

Striving to become living expressions of God's extravagant grace and love.

Connection

The newsletter of First Reformed United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

www.firstreformeducc.org

April 2021

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Good Friday Service

Members and music staff of Life's Journey UCC, First Christian UCC, and First Reformed UCC have prepared a Virtual Tenebrae Service

The service will be posted on FRUCC's Facebook and YouTube pages at Noon on April 2

**First Reformed UCC will resume
In-Person Worship Services on**

EASTER SUNDAY

April 4th

**Plan now to attend and make sure
to invite family and friends!**

Please review safety precautions on page 2.



Regathering Safety Precautions

1. Entering the Building

- a. ALL persons will enter via the door under the portico or the ramp door.
- b. Doors will remain open to allow fresh airflow and to reduce surface touching.
- c. Everyone entering the building will be REQUIRED to wear a face covering (mask or shield) (Extra masks will be available for those without one.)

2. Entering Sanctuary

- a. Ushers will remind worshipers of the need for social distancing.
- b. Hand sanitizer will be available at the sanctuary entrance for anyone who may have touched anything on the way in.
- c. Entrances on both sides of the chancel will be used for entry.
- d. The pews will be marked indicating where worshipers may and may not sit.

3. Worship Service

- a. Services will be kept shorter so as to minimize the time in an enclosed space
- b. There will be NO congregational singing. An alternative is humming.
- c. Passing the Peace will be virtual (ie. Waves, Air Hugs). No movement or touching.
- d. Clear plexiglass will be installed on a speaker's stand.
- e. The pastor and liturgist will be the only persons allowed to remove their masks.

4. Leaving the Building

- a. Worshipers will be asked to take bulletins and trash with them.
- b. Worshipers are discouraged from wandering through the building to reduce the amount of additional cleaning needed
- c. Worshipers will exit the building through the same doors they entered.

5. Additional Notes:

- a. Children will remain with their parents. Neither a nursery nor children's worship will be provided.
- b. If a worshiper becomes symptomatic during the service, he/she will be asked to leave the facility immediately.
- c. Should a medical emergency arise, a 911 call will be made so that emergency responders can intervene.
- d. If an attendee develops COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days after the service, please notify the church office so others within the congregation can be notified. The identity of the individual who developed symptoms will not be disclosed to others who attended.



"The Easter egg symbolizes our ability to break out of the hardened, protective shell we've surrounded ourselves with..."

—Siobhan Shaw

Looking Ahead

- Sun May 9 Mother’s Day
- Sun May 23 Pentecost Sunday
- Mon May 31 Memorial Day Meal
- Sun June 20 Father’s Day

A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort,
at easy answers, half-truths,
and superficial relationships
so that you may live
deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression,
and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for
justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears,
to shed for those who suffer pain,
rejection, hunger and war,
so that you may reach out your hand
to comfort them and
to turn their pain to joy

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can
make a difference in the world,
so that you can do
what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness
to all our children and the poor.

Amen.



Q&A Sessions for Daily Bible Readings

April 13 & 27
7:00 p.m.

Daily Bible Readings for April

<u>Day</u>	<u>Scripture Reading</u>
1	Joshua 1-3 / Psalm 37
2	Joshua 4,5 / Romans 10
3	Joshua 6,7 / Romans 11
4	Joshua 8,9 / Romans 12
5	Joshua 10,11 / Psalm 38
6	Joshua 12-15 / Romans 13
7	Joshua 16-19 / Romans 14
8	Joshua 20-22 / Psalm 39
9	Joshua 23, 24 / Romans 15
10	Judges 1, 2 / Romans 16
11	Judges 3, 4 / Mark 1
12	Judges 5, 6 / Psalms 40, 41
13	Judges 7,8 / Mark 2
14	Judges 9,10 / Mark 3
15	Judges 11, 12 / Psalms 42, 43
16	Judges 13, 14 / Mark 4
17	Judges 15, 16 / Mark 5
18	Judges 17, 18 / Mark 6
19	Judges 19, 20 / Psalm 44
20	Judges 21 / Mark 7
21	Ruth 1, 2 / Mark 8
22	Ruth 3, 4 / Psalm 45
23	1 Samuel 1-3 / Mark 9
24	1 Samuel 4-6 / Mark 10
25	1 Samuel 7-9 / Mark 11
26	1 Samuel 10, 11 / Psalms 46, 47
27	1 Samuel 12, 13 / Mark 12
28	1 Samuel 14, 15 / Mark 13
29	1 Samuel 16, 17 / Psalm 48
30	1 Samuel 18, 19 / Mark 14

Consistory Notes

The Consistory of FRUCC, via Zoom, met Wednesday, March 10, at 7 p.m. In addition to Phil Myers, eight members were in attendance.

Approval of Reports:

The February minutes were approved. Financial reports were tabled until the accountant is finished reviewing.

Additional discussion: In the fall of 2020, the possibility of hiring of consultant to aid in ways to increase membership and giving was discussed. The current status of contributions is unsustainable for any long term continued growth. It was decided to leave this to the executive committee for further brain storming before bringing to Consistory for a vote.

Special Discussion

It was decided that in-person worship will return beginning on April 4, Easter Sunday. All protocols (except temperature check) will be in place. A decision was made that in-person meetings for committees or small groups will commence in stages.

Ministry Team Reports

Faith Formation

Elizabeth Sutton

- The Lent in a Bag for the congregation was very successful with notes of thanks from several members.
- Holy Week in a Bag for the Congregation/Easter in a Basket: Our Porch Packs for March/April will be focused on Holy Week and Easter.
- Adult Sunday school continues to have good feedback and attendance.

Mission & Outreach

Beverly Pugh

- Beverly Pugh shared information for a long term Habitat for Humanity project possibly running for two years with 2021 concentrating on funding and 2022 the actual build.
- There is an opportunity for service with the Allied Churches program "Seasons of Love" to gather spices for Allied Churches kitchen.

Trustees Report

The group will meet Sunday, April 11. and are working on the following projects:

- Roofers investigating leaks in the sanctuary roof (corners of the balcony). One quote has been received and a second bid is pending
- Replacing bulbs in sanctuary and portico has been done
- Replacing ceiling tiles behind fellowship hall stage.
- Placing wire flags along driveway to keep vehicles from running over drain has been completed
- Fixing alley gate.

Old Business

- It was suggested that the Consistory Vice-President to be responsible for learning the church financial software system. This was added to the Vice-President's role.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudette Fitzgerald
Consistory Secretary

**Virtual Fellowship and
Prayer Gatherings**

**April 6 & 20
7:00 p.m.**

Meals on Wheels

Delivery Dates

April 12 - 16

Financial Report

COMPARISON	2020	2021
	YTD	YTD
INCOME		
Contributions	10,393	6,069
Other Income	1,360	1,050
Clapp Endowment	40,000	43,022
Fowler Endowment	7,950	9,074
Fowler Restricted		0
Total Income	59,703	59,214
EXPENSES		
Staff Compensation	31,524	30,862
Benevolence	322	98
Programming and Worship	999	1,163
Operating Expenses	13,573	10,066
Total Expenses	46,418	42,188
Net Total	13,285	17,026

Contributions received from the members & friends of FRUCC will be **ESSENTIAL** to meeting this year's budget

Whatever your budget allows you to contribute, please remember to give regularly.

Your support helps sustain the mission and ministry of First Reformed UCC.

Narrative Summary

Revenue

1. 2021 YTD Contributions are currently **4,324 less** than 2020 YTD Contributions.
2. Thus far, 2021 Other Income is **\$ 310 less** than 2020 Other Income.
3. 2021 Endowment subsidies are **\$ 4,146 higher** than 2020 Endowment subsidies.
4. 2021 Total Income is **\$ 488 less** than 2020 Total Income.

Expenses

5. 2021 Staff Compensation is **\$ 662 less** than 2020 Staff Compensation .
6. 2021 Benevolence is **\$ 225 less** than in 2020.
7. 2021 Programming & Worship is **\$ 164** more than in 2020.
8. 2021 Operating Expenses is **\$ 3,507** less than in 2020.
9. 2021 Total Expenses is **\$ 4,229 less** than in 2020.



Net Gain/Loss

10. Thus far in 2021, the Net Gain for this year is **\$ 17,026.**

Generous gift being put to use

Many within our congregation will remember two beloved members, Jim and Yvonne Brown. The list of accolades we could bestow upon this couple are beyond measure. For the sake of this space, let it suffice to say that they were immeasurably gracious, humble, and kind.

Following Yvonne's death in 1998, Jim established a modest endowment in memory of his beloved wife. Following his own death in 2011, the church received a bequest from Jim's estate with instructions to add this gift to that earlier endowment. Stipulations for the use of the Brown Endowment included:



Jim Brown

1. While quarterly dividends could be withdrawn, a specified percentage of the principle could also be withdrawn in any year ending in a "0" (such as 2020); and,
2. Although the church could use these funds in any way it desired, a minimum of 10% of the in-

come should be given to the Southern Conference.

Following Jim's death, 2020 was the first year that the church could make a significant withdrawal from this endowment. Rather than using any of these funds for the operating expenses of the church, the Consistory decided to use this resource to support multiple service agencies within our community. At the beginning of March, each of these six agencies received a gift of \$1,000: Meals on Wheels, Allied Churches, Habitat for Humanity, Open Door Clinic, Family Abuse Services, and Crossroads. And in accordance with Jim's

desire that support be given to the church at large, a gift of \$2,200 was sent to the Southern Conference.

All of these gifts were given in memory of the donors, and our beloved friends.

Thank you!

Thank you for your gift of \$1,00 in memory of James and Yvonne Brown. As you know well, a gift like this helps us build decent, affordable housing in Alamance County, and change the life of a family. The partnership of your church with Habitat for Humanity of Alamance County speaks of your dedication to minister to the physical needs of people in Alamance County. Our community is blessed to have your active participation and support of the ministry.

Chris Gillespie, Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity of Alamance County

Cultivating kindness

Kind hearts are the gardens.
Kind thoughts are the roots.
Kind words are the flowers.
Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
and keep out the weeds.
Fill it with sunshine,
kind words and kind deeds.



For April and May
the Adult Education Class
will move its meeting time
to **6:30 p.m.** each Sunday!

Want to participate?

Look for the link provided
in the pastor's weekly email.

Or request the link by emailing
the pastor at fruccevg@gmail.com

The weekly Lectionary texts
can be found at:
lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu

Beatitudes for Today

- Blessed are the curious,
for their curiosity honors reality.
- Blessed are the uncertain and those with
second thoughts, for their minds are open.
- Blessed are the wonderers,
for they shall find what is wonderful.
- Blessed are those who question their answers,
for their horizons will expand forever.
- Blessed are those who often feel foolish,
for they are wiser than those who always
think themselves wise.
- Blessed are those who are scolded, suspected,
and labeled as heretics by the gatekeepers,
for the prophets and mystics were treated
in the same way by the gatekeepers of their
day.
- Blessed are those who know their unknowing,
for they shall have the last laugh.
- Blessed are the perplexed, for they have
reached the frontiers of contemplation.
- Blessed are they who become cynical about
their cynicism and suspicious of their
suspicion, for they will enter the second
innocence.
- Blessed are the doubters,
For they shall see through false gods.
- Blessed are the lovers,
for they shall see God everywhere.

—Excerpt from Brian McLaren’s
*Faith After Doubt: Why Your Beliefs Stopped Working
and What to Do About It*

"Easter egg hunts are proof that children can find things when they really want."

Birthdays

- 3 Pat Evans
- 5 Mike Taylor
- 7 Becca Merrill
- 11 Josh Green
- 12 Ray Deal
- 16 Logan Balog
- 18 Josh Chappell
- 19 Melissa Kakavas
- 22 Alan Balog
- 27 Sara Beth Hardy
- 30 Mike Beamon



Holy hilarity!

More churches lately have been resurrecting (pardon the pun!) the early-church tradition of celebrating the second Sunday of Easter as Holy Humor Sunday, affirming the season’s joy. Need some jokes for April 11? Try these:

Easter is the only time when it’s perfectly safe to put all your eggs in one basket.

Knock knock. *Who’s there?* Hatch. *Hatch who?* God bless you!

What should you do after eating so many Easter treats? *Eggs-ercise!*

Why shouldn’t you tell an Easter egg a joke? *It might crack up!*

An irate subscriber called the newspaper, demanding to know where her Sunday edition was. “Ma’am,” said the employee, “today is Saturday. The Sunday paper isn’t delivered until Sunday.” After a brief pause, the caller spoke with a ray of recognition: “So *that’s* why no one was in church today.”

Church Office Hours

MWF - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

TT - 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.



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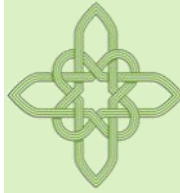
Suggestions and contributions for our newsletter
are welcomed and encouraged.
The deadline for each issue is
the 15th of each month.

Sunday Services

9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
10:30 a.m.	Fellowship Time
11:00 a.m.	Worship

All are welcome!

Jesus didn't reject people. Neither do we.



Striving to become living expressions of God's extravagant grace and love.

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- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED -



On Saturday, April 3, the old rugged cross will be placed on the front lawn of the church on the east side of the driveway. Individuals and families are invited to stop by anytime that day and place a flower, plant, etc. (real or artificial) in the mesh wrapped around the cross. Feel free to invite your friends, families and co-workers to participate as well.