

Greenhills Community Church, Presbyterian
Where every one of God's Children is Welcome!

MARCH 2021 Chimes



FROM THE PASTOR

I've been thinking a lot about time lately. This is, after all, the month we 'spring forward' in time. (There's more information about that elsewhere in the Chimes.)

I started here at GCCP as interim pastor on March 1, so we've been together for one whole year. Three of those 52 weeks, we worshiped together in the sanctuary. Except for one Sunday on the patio, during the other Sundays, we have spent developing and refining our "Zoom" worship services. What have we accomplished in that time together – and what is there still ahead of us in the next six months we'll have together?

The story of Esther, found in the Old Testament, tells us about a beautiful but humble young woman who was raised by her cousin, Mordecai, and who saved a generation through her bravery. If you haven't read the book of Esther in a while, I suggest you do so sometime during Lent. It's a riveting story told in ten chapters.

(As an aside, the book of Esther is only one of two books named for women; the other one is Ruth. Esther is also the only book in the Bible to not mention God in any of its verses!)

Esther 4:15 (NRSV) includes a well known line, spoken by Mordecai to Esther, at a pivotal time in history. He muses, "Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."

God has called *all* of us to this family of God called "Greenhills Community Church, Presbyterian." Have you ever considered what God might want from YOU in "such a time as this"?

The Nominating Committee will be busy trying to discern who God is calling to serve as an elder on Session. Perhaps God is calling YOU to serve in "such a time as this." Plus, your congregational study team has put together a wonderful description of who we are and who we want to be. Session has requested the Nominating Committee to provide a slate for a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). In God's time, the PNC can begin the search for whomever God has planned as your next pastor. How is God calling YOU to be an active part of this process during "such a time as this"?

Now is the time for YOU to step forward and prayerfully and actively help GCCP be ready for God's future. Think how important it was that Esther responded positively to God's call in "such a time as this" – and how God is calling YOU to do the same!

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Pastor
Chris White
Music Director
Brad Caldwell

Reformed Spirituality during Lent



In his book Reformed Spirituality, Howard L. Rice wrote "Spirituality is the pattern by which we shape our lives in response to our experience of God as a very real presence in and around us....This awareness of God is not automatic, nor can it be brought about by any particular technique. We can, however, open ourselves to the already present God by deliberately cultivating certain disciplines of mind and will."

As Christian believers within the reformed tradition, we have often been referred to as the "frozen chosen." For the most part, we like structure within our worship services that are conducted "decently and in order." We tend to lean heavily on our intellectual capabilities and not so much on our emotional feelings. Fortunately, that paradigm has slowly been evolving to include more experiential worship and devotional opportunities.

Our "Good News Thursdays" during Lent will rely heavily on services utilizing "Taize" and "Iona" type liturgy and music. We will gather at 7 pm on Zoom, as usual, and are suggesting that the first half hour is spent enjoying fellowship with one another over a simple meal in our homes. At 7:30 pm, we will turn our focus to worshiping God in a more meditative style than perhaps we are used to doing. The hour will give us the opportunity to enjoy our relationships with one another and our relationship with God.

Howard L. Rice also wrote, "The goal of the Christian life is union with Christ, but such union is only dimly and occasionally realized in this life by most of us. Nevertheless, the pilgrimage toward the goal is one of joyful discovery that Christ is with us whether or not we realize that presence. We are given new opportunities for relationship with others along the way. We find new possibilities within us that we had not thought possible. The adventure of "Christ life" is one that demands all we can give it. But the testimony of the ages is that the goal of the adventure is well worth the struggle. The hungry heart of the pilgrim is fed along the way."

May our praise of God here at GCCP incorporate a wide variety of worshipful experiences which help draw us closer and closer to God – whether they are on Sunday mornings or Thursday evenings! Especially during this Lenten season, may our private devotions and corporate worship opportunities provide us with a "joyful discovery" of the presence of our loving and grace-filled Triune God. Perhaps you will expand your "spiritual horizons" to include a wider range of Christian practices such as a more in-depth study of the Scriptures, times of meditation, fasting, prayer, etc.

If you would like more examples of spiritual practices, please contact Pastor Chris.

FIVE PRACTICES OF FRUITFUL CONGREGATIONS

by Robert Schnase



1. Radical Hospitality
2. Passionate Worship
3. Intentional Faith Development
4. Risk-Taking Mission & Service
5. Extravagant Generosity

1. Radical Hospitality – goes beyond friendliness.
 - Radical Hospitality requires within us an active desire to invite, welcome, receive and care for those who are strangers so they can find a spiritual home and discover the unending richness of life in Christ.
 - Radical Hospitality requires a genuine love for those not yet a part of the faith community.
 - Radical Hospitality requires a willingness for us to change our behaviors in order to accommodate the needs of others and to receive with thanksgiving the talents of newcomers.
2. Passionate Worship – goes beyond going through the motions
 - Passionate Worship calls us to be honest before God and one another and open to God's presence and will for our lives.
 - Passionate Worship calls us to so desire worship that we will reorder our lives in order to incorporate worship into our life as a priority.
 - Passionate Worship calls us to patterns of listening to God, allowing God to shape our hearts and minds through prayer, personal devotions and community worship.
3. Intentional Faith Development – goes beyond daily devotions
 - Intentional Faith Development encourages us to find ways for the church to help form faith at every age and in a variety of ways
 - Intentional Faith Development encourages us to do the "soul work" that connects us to others, immerses us in God's Word and positions us to grow in grace and mature in Christ.
4. Risk-taking Mission & Service – goes beyond donating canned goods to SOUL
 - Risk-taking Mission & Service stretches us so that we move beyond our comfort zone.
 - Risk-taking Mission & Service stretches us to do something for others that we would never consider doing if it were not for our relationship with Jesus Christ and our desire to serve Him.
5. Extravagant Generosity – goes beyond offering money when you remember
 - Extravagant Generosity emphasizes the need for us Christians to give for more reasons than just the church's need for funds.
 - Extravagant Generosity emphasizes the importance of the mission and purpose of the church – rather than budgets or shortages or expenses.

GCCP Session members

Ministry Chairpersons - Ruling Elders currently on Session

Administration - Lee Sanders, Bobbe Kugele

Congregational Care - MaryAnne Kizuka, Valerie Dauwe

Facilities & Finance - Cliff Kizuka, Phil Haisley

Teaching & Worship – Mary Newcomer, Bob Sanders

Witness & Service - Donna Hadley, Billy (Godfrey) Ngong

Clerk of Session – Betty Hamilton

Mr. Roger's Day March 20, 2021

Rev. Fred Rogers was an ordained Minister of Word and sacrament for the PC(USA) and is a notable public figure whose work around peace and reconciliation are worth remembering. Mr. Rogers was also a pioneer in the world of Christian education and formation of young children. March 20th was his birthday and the day that the PC(USA) has chosen to highlight some of his teachings. Here are some of his quotes to ponder!



"All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we're giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbors – in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver." (*Pastor Chris' note: If you or anyone you know needs help – please let me or someone on session know!*)

"As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has or ever will have, something inside that is unique to all time. It's our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression. (*Pastor Chris' note: Remember this when the Nominating Committee calls on you!*)

"Forgiveness is a strange thing. It can sometimes be easier to forgive our enemies than our friends. It can be hardest of all to forgive people we love. Like all of life's important coping skills, the ability to forgive and the capacity to let go of resentments most likely take root very early in our lives." (*Pastor Chris' note: As much as is humanly possible, forgive others as God forgives us!*)

"When we love a person, we accept him or her exactly as is: the lovely with the unlovely, the strong with the fearful, the true mixed in with the façade, and of course, the only way we can do it is by accepting ourselves that way." (*Pastor Chris's note: As much as is humanly possible, love as God loves!*)

"What's up?"

From the Church Ministries

Clerk of Session– see session notes

Ministry of Administration– Status quo.

Ministry of Congregational Care– Well 2021 you are starting off in the new normal. The focus being on getting the Covid 19 vaccine shot. I am getting calls and emails that just melt my heart. I know that my church family will be safe. As the age limit goes down please don't forget to let me know when you got your shots.

Ministry of Facilities & Finance- The shelf for the newer WiFi router that was installed outside Brad's office was enlarged to accommodate the larger router. A dual band WiFi extender was installed in the CFE area to increase the range of the WiFi connection.

Ministry of Teaching & Worship– **Teaching:** GNT started February with a book discussion on "Just Us" by Claudia Rankine led by Lee Sanders. Thank you to Lee for introducing everyone to this book and leading us in discussion. There was not be GNT on 2/18/21 as we were together for the Ash Wednesday service on 2/17/21. GNT started again on Thursday, 2/25/21 with a Taize service. We will begin at the normal time 7:00 pm with fellowship and a lite supper. The service will begin at 7:30 pm.

Worship: As we move from Epiphany with the Wise Men, the Baptism of our Lord, and Transfiguration of our Lord into Lent with Jesus fasting in the Wilderness and his ministry leading him toward Holy Week, we combined the themes of repentance and forgiveness with the racial justice theme of Black History Month (February). The latter was accomplished primarily with African American Spirituals (many arranged by Howard Helvey) and songs of the Underground Railroad and the Civil Rights Movement. On Thursday 2/25, we collaborated with Christian Education on Good News Thursdays for supper and fellowship followed by a brief service of Lenten reflections and music - all done via Zoom of course. But, we are looking forward to at least occasional in-person services outdoors after Easter.

Ministry of Witness & Service– Thank you, thank you, Chris Visnich for the wonderful article you wrote for the February issue of the *Greenhills Journal!* I truly enjoyed reading it. There is nothing much to add except that Godfrey and I encourage you to continue "feeding" the S.O.U.L basket whenever you can. The basket is still in the church office which is open every weekday morning until noon. Of course, we are always looking for additional ideas for mission.

Music Director– February has proven to be a very busy month for CFE. All seniors audition videos are due for scholarship consideration. In addition, they are preparing for the Ohio Music Educators Solo and Ensemble adjudicated festival. (video submissions only). These videos will be due on March 20th. On February 10th, the CFE board met and decided to hold our annual summer institute in our facilities at GCCP. The date has been set for July 23rd - 31st. We have decided to create 3 different scenarios: in-person, hybrid, and completely virtual. We decided on this approach so we can "flip a switch" and function given whatever the "Covid" environment looks like, at the time. We discussed and will continue to discuss safety protocol. We are researching daily take home testing, which is suppose to be released in a month, for those not vaccinated by then. Much more planning ahead.... We also be welcomed another piano to our facility on Feb. 17th. (An 1895 Weber Concert Vertical, at the time, built exactly like a Steinway, absolutely beautiful instrument) This piano was donated by a couple in Indian Hill. Given the summer institute, it came at a good time. Over the past few weeks, Paul and MaryAnne Odegard have been sanding and painting all of the door frames in the CFE wing. I bought the materials right before my father went into hospice, so the project went on hold. I am usually helping them, but due to recording schedules, I have been unable to do so. They are doing a wonderful job, as usual, and we are VERY grateful. As soon as I get through recording, I will start putting carpet squares down in the "entry-way cubby holes" to the Chocolate room, the current CDV room, and the front CFE room. Following this, we are planning to clean up and organize the old bell room, clean and organize the choral library, and paint the stairwell corridor to the coded door entryway. We want to make sure to really "fit and finish" the facility to hopefully welcome the community to some outdoor concerts. More to come!

Please continue to keep CFE/our kids in your prayers, as we navigate to the other side of Covid. Thanks for all you do!! Blessings.

Presbytery of Cincinnati– Recap of the February 13, 2021 meeting was sent out by the church secretary on February 19, 2021



Session Highlights February 2021

By Betty Hamilton, Clerk

[Note: This report focuses on the activities of the Session as a whole and the Committees and Partnerships that report directly to Session rather than the five Ministries, which are mentioned elsewhere]

1. **The Stated Meeting** held on February 16 was again held by Zoom. Did you know that your elected Elders take their responsibility so seriously that attendance is almost always 100%? Especially during the winter months, having virtual meetings instead of in-person has probably made it easier for all to attend an evening meeting.
2. **Membership** – There will be a group of 3 or 4 Session members working to develop new guidelines for our membership categories, based on the wording of the revised edition of the Book of Order.
3. **Mission Study, Next Steps** – The Session voted to instruct the Nominating Committee to begin working on a slate for election of the PNC (Pulpit Nominating Committee.) This important group is to be elected by the Congregation. Our nominating committee is also to develop a slate of up to two people willing to serve as deacons. Under the new form of government PC(USA) and the GCCP By-Laws, individual deacons may be elected even though there is now no Board of Deacons.
4. **Centro de Vida** – As we look forward to re-opening the building, planning is taking place for the two congregations to work together on renovation of the Nursery. In addition to cleaning and painting, some of the furnishings and toys will be repaired or replaced.
5. **CFE (Cincinnati Fusion Ensemble)** – During the pandemic, members of CFE have been doing most of their teaching virtually or with a hybrid model. Though we seldom see them in the building, they continue to work with our Choral Scholars and other high school students from several schools in Greater Cincinnati. It has been a very busy time as the seniors and their coaches/accompanists have been preparing audition recordings to be sent with their college applications.

Stewardship of Pledges & Offerings - as of January 31, 2021



Percent of the Year Elapsed	8%
Budget Needed	\$10,576
Direct Income to Date*	\$3,005
Percent of Anticipated Income Received	2%
Percent of Anticipated Expenses to Date	6%

Based on Budget adopted from 2021

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 14, 2021! Turn your clocks **AHEAD** one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 13!

Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with \$86,400, carries over no balance from day to day, allows you to keep no cash balance, and every evening cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day.

What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

Well, everyone has such a bank. It's name is **time**.

Every morning, God credits you with 86,400 seconds.

Every night God writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.

It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.

Each day God opens a new account for you.

Each night God burns the records of the day.

If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There is no going back. There is no drawing against the tomorrow.

You must live in the present on today's deposits.

Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and faithfulness!

The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of **ONE YEAR**, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of **ONE MONTH**, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of **ONE WEEK**, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of **ONE HOUR**, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

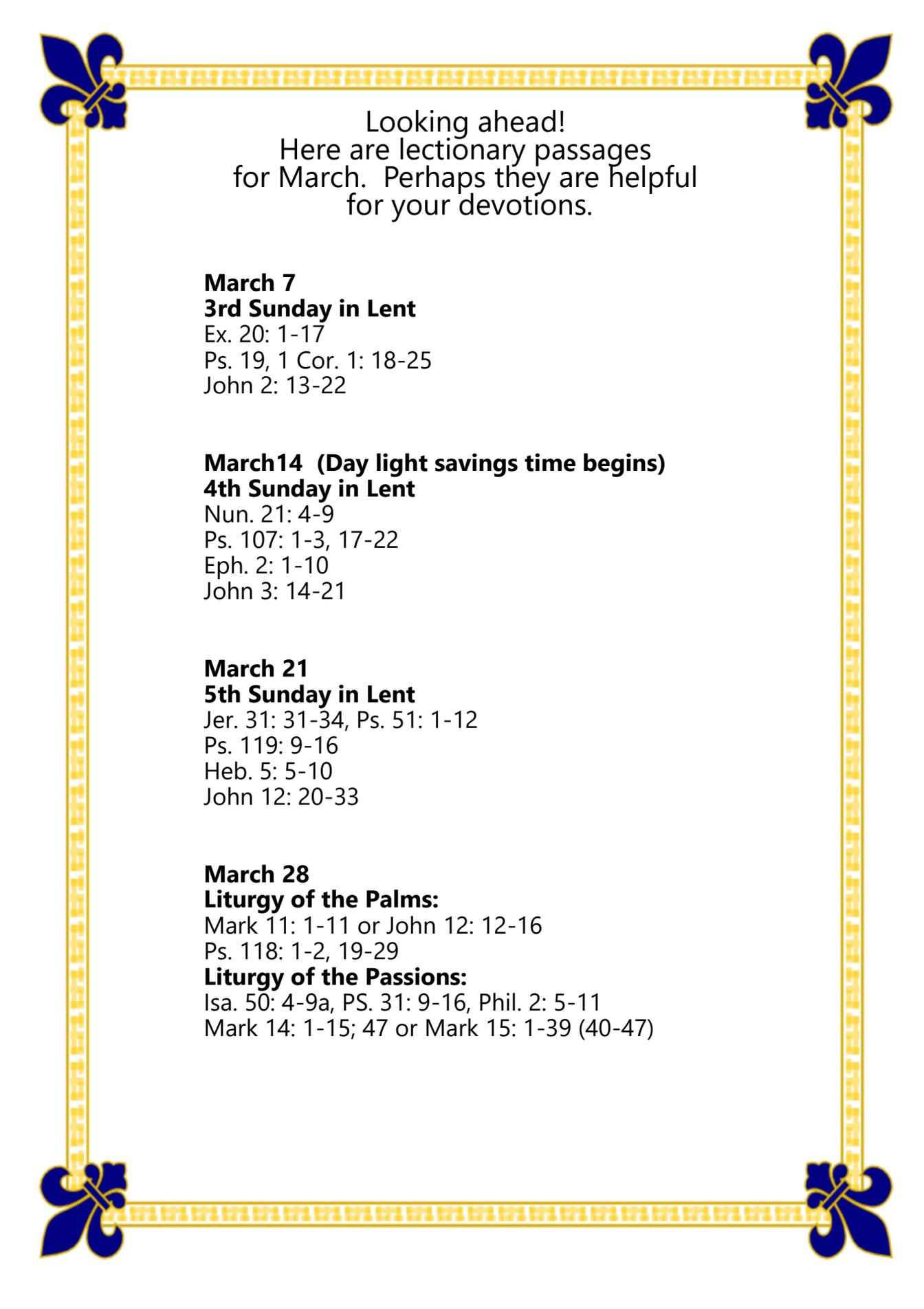
To realize the value of **ONE MINUTE**, ask a person who missed the train.

To realize the value of **ONE SECOND**, ask a person who just avoided an accident.

To realize the value of **ONE MILLISECOND**, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Remember, time waits for no one. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. **Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present.**

The origin of this text is unknown.



Looking ahead!
Here are lectionary passages
for March. Perhaps they are helpful
for your devotions.

March 7
3rd Sunday in Lent

Ex. 20: 1-17
Ps. 19, 1 Cor. 1: 18-25
John 2: 13-22

March 14 (Day light savings time begins)
4th Sunday in Lent

Nun. 21: 4-9
Ps. 107: 1-3, 17-22
Eph. 2: 1-10
John 3: 14-21

March 21
5th Sunday in Lent

Jer. 31: 31-34, Ps. 51: 1-12
Ps. 119: 9-16
Heb. 5: 5-10
John 12: 20-33

March 28
Liturgy of the Palms:

Mark 11: 1-11 or John 12: 12-16
Ps. 118: 1-2, 19-29

Liturgy of the Passions:

Isa. 50: 4-9a, PS. 31: 9-16, Phil. 2: 5-11
Mark 14: 1-15; 47 or Mark 15: 1-39 (40-47)

"Prayers, Poems, and Prose"

The world of my dreams
by Gene Kennedy

I dream of a world where
everyone is free
But with that freedom
comes responsibility
We need to treat others
with encompassing equality
To hear their needs
and respect their dignity
And when they ask
to provide help and charity

The world of my dreams
is not a reality
We do not treat people
the way they should be
As we stand right now
I consider us too greedy
We view our possessions
as how we live comfortably
Our jobs denote how we have
competed successfully

The world we live in now
is not where we ought to be
People are suffering
all very needlessly
Money is the measure
of who will rule powerfully
We look to our leaders
to guide us truthfully
We need to get to that place
where all is love, faith, hope and unity

Adam Sanders	3
Mary Ann Odegard	7
Gus Ngong	8
Cliff Kizuka	10
Lily Kizuka	14
John Dunbar	14
Steve Bailey	23
Betty Hamilton	25

March Birthdays



Memorial Committee



There were no donations received in January and the transfer of funds mentioned in the annual report have been handled.

We did not meet Via zoom in February as there was no business to conduct.

Bobbie Kugele

COVID-19 Vaccinations and "Herd immunity"

"Herd Immunity" means that enough people in a community are protected from getting a disease because they've already had the disease or they've been vaccinated. Herd immunity makes it difficult for the disease to spread from person to person. It also protects those who cannot be vaccinated, such as newborn babies. This guideline means that the greater Cincinnati area needs to vaccinate at least 70% to 90% of the population for local "herd immunity" to be effective. When that is achieved, we'll also need to ensure that the same percentage of GCCP folks are vaccinated before we can consider worshipping in person again. If you have been vaccinated, please let MaryAnne Kizuka know so we can determine what percentage our congregation has been vaccinated.



