



Faith Connections – April 2023

Ionia United Methodist Church
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From Our Pastor's Desk:

Dear Ones,

As we approach Holy Week, I hope & pray your Lenten journey has been reflective, repentant, & prayerful. I also hope it has been spiritually blessed & filled with gratitude for the choices you have made and are making in your life, for life & love in Christ. I further hope (lots of hope!) & pray that you have heard the Lord speaking with love & grace to your heart of hearts where the Holy Spirit dwells. The promise of life eternal because of the grace of Jesus Christ is beyond all that our logical & perhaps scientific minds can comprehend; & yet with our faith, we believe.

I had the blessed occasion to sit with a ten year old person recently to explain about this notion of who Jesus was, & is to me, surrounding Holy Week, & she asked me some wonderful and curious questions as I told her what Holy Week was about:

1. Why palms on Palm Sunday?
2. Why did he ride a donkey?
3. Didn't Jesus ever get angry when people were so mean to him?
4. Couldn't he have given the people his forgiveness and grace without the suffering on a cross if he was God?
5. Was it important that he resurrected with his body - not like a ghost or spirit or something, but his human body?

These were a few of the questions we talked about and it occurred to me that while she had heard these words in culture along with phrases like Easter Baskets, good news, resurrection, forgiveness, the cross is a symbol, the words had little context in faith itself for her because she had not been in a church for four years and her family (friends of mine) did not prioritize Christian education. The Christian faith was not opposed in the home but it was not talked about because there was an assumption of faith in our tradition.

To be clear, I think that is a lovely assumption however her questions reminded me of how important Sunday school is, how important worship is, and how important prayer is in our relationship with God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. We all keep learning, and we all need to keep learning. If that learning begins in childhood, praise be to God! If not,

our God is a patient God and bringing folks to the beauty of God's grace is life-giving in ways nothing else is at any time of life. To whom has God given you the blessing of a witness in this most precious time of Lent and Easter? What stories are you telling?

I was so grateful for this time with her and hearing what her actual questions were and to see her put meaning to all this in the orbit of her busy life. I look forward to more time with her and anyone who wants to sit with this conversation about love, because God is love (Jn 4:17) and there is little I like to talk about more than our faith.

We have discussed how to witness to others, why we witness to others, and when to witness to others. This moment just dropped in my lap so there was no actually planning time and I suggested Easter season to her as a starting point, she was amenable. Where would you have begun if you had the opportunity to share time with a young person who had a batch of words that were connected to Christianity, but did not know why, for example, Jesus rode into town on a donkey? Or why some people passed by the guy laying in the ditch, but one fellow stopped to help? Or what does it mean that *blessed are those who mourn, are meek, are the peacemakers*? What biblical story would you share, and how would you tell it?

I found that it was important to speak gently, with enthusiasm and grace, honor her questions, and affirm that all people of faith have loads of questions. And in the most simple terms, she was listening as I prayed the Holy Spirit was opening her heart of faith, praise be to God.

I know this is challenging to some of you, easier for others of you - but I also know that God equips us to that which he calls us; this means, you can do it. Tell the stories of Jesus, tell why you love Him, and tell about how this feeling of closeness to God might be confusing from time to time, but that God is the center of all things and life is eternal because eternity starts right now.

I celebrate the glory of God with you, this Lenten journey in worship and bible study has been spiritually rich. Let us hope to see one another in church on Resurrection Day, aka, Easter Morn!

With love and blessings, Pastor Robin

From Pastor Robin:



Earth Day is April 22, 2023

Earth Day is more than a slogan for people of faith. We are called upon by the Lord to care for, not abuse, God's creation. Does this call us to a way of life that is more than just a day?

Below are just a few of the scriptures that remind us of the blessing within and about creation and how we are a part of all that God created for good in creation. Through scripture we are reminded not to exploit and abuse creation. Please take a bit of time to imagine how God is speaking to you individually and as the body of Christ as a congregation regarding our love of God and God's creation. Does God call you to action? Would you like to be a leader in our congregation of a creation care effort?

Genesis 1:1-31 God made the heavens and the earth and it was good. Genesis 2:15 Humans are commanded to care for God's creation. Leviticus 25:1-7 The land itself must be given a rest and not abused. Psalm 24:1-2 All the earth is the Lord's. Matthew 6:25-34 God loves and cares for all of creation. Romans 1:20 Creation reveals the nature of God.

On Earth Day Sunday (Apr 24, 2023)

I am asking us to consider a time of prayer and discovery as to how we might imagine a call to our UNY UMC Annual Conference (the institution we are a part of) to have an impact and statement of change for the care of creation. I know this is a new thing to ask you to pray about; we are a part of this great connection and together we can make an impact and profound statement of faith, together. We also know the first step begins the path. What could it mean if we nudge the first step along?

- perhaps the start of a fund to help churches seek solar panels and alternatives to fossil fuels to heat our buildings?
- Perhaps it means an end to the use of plastics (like disposable water bottles or utensils) in the AC or local churches (as we have done at IUMC)?
- Does it mean educating congregations for backyard gardens to feed ourselves rather than purchase lettuce that comes from far away requiring trucks and diesel etc..?

We have begun a commitment to creation care in our own body of Christ at IUMC by offering funds from our missions team to support clean water to the people of South Sudan and through Heifer International's Clean Water Project. We did this because we are blessed with water all around us in our geography, the Finger Lakes, and wanted to reach out in God's creation to help the vulnerable who are in need of clean water, have clean water.

What might be our God-call to action, now? Read the article below and follow the links for information to fill your prayers as we ask God to guide us in Creation Care.

More news on Climate Justice, Caring for Creation (in the spiritual language of our faith.)

The news of concern from the week of March 20, 2023. Many of you read or heard the news of a new scientific report on climate change from the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**. It reports what is possible and what is at stake in lay language. As you go to the [link here to summarize the 37-page report](#), I invite you to gently pray as you read for God to be speaking to you through the work of science and faith. You will see a photo of a glacier in Switzerland that is being covered to reflect the sun and slow down melting, and I must say this was a surprise. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

A few points:

- The Earth is heating up faster than it has in 50+ years, and with this atmospheric heat acceleration there will be "trauma and extreme weather events to the loss of livelihood and culture" if we do not alter our fossil fuel consumption
- With 8 billion people in the world, 10% of households are responsible for 34-45 percent of greenhouse gas emissions
- "Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed least the current climate change are disproportionately affected"
- The temperature changes can be slowed by reducing the use of fossil fuels

The leadership of the church (Administrative Council) has discussed our commitment to God's creation and how we are charged by the Lord through scripture to care for it (see above scripture). What does God call you to pray about and perhaps share on Earth Day Sunday after church, April 24, 2023.

Blessings, Pastor Robin



Tuesdays during Lent at 10:00 am.



Palm Sunday, April 2nd
Holy Communion



CROSS

Good Friday, April 7th, Tenebrae service at noon. Following the service, the movie "Risen" will be shown in Fellowship Hall, then the sanctuary will be open for personal prayer and reflection with scripture and slide show till 6:00 pm.



Easter Altar Plants

Flowers will be placed on the altar for this Easter.



**Easter
Worship**

Easter, April 9th

Easter Worship: 9:30 am
Easter Brunch 10:30 am



The donations from our special Easter offering envelopes will be donated to the Blessing Room in Bloomfield. These envelopes will be distributed with this April newsletter and also placed in the church Narthex.

In Our Area Churches:

Good Friday, April 7th, 6:30 pm an **Ecumenical Cross Walk**, beginning at St John's Episcopal Church, 11 Episcopal Ave., Honeoye Falls, ending at St. Paul of the Cross Church, 37 Monroe St., with an ecumenical service at 7pm



Our prayers are with the family & friends of Leona Parrish who passed on March 25th.

Kevin, Pastor Robin's nephew

Louise Childs, Pastor Robin's mother-in-law

A parishioner's son

The people of Ukraine, Russia, & Turkey

Our nation & the world

Norene Adams

Jan Bartlett

Pat & Ron Bennett

Doris Daniels

Mary Dunne

Jean Frelier

Shirley Kelly

Elaine Parrish

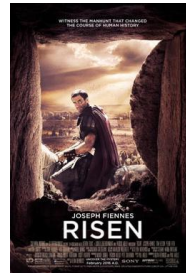
Dorothy Strapp

MaryAnn & Cliff Pimm

Our home-bound

All youth in today's world Our military men & women

All those battling COVID 19, cancer, & diseases



Church Family Movie Afternoon
(for everyone, families, couples, & singles!)
Good Friday, March 31st

We will watch a movie "Risen" after the Good Friday Service

Link to the movie review:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcTVLfn5i8g>



Tuesdays at 10:00 am.

Bring your bible for a Lectionary bible study that will take us through Lent and pay attention to how God is moving through Christ to bring Him to carry the cross for our sins. The last session is April 4th.

Ray Van Der Laan & Max Lucado DVD Studies – after Sunday Worship



Our Church Joys:



Lenten Display in our entry



New screen in Fellowship Hall to show movies, DVDs, etc



New tv for our sanctuary to show announcements, videos, DVDs, meditations, movies, etc



Future Ionia UMC Dates!

Good Friday/Easter Services April 7th & 9th

Strawberry Social: Thursday, June 15th

Fall Festival Saturday, September 16th

Holiday Fair Craft Show: Saturday, November 18th

Update on the Raspberry Social – On a trial basis, the Administrative Board voted to not hold our Raspberry Social in July this year. But on June 15th, 4:30 – 6pm we will have the Strawberry Social inside Fellowship Hall after the pause in holding it inside due to Covid. Take-out will also be available.



Birthday Sunday

on the 2nd Sunday of each month celebrating all those people with birthdays that month! To make a cake for this celebration, you may sign up in Fellowship Hall or call Carol 657-7310 You may buy one and be reimbursed.



Are You Able?

Volunteers are needed for a couple positions!

Ad Board Secretary: take notes at the Ad Board meeting on the 3rd Tuesdays' meetings. Either type or write them up & distribute to board members & post on the bulletin boards. Training is available.

Strawberry Social Team A group to organize menu & food solicitations, worker sign-up sheets, set up kitchen & Fellowship Hall, and work at event. Training is available.

See Pastor Robin if you are interested in either of the positions.





Happy April Birthdays

- 1 Judy Baldwin
- 2 Marla Bennett Jabbour
- 5 Marlese Hawkins
- 6 Heather Kenyon
- 7 Don Frelier
Roxanne Price
Cindi Thomas
David Wells
- 8 Kim Baylor
Mark Gilbride
- 9 Cynthia Fraser
Eva Garling
- 10 Don Semmler
- 12 Scott Garling
Sue Milton
Rebecca Smith
- 14 Linda Brown
Philip White
- 15 Aryn Rapp
- 17 Colden Thomas DuBois
- 22 Meghan Giessler
Bethany Milton
Rebecca Gilbride Pezzimenti
Jeff Price
- 23 Mackenzie Kenyon
Emilio Tolomay
William Washburn
- 26 Ryan Baldwin
- 28 Mary Dunne
Sam Fryer
- 29 Jane Wagorn

In Our Area:

Mon., April 10th , 7pm Pub Theology at Fanatics in Lima with Honeoye Falls UMC "Beers, Conversations & God" All perspectives are welcome.

Sat., April 15th from 1 - 3 PM, "Spring Shenanigans" at the United Church of Bristol - two hours of fun for kids of all ages. We will have "Agility Bunnies" trained to jump, among other things , sponsored by 4H. They also will be available for holding & petting. We will also have alpaca, crafts to do, snacks, and games to play. and IT'S FREE!

Sat., May 20, 3pm til gone, Pulled Pork Dinner United Church of Bristol



We are still collecting used printer ink cartridges

that can be redeemed for coupons toward our church's office supplies at Staples. Leave the ink cartridges in the labeled box in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!



Our church's mission is to serve our church family & community.

Mission Team: Carol Hinds, Pastor Robin, and of course, the body of Christ!



Drop off your clean "NYS deposit" Pop Cans & Bottles for Missions

Place into the crate or trash containers next to the shed behind the church. Please drain the bottles & cans & place them in plastic bags! Thank you for all your donations! Pop cans and bottles do add up... Already this year we have collected over 4,000 cans & bottles, all proceeds to be donated toward our various missions!

County Programs: As we imagine living into our later years of life in our homes, there are a variety of programs in the county that could be useful: Did you know?

The Blessings Room Food Shelf (our community food shelf) is our Lenten & Easter missional offering for food & financial donations. Our missions team is going to donate a monthly amount for a Milk Fund because it is an expense for the Blessing Room to purchase regular cow milk, free to families who shop at the food shelf. You are welcome to donate; & you are welcome visit the food shelf if you have a need for your home. The Blessing Room Food Shelf s located at St Benedict's Parish on Church Street, East Bloomfield, NY. Phone:585-337-0797 Open Wednesday 9-12 & Saturday 9-12. Food is free.

Older Adults Safe And Sound Home Modification Program (OASAS)

Director: Pam Precourt (315) 333-4155 x 3206
Program Coordinator: Wanda Felix (315) 333-4155

The OASAS Program is a grant-funded program designed to provide low-income senior citizens with low-barrier, high-impact home modifications that will allow their homes to be a safe space to age in place. By providing temporary ramps, shower grab bars, comfort height toilets, fixing uneven floor repairs, and much more, seniors can feel safer and more independent in their homes. This is a free service to those who meet eligibility requirements.

Residential Emergency Services to Offer Repairs to the Elderly Home Modification

The RESTORE program, Residential Emergency Services to Offer (Home) Repairs to the Elderly, is an (continued on the next page)

(Continued)

assistance program for low-income, elderly homeowners in Wayne, Cayuga, & Ontario counties. This program was designed to eliminate unsafe conditions in the home where the homeowner cannot afford the cost of emergency repairs within a reasonable period, as determined by FLCA. Director: Pam Precourt (315) 333-4155 x 3206 Program Coordinator: Amy Sanzotta (315) 333-4155



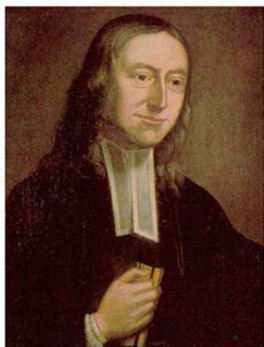
Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time.
Martin Luther



Our church **will not** be having our annual garage sale this summer! So, how about donating to another area church or charity? We will include in the May newsletter places where you can take your donations.



Easter. Springtime is lush with rebirth, new beginnings, and new growth. Too often, however, we want to race to the Easter Resurrection without fully embracing the Lenten process that leads there. Lent reflects the forty days that Jesus wandered in the wilderness — tempted by Satan — in readiness for a ministry destined to end in tragedy. Few of us can relate to the level of sacrifice and commitment that Jesus displayed in his forty days, yet Lent provides us with an opportunity to deepen our spirituality by engaging in regular discipline from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday. The wilderness — the desert days of Lent — is the true path toward spiritual transformation.



“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

— John Wesley

Pioneers in Methodism: Sarah Mallet was one of the women John Wesley authorized to serve as a preacher in 18th century English Methodism! Her preaching ministry spanned 55 years despite later opposition from her denomination, the Wesleyan Church. Read more about this persistent preacher and how she continues to make an impact on the church today. The article link is below:

https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-pioneers-in-methodism-sarah-mallet?utm_source=communication%20essential&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=umcom&utm_content=sally03/22/2023&mkt_tok=MDc4LUpYUS02NDMAAAGKqUHa7np0vRdpgGO77gMA8gJsKEhAWa0h8updMs_u09XA5e9vqhgWYHBIzPgSj4K5CkwllFWp8DqtK-xOhoHvNV0Utv2s-H6nxWrQ6XwBvQj0Q



Dear God, we praise you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

We rejoice on this Easter day.

We rejoice singing praises to Jesus' name.

Jesus is risen, and He brings new life to all.

Dear Jesus, we thank you for giving your life for us on the cross.

We thank you for forgiving our sins.

We thank you for loving all the people of the earth.

We pray your blessings upon our family.

Unite us in your love.

Make our home a safe place.

Help us to reach out to the poor and the needy.

Help us to speak for justice and against oppression.

We pray your blessings upon all nations.

Help us to repent of all violence and crime.

Lead us to become a loving community.

We praise you, Jesus our savior.

We thank you for this day. Amen.

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PO Box 8
2120 Elton Rd.
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Sunday Worship Service:
9:30AM AM

Church Website: www.ioniaumc.org

Church Email: ioniaumc2120@hotmail.com

Facebook: "IoniaUMCNY"

Church Phone: 585-657-6984

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Robin Blair

Pastor's Email: revrobinblair@gmail.com

Pastor's Phone: 315-729-4485

HE IS NOT HERE;
HE IS RISEN!

April Calendar

Sundays, 9:30 AM Worship Service &
10:30 AM Coffee Hour & DVD Studies
Friday, 2nd Good Friday Service, at noon; &
Movie; then meditation til 6pm
Tuesday 4th, 10 AM Lenten Bible Study
Tuesday 4th : Trustees meeting
Sunday, 9th Easter Sunday & Brunch
Sunday, 19th: Birthday Sunday
Thurs., 18th : Ad Board meeting
Sunday, 30th: Sunday Pot-Luck Brunch