved ones with the purchase of flowers will be able to retrieve them following the Easter Sunday service.

Thank you for helping to beautify our sanctuary for Easter!



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Greetings Churches of Penn Central Conference,

During conversations with churches and clergy around the conference, we have heard that many are looking for more information about connecting with technology as well as meeting safely in person. Here are some testimonies from clergy around the conference during our monthly Coffee With The Conference Staff meeting in early March. Here is an abridged version of what some pastors and churches are doing.

Sincerely,

C. Paul Keller, Conference Office Manager

Pastor Tim Hogan of St. Paul's/UCC in West Milton shared that his reopening committee surveyed the congregation regarding re-opening. With 75 percent of members ready to re-gather and a large percentage already vaccinated, St. Paul's UCC has decided to install a PlasmaAir air-filtration system.

Rev. Dr. Chris Rankin at Trinity UCC/East Petersburg has installed a bipolar ionization air-purification system and shortened its services. They gather in two services each Sunday.

Rev. Dani Neff at Mt. Zion/UCC in York is using the CDC's designation for community spread as a metric for when they will regather in the sanctuary. They will look to re-gather in the sanctuary when York County moves from high community transmission category to substantial.

All three leaders shared that their online (or phone) presence continues and will do so after re-gathering. *Zoom, Google Meet, Free Conference Calls*, and so many other tools are being used.

Leadership Team Update

By Kim Merkert, Chair

The Leadership Team met on March 11, 2021 for its regular monthly meeting. After our opening activities, we continued our ongoing discussion about possible grants and obtaining 501c3 status for Redeemer. In order to access many of the available grants, Redeemer would need to obtain 501c3 status. This process can take a year. Jan, George, and Jorja will start gathering the requirements for this process to get us started and see if there are costs involved. If we do eventually apply for grants, it would be helpful to have ideas of specific grants we are interested in to narrow down the scope.

Jonathan presented the monthly Treasurer's Report. He also discussed changes that the officers/emeritus propose to update Redeemer's financial processes and offer more support to the Treasurer Roll. The first recommendation is to begin outsourcing all payroll functions to a third party firm, Sonrise Paymasters. The cost for this service would be approximately \$1,150 per year, and would eliminate the need for us to pay for Quickbook updates, which currently costs us \$700 per year. This would impact us with a net increase of \$450 per year for the payroll outsourcing. The plan would be to begin using the third party service in July 2021, 3rd quarter.

The second recommendation is to implement a new accounting package, IconCMO, which will combine our offering/membership system and finance/bill paying systems together. This is a cloud based church management system, which will allow the data to be accessed from anywhere. This gives the Treasurer the ability to work on these items from home or church as necessary. All the officers/emeritus will learn to use the system, so that there is support if the Treasurer needs to take time off. Our office administrator will also have access to portions of the program as necessary. This package will eliminate the need for our current software programs, Quickbooks and Servantkeeper. The cost of this new package is approximately \$385 per year, or \$35 per month. The recommendation is to install the package by June, and transition to full use by January 2022. This will make things more efficient for us to prepare for an audit in 2022, at which time we will decide if we should begin with an internal or an external audit.

The Leadership Team unanimously voted to accept these improvements to Redeemer's financial processes.

The current schedule of recording weekly video worship services is not sustainable for the Interim Pastor, Music Director, and Leadership Team Chair. We will continue recording videos through Easter. After Easter, we will move to a more pastor-centered outreach, which will possibly utilize weekly devotionals instead of videos, or may re-use the year's worth of videos we've created in the past year. The Leadership Team unanimously voted to accept this change.

Pastor Tom presented his report, and we reviewed Jorja's written office administration report. New business included the proposal to investigate installing an AED (defibrillator) device. Mike will research the requirements and costs associated with this idea. The rest of the meeting consisted of the Leadership Team and Interim Pastor discussing ongoing communication challenges. Dr. Marisa Laviola from the conference joined us in person to offer guidance for this discussion. Pastor Tom also invited a consultant, Bruce Conrad, to observe the meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to share openly how we can work together to accomplish the work of the church in the best interest of the Leadership Team, the congregation, and the Interim Pastor.

In a separate meeting, the Search Committee presented their unanimous recommendation to the Leadership Team to call a settled pastor. This recommendation was accepted with a unanimous vote by the Leadership Team. More information on this process will be featured in a separate newsletter article. Our next regularly scheduled Leadership Team meeting will be held on Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 7pm. As always, please reach out to the Leadership Team if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Merkert
Leadership Team Chair





Victoria Valez

2021 UCC Homes 25th Anniversary Helping Hands Event Goes Virtual

UCC Homes is excited to announce that our 25th Anniversary Helping Hands event will happen in 2021...just in a different way! On behalf of the Board of the Directors and Special Events Committee of UCC Homes, we invite you to support our **VIRTUAL** 25th Helping Hands event.

Our virtual event will offer a variety of ways in which you can uplift and support our mission, including participating in our online auction. Gathering together was fun and exciting but the real focus for this event was always on mission...serving those in need within the communities of UCC Homes. The need to underwrite residents who are no longer able to pay for the cost of their care and who are not deemed eligible for governmental assistance continues to grow and is very real. While it is not a guarantee, it is our intention to never have to ask anyone to leave because of his/her inability to pay for the cost of care. Building up the Benevolent Endowment Trust Fund will assist UCC Homes in providing financial assistance in future years.

You won't want to miss out on the fun of the online auction and you can do it all from the comfort of your own home! We are using **ReadySetAuction** secure software to conduct the online bidding via computer, tablet or smartphone. To participate in the online auction, you can register at no cost online after March 17th at our special Helping Hands website:

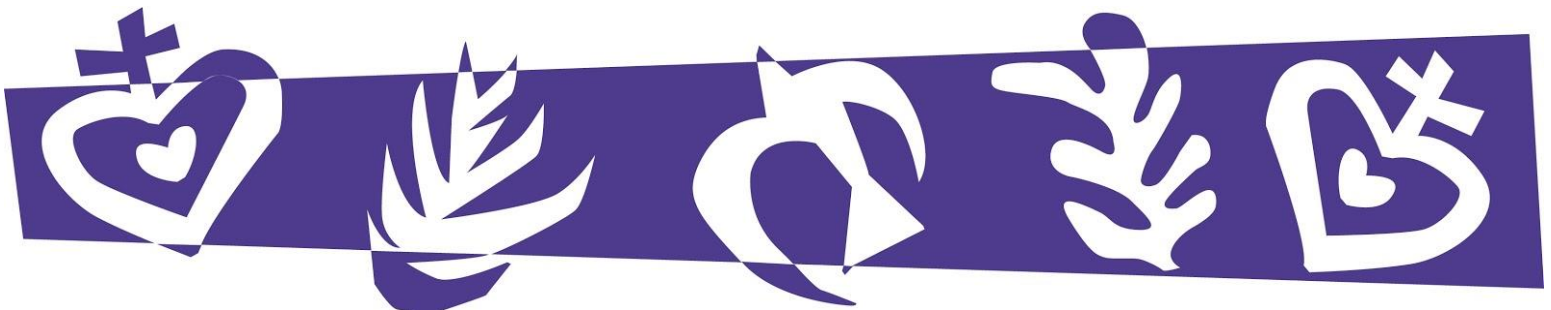
<https://events.readysetauction.com/unitedchurchchristhomes/helpinghands>

A preview of the amazing auction items will be available from April 12th to April 18th and online bidding will open on April 19th and close on May 1st at 4:00pm. Monetary donations are currently being accepted on our Helping Hands website for those who may not wish to participate in the auction but want to support our mission.

It is our hope that the virtual format will enable more people to share their passion for helping others by participating at a level that fits their giving objectives and supports our mission!

Thank you in advance for your support!

Victoria Valez
Director of Development
UCC Homes





Prayers of joy for:

The Hottensteis who were able to visit with their two granddaughters for the first time in a year.

Kevin & Nadia Mongold, who are expecting a baby in September, and for **Barry & Pam Mongold** who will become grandparents!

Pastor Tom and brother **Richard Caruso** for reconnecting deeply after 5 years

Kim Merkert, who keeps giving, caring and sharing in ways that give glory to God!

Prayers for healing for:

Barry Mongold, who began radiation treatments in mid-March

Charlie Goedken, friend of George Kapp, going through stem cell injections to restore his sight

Bev Patton's son, **John**, who is recovering from shoulder surgery

Randy Rupert, friend of Matt & Audrey Baker, who is undergoing treatment for throat cancer

Pastor Tom, struggling with sinus-induced vertigo, and side effects from decongestants and related med that impact his vision, mood and focus.

Prayers of comfort for:

Kemmy Himmelberger, who is struggling in Hospice care at Country Meadows Nursing Home with heart and vascular issues. She welcomes cards at Country Meadows, 451 Sand Hill Rd, Hershey, PA 17033, but visits are difficult.

Prayers for the humanity and strength of the church community – don't forget the past year and the opportunities it gave us to come together.

Prayers for Strength for first responders, the medical community, and our nation as we pass **550,000 Covid deaths** and we continue to battle the virus, political strife and social injustice, particularly that addressed by **Black Lives Matter** leaders and advocates

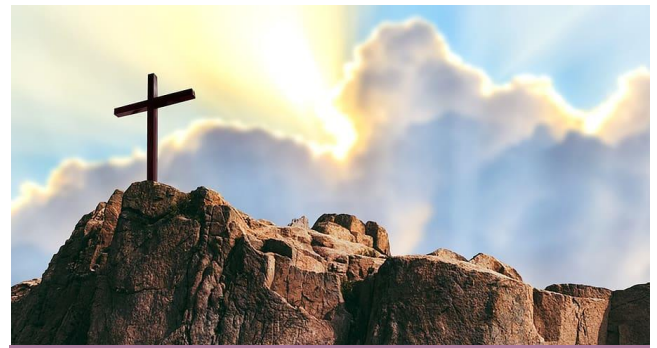
State and local residents dealing with rising unemployment, poverty and hunger.

George Kapp as he continues to invest resources of all kinds into his family's printing business

HIS COMING

He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lakeside he came to those men who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word, "Follow thou me," and sets us to the tasks which he has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey, whether they be wise or simple, he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their experience who he is.

Albert Schweitzer



Redeemer Extends Call to a Settled Pastor

In a unanimous decision by the Search Committee and the Leadership Team, Redeemer has extended a call to a settled pastor. Please join us for Call Sunday on Sunday, April 11, to meet the candidate. Call Sunday is the day when our candidate will lead worship at Redeemer.

Following worship, all Redeemer members will participate in an anonymous vote by paper ballot. In order for our candidate to become our settled pastor, there must be a two-thirds "yes" vote by all members that are present at Call Sunday. If the vote passes, the candidate and representatives from Redeemer and the Conference will sign the covenantal call document, and our settled pastor will begin her ministry with us in June.

The Search Committee had the opportunity to meet with the candidate three times, twice by zoom and once in person. We were also able to view some of her worship services online. We like her calm energy, her deep faith, and the way she answered all of our questions with thoughtfulness, humility and grace. She is artistic, with a background in science, and she likes our labyrinth. Her worship incorporates a mix of traditional and modern elements. She practices self-care to make sure she doesn't take on too much, and she also respects that those she works with need to have down time and practice self-care as well. We think the candidate will be a very good match for us at Redeemer.

We want to acknowledge both the Profile and Search Committees for their diligent work during this process and the congregation for their patience in navigating this important step for our church.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the candidate, please contact Kim Merkert, leadership team chair, at ltchair@redeemerchurchucc.org, or via the church office at 717-533-7300.

*Submitted by
Kim Merkert, Leadership Chair*



Beef & Dumplings

Submitted by Jorja Barton

2 Tb. olive oil
2 lb. lean beef cubes dredged in $\frac{1}{4}$ c. flour
2 large onions thinly sliced (about 3 cups)
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 Tb. brown sugar
2 bottles of beer
2- 10 oz cans of Beef broth
4 Tb. wine vinegar
1 tsp. Paprika
1 tsp. Thyme
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. Parsley
Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions: Heat oven to 325°. Using Dutch Oven, saute sliced onions and garlic in oil until translucent. Add dredged beef cubes and brown over medium heat. Add all remaining ingredients and bring to simmer. Cover and place in preheated oven for 2 hours then remove to stove top. (In 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours, prepare dumpling mixture.)

Dumplings: Mix 2 cups of Bisquick (or Jiffy Mix) with one cup of milk. Place serving spoon sized dollops of dough on top of the beef mixture, cover and cook on low for 10 minutes. **Do not peek!** The steam in the pot cooks the dumplings. After 10 minutes, remove from the heat and serve! I serve the dumplings in one dish and the beef in another.

This "easy but gourmet" recipe has been a favorite of our family for more than 40 years. A friend who loved to cook first made it for my husband and me probably back in 1974 following a vacation he took to Historic Williamsburg. He claimed the recipe dates back to Colonial Times, so it's far more than just my family's favorite. The beef is incredibly tender, the gravy scrumptious, and the dumplings are light as clouds. I hope this becomes a favorite of yours too!

Bon Appétit!

April Redeemer Celebrations

Birthdays... Have a happy one!

- Nathan Davis
- Barry Mongold
- Adrienne Bell
- Chelsea Reihl

Anniversaries... Congratulations!

- Dave & Jan Stong
- Tom & Adrienne Bell
- George & Nancy Kapp

Redeemer Supporting Its Community

We are a Church with open walls, and we welcome groups who use our facilities to hold their meetings. Through our doors each and every week pass countless numbers of individuals, many of whom make a special point to compliment and thoughtfully thank Redeemer for allowing them the opportunity to congregate here. We are proud to be a host for these groups and a hub for such good work!

Of special note... many of the participants who attend these meetings have supported Redeemer in many ways including financial support of fundraising campaigns for building needs, donations to the *Fill the Sills* food drive, and items for the Gift of Warmth Christmas campaign.

Our Building Partners include the following organizations:

- **AA KISS Group** - Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, & Sunday evenings
- **AA Nooner Group** (the largest long standing AA group in our area!) Monday through Friday at noon
- **AA Sunrise Saturday Group** - Saturday mornings bright and early at 7:30 am!
- **Overeaters Anonymous** - Monday evenings
- **Life Gospel Chinese Christian Church** (currently meeting virtually)

Hosting these organizations each and every day of the week also allows us to introduce both our Church and the word of God. Given the opportunity, be sure share your words of welcome!



April



CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER
HERSHEY PA

2021

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Hershey, PA 17033
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www.redeemerchurchucc.org
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 12 pm Nooner 12 pm Focused Prayer 7 pm Maundy Thursday Service (communion) (sanctuary)	2 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS 7 pm Good Friday Service (sanctuary)	3 7:00 am Sunrise Sat 12 PM KISS
4 9:15 am Worship EASTER SUNDAY HE IS RISEN! (communion) (sanctuary) 3 pm KISS	5 12 pm Nooner 7:00 pm Lenten Book Study 7:30 pm OA	6 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	7 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm Kiss	8 12 pm Nooner 12 pm Focused Prayer 7 pm Leadership Team	9 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	10 7:00 am Sunrise Sat 12 PM KISS
11 9:15 am Worship CALL SUNDAY Congregational Meeting following worship 3 pm KISS	12 12 pm Nooner 7:30 pm OA	13 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	14 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm Kiss SCRIP Order Due	15 12 pm Nooner 12 pm Focused Prayer	16 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	17 7:00 am Sunrise Sat 12 PM KISS
18 9:15 am Worship 3 pm KISS	18 12 pm Nooner 7:30 pm OA	20 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	21 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm Kiss SCRIP Order Delv	22 Earth Day! 12 pm Nooner 12 pm Focused Prayer	23 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	24 7:00 am Sunrise Sat 12 PM KISS
25 9:15 am Worship 3 pm KISS	26 12 pm Nooner 7:30 pm OA	27 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	28 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm Kiss	29 12 pm Nooner 12 pm Focused Prayer	30 12 pm Nooner 6:30 pm KISS	

Join us for Holy Week Services!

Be sure to check the calendar for in-person services and our website for recordings of 2020 Holy Week Services @ www.redeemerchurchucc.org.



Earth Day – April 22

Take an Earth Day Quiz

Earth Day is an annual holiday—celebrated on April 22 every year—that gathers support and spreads awareness about environmental protection. And in honor of this yearly event, people around the world get together to partake in a variety of fun Earth Day activities, from planting trees to picking up litter.

As an Earthling yourself, you may think you already know all about the benefits our blue and green planet has to offer and the role we, as humans of the world, need to play in order to help and protect our Earth for the long-run.

Let's see how well you know your planet!

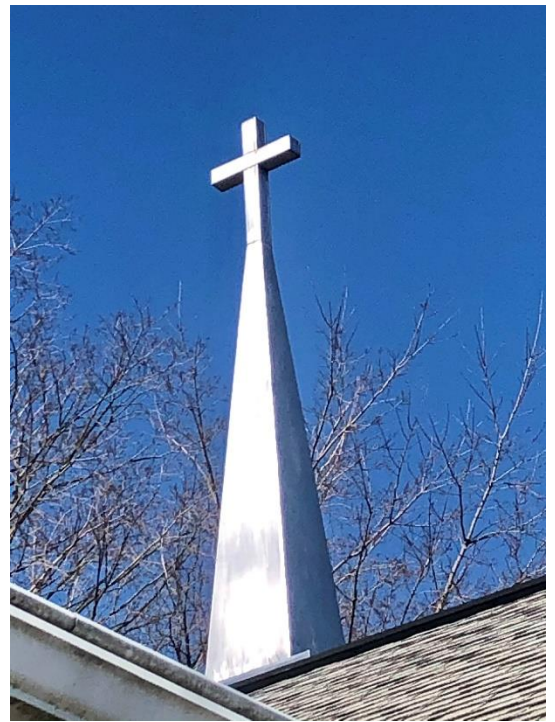
1. More than half of the world's breathable oxygen comes from where? Oceans – Forests - Flowering Plants - Clouds
2. How much of the world's oxygen is produced by forests of the Amazon? 1% - 5% - 10% - 20%
3. How much oxygen does an average tree, 50 years old, provide? Enough for 1 person - 4 people - 8 people - 10 people
4. Which ailments can be treated by drugs derived from plants of the rainforests? Cancer – Asthma - Hypertension
5. Around world, how many indigenous people live in the forests? 1 million - 5 million - 8 million - 50 million
6. Which landbased ecosystem is the most diverse with plants and animals? Coral reefs - tropical forests - African Savannah - South Pacific Islands
7. How many people in the world are dependent on fish as their main source of daily protein? 1 in 10 - 2 in 10 - 2 in 10 - 8 in 10



1. Oceans – 50% of all oxygen is produced by phytoplankton
2. 20% - 1 in five breaths of oxygen are produced by Amazon forests
3. Enough oxygen for 4 people or 6,000 pounds of oxygen
4. All of them! More than 120 pharmaceuticals are produced from plants from rainforests to treat these ailments.
5. 50 million indigenous people live in the worlds rainforests
6. Tropical Forests are home to the most diverse mix of plants and animals
7. 3 in 10 people in this world depend on fish as their main daily source of protein.

How did you do? For more information on Earth Day 2021, check out [Earth Day 2021](#) | [Restore Our Earth™](#) | [EARTHDAY.ORG](#).

Be sure to visit us on Facebook page and our website at www.redeemerchurchucc.org



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email @
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This month's issue is sponsored by George and Nancy Kapp in honor of their Granddaughter Annalise's birthday.