



Join the Conversation

Many, many folks have taken us up on the invitation to join in small groups meeting at the church and in homes to talk about the book *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian? {A Guide to What Matters Most}* by Martin Thielen. By the time you are reading this we will be a little over halfway through our Lenten journey and small group gatherings, but it is not too late to join in the conversation. If you come to a Sunday service and find it particularly provocative, or moving, or confusing, these gatherings offer an opportunity to explore the questions more deeply. Consider yourself invited, and call the church office if you want us to help you connect with a group (or you want to gather some friends and start a group of your own!).

Sunday worship this season has focused on these central ideas of our faith that matter most and the questions they seek to engage. I hope you will plan to join us:

- April 3rd Jesus' Work: Where is God?
- April 10th Jesus' Example: What Brings Fulfillment?
- April 16th Jesus' Death: What About Suffering?
 A Palm/Passion Worship Experience with Communion,
 Festival Choir, iGen
- April 23rd Jesus' Resurrection: Is There Hope?
 An Easter Worship Celebration with Communion, Festival
 Choir, and Bell Ensemble

Throughout the month of April we hope you will be signing up for our second annual **Spill Out into the community, a Worship/Service event planned for May 1st**. We hope to have members and friends raising money and participating in the Literacy Run, Walking in the CROP Walk and collecting pledges to address local and global hunger needs, helping to clean up Barker Park, visiting in Nursing Homes, Serving at Bethany Center, and preparing meals for Joseph's House and Damian Center, to name a few of the projects to choose from. At least as important as questions about what we believe, is the witness to our faith in what we do.

I am grateful to be on this journey together with Christ and with all of you: questioning, serving, growing.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Nina

Troy Night Out

Roast Beef Dinner

Friday, April 29th 5-8pm

\$12.00 (Children 6 and under: \$5)

Menu:

- Roast Beef
- Garlic Smashed Potatoes
- Green Beans
- Corn
- Cole Slaw
- Dinner rolls
- Salad
- Dessert

Portion of proceeds to benefit UMCOR's Japan Relief Effort

<h2>Contents</h2>	Study Opportunities 3	April Calendar..... 5
Music..... 2	Spaghetti Dinner 4	Retreat Date 5
Devotion..... 2	Tango..... 4	Clean-up..... 6
What's the Least..... 2	Cd Fundraiser..... 4	Help Needed..... 6
2011 Talent Auction 2	DVDs 4	Movies..... 6
One Great Hour of Sharing 3	Flowers..... 5	Spire Deadline..... 6
	April Birthdays & Anniversaries 5	Pastors' Addresses 6

Music at Christ Church

Music Ministry continues to tread old and new paths of enhancing our worship experience. I've just come home from an iGen rehearsal at which (if I counted right) 20 folks were present and participated in some form--wonderful!

Look for our Festival Choir to have selections ready for Palm Sunday and Easter. We'll be trying to get a Bell Ensemble together for our Easter worship--please let me know if you're interested. Our iGen group is preparing a wonderful piece with some solo male vocals for Palm/Passion Sunday (hence the large turnout tonight). And, we are hoping for some special selections from various individuals this month (instrumental and vocal). So far this year, we've had some special musical selection every Sunday but one. Sincere thanks to the many folks who have contributed their time and talents. If you're out there and would like to contribute musically, please just let me know and we'll find a time and place!

Have you noticed how much better the singing of hymns sounds now that we are seated closer together (thanks to removing a few pews)? Having a bit more space up front is also very helpful for our special music groups such as our Bell Choir, iGen and other groups. And, of course, it makes it so much easier for any folks with disability issues.

And...if you're looking for a fun afternoon, check out the new Troy Samba group that will next meet Sunday, April 3...it's a ton of fun and requires no special music ability (other than enthusiasm) to get started! Thank you Elizabeth for bringing this opportunity to our community!

Warmly, in Christ,

George Garin, Minister of Music

Sunday School

So that everyone may celebrate the holiday, there will be no Sunday School on Easter. We will resume classes the following week.

Devotion

Nancy Burgin

I admit it. I am an absolute wimp when I am sick. This past time, I crawled into bed, feeling miserable. I prayed, "God, just don't leave me here all alone." "MMRRROW!" was the immediate answer. Our cat was right there, reminding me I wasn't alone; she was here too. Now I'd be tempted to say this was just a coincidence, but the two things happened within a heart beat of each other.

So then I started thinking, Does the Bible have stories of God using animals as messengers? First I thought about Balaam and how his donkey saved him from the angel. (Numbers 22:21-33) Interesting story, but the donkey is smarter than the human. Don't think I dare draw parallels from THAT one. Then I remembered- the ravens! God sent the ravens to feed Elijah! Elijah had just told predicted a drought, and God told him to "hide yourself by the brook of Cherith...you shall...drink the brook and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there....And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening." (1 Kings 17:4, 6) So God does use animals as messengers. We humans just need to learn to listen!

"What's the Least...?" Study Update

More than 40 adults have attended at least one of our Lenten discussion groups and over 30 books have been purchased. Many more have shared in worship where we have looked at those same themes.

7 groups are meeting with the 3 being held in the Church building as drop-in groups - so if you happen to be available and want to take part please feel welcome to stop by Sundays at 9:30a.m. or Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m and 7 p.m. There will be no group on Easter Sunday, and the study is scheduled to end in the 7 days following Easter Day.

2011 Talent Auction

Consider sharing your talents at this year's talent auction. All items donated to benefit the Christ Church budget. We have so many talented people in our church. What about teaching someone something you love to do, a musical lesson, a painting class or something else you like to do? Love to cook? I can think of many items for this category from a full dinner, to casseroles or dessert. How about a cooking lesson!

There have been many different items donated in the past from services such as computer assistance to babysitting, hand-crafted items, paintings and plants. Please call Darlene Brooks at 225-2334 or e-mail me at delder1@nycap.rr.com to add your donated item or you can see either Suzanne Sherman or myself at church on any Sunday. Bid sheets will be posted on Sunday, May 1st and bidding will close Sunday, June 12th.

One Great Hour of Sharing – Giving to those who give relief

Your gift to One Great Hour of sharing benefits The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) located at the General Board of Global Ministries. With this offering, The United Methodist Church rebuilds lives and communities around the world by helping the United Methodist Committee on Relief keep its promise that 100% of your designated gift goes to specific causes.

From their website, here are the highlights on what UMCOR has been doing just since the beginning of the year.

UMCOR and donors help rebuild war-torn South Sudan

UMCOR coordinates help for Japan with churches and agencies.

UMCOR partners with government to support senior citizen center in Armenia.

UMCOR helps farmers in Indonesia harvest chili crops

UMCOR establishes supply network for efficiency in distributing needed supplies

UMCOR sends relief to Haiti to help with rebuilding.

UMCOR Health Assists Africa Annual Conferences Strengthen Health Boards.

You help all the people touched by these programs through your generosity. Please continue to help and give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing on April 10.

To read more about the stories above, link to the website at <http://www.umcsgiving.org/site>

Thank you, Lee Kemp

Upcoming Study Opportunities

Janet Douglass

As our Lenten study draws to a close, here are a few options for further study:

I have recently purchased the **DVD series “First Light”** - rather as “Eclipsing Empire” toured the cities where Paul taught, “First Light” tours the Galilee and Jerusalem and talks about the gospel stories. Written and presented by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, Crossan - one of the foremost Christian scholars of our age who wrote the accompanying participant reader, says of it: “It is all I have to say about Jesus after half a century of study - in succinct summary”. I have previewed it and I think it is interesting and great discussion material. There are 12 sessions and we could certainly do this Tuesday evenings at Church with classes 7:00 - 8:30pm: as always, if there is sufficient interest in an alternative time, I am willing to consider that.

There are still some people who are interested in an evening or weekend study- discussion using **Living the Questions 2.0**. (There is currently a group doing this on Thursday mornings.) This study is in 3 sessions, each of 7 classes and it is a dvd-based discussion with multiple well known current Christian thinkers. Over the 21 sessions, participants hear how Progressive Christians view Christianity and the Bible, Jesus, creation myths, birth stories, the recent interest in “the rapture”, resurrection and the future and meaning of the Christian faith. A commitment to the whole series is suggested to get the most from this foundational course in Christianity for the 21st Century.

Book Study: “Love Wins” and “Razing Hell”

Rob Bell’s new book, “Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived”, has caused quite a stir in the media as he tackles, among other things, what he sees as the out-dated and unfounded popular view of Hell. Nancy Burgin recently came across “Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You’ve Been Taught About God’s Wrath and Judgment” by Sharon L. Baker at the library, which deals with similar subject matter. If these interest you we can plan a Summer book group to talk about one or both - with plenty of advance notice to get and read the book/s! (Amazon have both books for under \$12 each.) Let Pastor Janet know of your interest.

Spaghetti Dinner

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our very successful Benefit Spaghetti Dinner! To everyone who helped cook, serve, clean up, collect tickets, make desserts, pass out flyers, email friends, come and eat and all of the other small things that make a great event, your help is appreciated, not only by our coordinators, but also all those who are served by the agencies that benefit. We are very grateful for the wonderful energy of the students of the Robert C. Parker School, our co-sponsors. We raised over \$3,500.00, serving over 300 people. This is a large increase over last year and the best we have done in the eight years we have been doing this event. We will report the distribution of the funds in the next SPIRE, after we receive the last bits of income and pay all of our expenses.



We made 1000 meatballs, 25 gallons of sauce, 42 pounds of spaghetti, 20 large loaves of garlic bread, used 40 heads of romaine as the base for the salad, and cut more than 20 cakes and pies as well as serving plates of fresh fruit and cookies. Wow! Thanks again, everyone!

Tango at Christ Church.

Did you know that most Saturdays of the year, Christ Church hosts community classes in Argentine tango in the Fellowship Hall? On Saturdays, from 9:30am-10:00am, Kevin Magee (Albany Tango Society) teaches a free class in Argentine Tango for anyone in the community who wishes to drop in. From 10:00am-2:00pm, Kevin teaches three levels of instruction, organized in six-week courses. Feel free to stop-by and check it out! **Special Arrangement: Members of Christ Church who register for the beginning level class can contribute 100% of the course fees to the church.** Now, there is a creative opportunity for giving! Details on the six-week course in Argentine Tango can be found on the website: www.AlbanyTangoSociety.org. Contact Kevin Magee: 518.266.9612.

About the Artist: Kevin Magee received his MFA in Dance studies from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in 1991. Trained as a classical dancer, Kevin has performed and taught modern dance, ballet, jazz, and tango at universities and colleges throughout the US. In 2007, Kevin formed the Albany Tango Society, and he now teaches tango in venues throughout the Capital Region, including tango clubs at RPI, SUNY-Albany, and Emma Willard School.

Kevin Magee - 518-266-9612

DVDs of services and Livestream options

Weekly sermons are available online by clicking on the livestream link on the front page of our website (www.ChristChurchTroy.org) and the whole sermon is streamed as it happens on Sundays from 10:30 am. if you cannot listen live and want to hear the whole thing (and services are crafted so that the whole message supports the metaphor or theme of the day) then please request a DVD by calling or stopping by the Office (272-8392.)

CD Fundraiser

Many thanks to all who contributed to Elizabeth Woodbury Kasius & Heard's CD Fundraiser in February!

We more than met our goal and Susan Adhiambo will have all her school fees paid for this year because of your generosity. Because there is still interest from the congregation in the cd ("Karibu") we will continue to sell them out of the church office and 100% of the funds will be donated towards next year's school fees.

For more information on the organization that administers this program visit www.villagevolunteers.org.

For more information on Elizabeth's musical group, visit www.heardmusic.net.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Regular Sunday Schedule 9.30am: Church School (All ages) 10:30am: Worship 11:30am Coffee fellowship					1	2
3	4	5 ^{9am} Wshp Planning 10:30 Study 6pm iGen 7pm Study	6 ^{7pm} Choirss	7 ^{7pm} Finance	8	9 ^{9am-noon} clean-up
10	11 ^{9am} Wshp Planning	12 ^{10:30} Study 6pm iGen 7pm Study	13 ^{7pm} Choirss	14 ^{Trustees} & Church Council	15	16
17 ^{Palm} Passion	18	19 ^{9am} Wshp Planning 10:30 Study 6pm iGen 7pm Study	20 ^{7pm} Choirss	21 ^{Maundy} Thursday Evening Taize Service	22 ^{Good} Friday Noon-3pm Prayer	23
24 ^{Easter} Sunday Spire Deadline	25 ^{6:30pm} Wshp Planning	26 ^{10:30} Study 6pm iGen 7pm Study	27 ^{7pm} Handbells	28	29 ^{5-8pm} Roast Beef Dinner	30

April Anniversaries.

9 th	David and Christine MacDonald	26 th	Bruce & Nancy King
-----------------	-------------------------------	------------------	--------------------

April Birthdays.

3 rd	Olivia Delamarced	3 rd	Devin Nuzzi	4 th	Matthew Feiden
5 th	Vito Greco	6 th	Eliot Cape	10 th	Amanda Busta
12 th	Brian Aldrich	13 th	Annelise Pitts	14 th	Jason Matot
19 th	Virginia Christian	19 th	Henry Delamarced	20 th	Marta Andersen
21 st	Kenneth Rose	22 nd	David Weiner	26 th	David Bassett
29 th	Mary Wolfe-Baker				

March Flowers

6 th	Given by Linda & Mark Campbell in memory of her grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. John K. Keyes.
13 th	Given by the Ide Memorial in memory of Mr. & Mrs. George H. Ide
27 th	Given by the MacDonald Family in loving memory of Ann & Larry MacDonald.

Save the Date; Retreat set for Carondelet in Latham.

Friday May 13th 5pm-Saturday May 14th 5pm. 15 people can stay overnight, but all are invited to attend the sessions. Let Pastor Nina know if you wish to stay overnight. See bulletin for cost.

Christ Church United Methodist

35 State Street, Troy, New York 12180

Return Service Requested

Non-profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Troy, NY 12180
Permit #496

Spring Clean Up

Please come to the church on Saturday morning, April 9th as we gather for some pre-Easter Spring cleaning. We aim to work from 9am until noon.

Thank you for your help! The Trustees.

Help Needed:

On Friday April 29th (Troy Night Out) we will be having a church fundraiser: a Roast Beef Dinner. There are many ways to help!

- Help to prep and cook the food; set up the room; greet and wait on diners; clean up afterwards: sign-up sheets are on the Office window.
- Can you help distribute fliers?
- Email your contacts to let them know we are doing this?
- Sell tickets?
- Will you be there?

Movie and Scones anyone?

There has been a suggestion for one of our occasional free movie nights: "The Queen." Free movie and - fittingly - scones will be provided and we will meet downstairs in Wesley Hall. Possible date is May 6th. Watch your bulletin for details.

...And how about a Star Wars Movie Marathon?

There is talk about a Star Wars Marathon weekend in May using the larger screen (before it gets too warm in Fellowship Hall.) If this idea intrigues you make sure you let Pastor Janet know and those interested can get together and plan the times and refreshments: someone admitted to not having seen the originals at worship planning...and an idea was born!

Spire Deadline

The deadline for the April Spire is Sunday, April 24th.



God intends the church to be a community that embodies love, grace, and justice for all people. As a Reconciling Congregation, we therefore affirm the sacred worth of and welcome persons of any sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, marital status, race, ethnic background, economic condition, and physical or mental ability as full participants in our community of faith. God's love includes everyone, as does Christ Church United Methodist.

Office phone 272-8392, Fax 273-8042, URL <http://www.ChristChurchTroy.org>

The Rev. Nina Nichols Senior Pastor email pastornina@christchurchtroy.org Urgent phone: 588-6405

Janet Douglass, Assistant Pastor email janet@christchurchtroy.org Urgent phone: 273-3713

The Rev. C. Joseph Ingraham, Pastor Emeritus