



Seven Weeks

On Sunday, March 13th, our congregation will embark on an exciting seven week journey. Our entire church family, both in Sunday School classes, evening studies at the church and in homes, and in worship services, will read and discuss an engaging new book about Christianity titled *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be Christian?*

During this unique study we'll discuss several things Christians don't need to believe. For example, we don't need to believe that good Christians don't doubt or that it's OK for Christians to be judgmental. However, we'll spend most of our time studying what Christians do need to believe. In short, Christians need to believe in Jesus- his life, teachings, example, death, and resurrection. A great benefit of these beliefs is that they provide promising answers to life's most profound questions including: What matters most? Am I accepted? Where is God? What brings fulfillment? What about suffering? Is there hope?

You can help us to prepare for this dynamic seven-week experience in the following ways. First, pray for this important event. Second, attend Sunday School or a study group and worship for all of Lent (March 13th-April 17th), Easter Sunday (April 24th) and the week after (May 1st) when our worship will Spill Out into community service. Third, purchase copies of *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?* Pastor Janet has gotten us a great deal so call the church office and reserve a copy if you haven't already. Finally, invite family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers to visit our church during the seven-week event.

I look forward to wrestling with this question and the others it inspires as we gather for study and worship this Lenten season.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Nina

Why that title?

The author, UMC Pastor, the Rev. Martin Thielen writes how a young man he meets and chats with explains that because of his experience with the institutional Church and Christians he has met, he is an atheist. As the chats continue, he upgrades first to being "an agnostic" and then admits he's had "an epiphany. I realize I don't reject Christianity. Instead, I reject the way intolerant Christians package Christianity" and shortly thereafter asks the author: "What's the Least I Can Believe and Still be a Christian?"

What are the 10 things Thielen says we can - and should- let go of? And what are the 10 things he believes are essential?

Come to our Lent worship series...read the book (\$9 from the Church Office which is a 40% saving)...join - or host- a discussion group at church, in a home or out in the community. Come see if you agree with the author. And if you know someone who sounds like that young man -- invite them to share in the discussion too!



Ash Wednesday

In the name of the church I invite you to the observance of a Holy Lent...

Wednesday, March 9th 12:00 and 6:30, Parlor

Service of Prayer and Communion and the Imposition of Ashes

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Music at Christ Church

We've been thrilled to have some special music offerings the past few weeks, including a "body worship" rendition of Shout to the Lord by our iGen group and a Duke Ellington composition sung by Michael Lopez in commemoration of Black History Month (accompanied by Kate on piano). Elizabeth Woodbury Kasius played a beautiful composition on the Sunday Lily was baptized. We continue to try and recruit folks who will gather around the microphone and help lead congregational singing on Sundays. Feel free to come up and join us in leading the Sunday singing...or, if you'd like to contribute some other musical offering to our worship, please let me know and we'll put it on the calendar.

Our Bell Choir has started rehearsing on Wednesdays again after a winter break. Watch the bulletin for an announcement for Festival Choir rehearsals. We plan to have choral pieces ready for Palm Sunday and Easter. iGen continues to meet weekly on Tuesday evenings and is working on another music/dance/body worship piece with supplemental instrumentation.

All of our church's musical groups are open for new members. See me or the person heading up the group for more information and come join the fun!

And...in addition to church-specific musical opportunities, a number of other music-related events occur on a regular basis at Christ Church. Like to dance? There's Tango on Saturdays. Traditional English folk and dance music interest you? There's a monthly group on the last Monday evening that's fun with a variety of instruments (piano, concertinas, pipes, flutes, mandolins, violins, guitars, etc. have all played a part). Brazilian Carnival rhythms move you? Try out the new Samba group being formed by Elizabeth (50+ folks met for the first time the afternoon of Jan. 30). Refer to our church bulletins and/or the monthly Spire for more information about these and other possibilities as they arise.

George Garin, Minister of Music

Benefit Spaghetti Dinner

Here is your chance to learn authentic Italian cooking ... or eat it! Our Benefit Spaghetti Dinner will be held on Friday, March 25th from 5-8 pm here at the church. We invite you to sell tickets, come eat, bring your friends and family, and we will need desserts. Come help with making meatballs (with cooking lesson included - old Marano family recipe) on Tuesday March 22nd. Help with set-up, serving, or cleanup. A sign-up sheet will be on the office window.

Bethany Hospitality Center, Joseph's House, the Roarke Center, Troy Area United Ministries, Unity House and the YWCA will benefit from this event. If you don't know about one or more of these agencies, we will be featuring them beginning of February 27 during the Sunday worship.

Devotion

Peter Burgin

The engine revved once again, the tires spun on the snow beneath them, and I groaned.

There was no way that car was moving.

It was one after one of those heavy snowstorms in late January. My girlfriend, Katielyn, and I were trying to shovel out her station wagon and get it to the other side of the road before we got plowed in. Despite our best efforts, however, the car had only pulled forward a little ways before getting stuck.

We'd be stuck there until spring.

Standing in the cold, frustrated, I remembered what Katie and I had been working on. Instead of getting ourselves worked up over things, we were trying to actively pray about them. In a desperate attempt, I prayed, "Please God, help us get our car unstuck."

Katie tried to move forward again. No luck.

Feeling really angry, and somewhat disappointed, I turned around to see a snowplow headed up the opposite side of the street. Wonderful. That meant that we had only about 5 minutes before the car was buried in a huge snowbank and I'd have to start all over again.

Then the snow plow stopped, the driver got out, and got behind our car to push. With his help, we managed to get the car unstuck, and we thanked him as he cleared in front of the house so we could park back in front of it. Katie told me later that she had prayed too, and we both thanked God for his help.

This made me think of Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." God is always there for us to help us through. Even if that help comes in the form of a snow plow driver.

Benefit Spaghetti Dinner

Troy Night Out

5:00 - 8:00 pm, Fri March 25th

@ Christ Church United Methodist
35 State St. corner of 5th Ave., Troy

The Menu

Spaghetti & Meatballs
Homemade Sauce
Garlic Bread
Salad
Beverage
Dessert

Vegetarian Option Avail.

\$10/adult

\$4/children 6 & younger

Bring home a quart of
sauce or meatballs for just
\$5!



Call ahead for group
take-out: 272-8392,
to pick up dinners
between 4p and 5p

Tickets available from

Joseph's House*,
the Troy YWCA*,
Bethany Hospitality Center*,
Unity House*,
Troy Area United Ministries*,
The Roarke Center*,
Christ Church Troy, and
the Robert C. Parker School

**These agencies will receive the proceeds
from the dinner.*

Inn From The Cold

Esther Dunagan

Inn From The Cold is in its third season with churches in Downtown Troy serving as an overflow shelter for ten men from Joseph's House from November 1st through April 30th. In November and December, Christ Church was the host church with 39 men being served. Nineteen (19) of these men have been resettled in an appropriate living situation.

Thank you to everyone from Christ Church who served as volunteers. Some of these same individuals were not only involved with the program hosted at our church, they also continue through the remaining winter months as volunteers serving at other churches for the program.

All in all, there are 75 volunteers, consisting of a broad cross section of the general population: church members, college students, helping professionals, and people simply interested in helping the most vulnerable in our community.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Lee Kemp

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is one of the six church wide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church. OGHS enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to live out its mission to alleviate human suffering.

UMCOR is the humanitarian arm of The United Methodist Church. OGHS gifts underwrite UMCOR's "costs of doing business," meaning that every penny of every gift you make to a specific UMCOR project will be spent on that project—not on office administrative costs. This enables UMCOR to respond to natural or human made disasters.

The OGHS offering makes ministries available in the United States and across the globe. In 81 countries in all, you assure the United Methodist Church is in the lead to alleviate suffering through OGHS.

This year we will celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing on April 10. Please give generously. When we give from the heart, we receive unexpected blessings - especially the joy of making a difference in someone's life.

Accessibility for All

Christ Church is committed to being a welcoming place to all people, and we are getting ready to take the next steps in making our building a more inviting and accessible community center. Two years ago the Trustees worked with architects to draw up plans for renovations that include making handicapped-accessible bathrooms, installing an elevator that services all 3 floors, and rearranging some of the public space in the Parish House. The next step is to raise funds to support these renovations. In total, about \$300,000 needs to be raised.

A team, including Andrew Torres, Joel Holcomb, and Alice Rose has begun taking action to make these dreams a reality. And the first grant application has already been submitted! We will raise funds from three types of sources: public & private grants, endowment and memorial monies, and personal donations. As the funding is secured, the construction will begin in a phased approach, starting with the bathroom construction.

We need your help. If any of you know of grant opportunities that would fit this project please talk to one of the team members listed above. If you have a strong interest or ideas about the coming capital campaign, please talk to one of the pastors. And if you

have questions about the renovation plans, speak with Paul Marano or one of the Trustees. Keep this project in your thoughts and prayers. Prayerfully begin to consider how your family might be able to help make this dream a reality.

Imagine the Christ Church building as a fully accessible facility. Older members and those with walking aids will no longer be kept from events and meetings because the stairs keep them from attending. Everyone will be able to use modern, clean bathrooms. One bathroom will be family-style and fully handicapped-accessible. The basement rooms will be more accessible to students and organizations that meet in them. Imagine how much more Christ Church will be able to serve our community with these changes. Please help.

Alice Rose

Souper Bowl

Thank You to everyone who donated to the Sunday School's Souper Bowl food drive in February. The class will be delivering the items to the Roarke Center in early March. Please continue to keep area food banks in your thoughts, prayers, and donation plans.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 6pm iGen	2 7pm Handbells	3 10:30am LTQ 2.0 7pm Finance	4	5
6	7	8 9am Wshp Planning 10:30 LTQ 6pm iGen	9 Ash Wednesday 7pm Handbells	10 7pm Trustees	11	12
13	14	15 9am Wshp Planning 10:30 Study 6pm iGen 7pm Study	16 7pm Handbells	17 7pm Church Council	18	19
20	21	22 9am Wshp Planning 10:30 Study 6pm iGen 7pm Study	23 7pm Handbells	24	25 Spaghetti Dinner	26
27 Spire Deadline	28	29 9am Wshp Planning 10:30 LTQ 6pm iGen 7pm Study	30 7pm Handbells	31	Regular Sunday Schedule 9.30am: Church School (All ages) 10:30am: Worship 11:30am Coffee fellowship	

March Birthdays.

2 nd	Zachary Valentine	6 th	Rita Bardill	6 th	Nick Sopchack Jr.
6 th	Rick Martucci	10 th	Jennifer Pryor	15 th	Mike Douglass
23 rd	Amanda Martucci	24 th	Warren Gibson	25 th	Kayla Fenimore
29 th	Arlene Lewis	30 th	Nicholas Sopchak Sr.	31 st	Cody Martucci

February Flowers

6 th	Given by Nancy & Ron Burgin in honor of their recent 25th anniversary
13 th	Given in Marta Andersen in memory of her husband, Bob.
20 th	Given by Esther & Curtis Dunagan in memory of Loved Ones.
27 th	Given by Marilyn & Lowell Blom in memory of Loved Ones and in celebration of family & friends.

March Anniversaries.

20 th	Shirley & Chris Greagan
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Spring and Easter are coming! As sometimes happens, we need to mention **Easter plants** while ice, snow and cold temperatures are still with us. We have not even received the letter from our supplier, but the April Spire might leave little time for some to participate in this part of our Easter worship. So this is a reminder to plan ahead and watch for more information in the Sunday bulletins. The choices are usually lilies, tulips, red azaleas and variegated azaleas. The cost will probably be \$9.50 or \$10.00, but we should know in a few weeks.

Christ Church United Methodist

35 State Street, Troy, New York 12180

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Devotion

Nancy Burgin

Coming out of our motel room, I spotted my Mom, deep in conversation with another guest. They were sitting there, chatting away. I joined them and learned that the other lady was from Maine. When I told her I was from Troy, NY, she perked right up. Troy has a special place in her heart, and in the hearts of her church members.

Some one in Troy had been at a garage sale, here in the local area and spotted a quilt, with their church's name on it. It was purchased, and sent back to them. They had just placed it in their sanctuary right before Christmas. It meant so much to them that someone had made the effort to see that the quilt came home. This story brought to mind the verse "Cast your bread upon the surface of the waters, for it will return to you after many days." (Ecclesiastes 11:1)

Elizabeth Woodbury Kasius and Heard's New CD

This month 100% of CD sales from Elizabeth Woodbury Kasius and Heard's new release KARIBU are going to support Village Volunteers and our effort to raise \$650 for Susan Adhiambo Odoyo's school fees for this year. If you've heard the album you've heard the song we recorded for her.

Susan is a 14 year old orphan living in Western Kenya who has great dreams of continuing her education, attending college, and becoming a lawyer and advocate for women's rights in Kenya. We have until the end of February to raise her school fees. Help out if you can and receive our new CD for your generosity.

Spire Deadline

The deadline for the April Spire is Sunday, March 27th.



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>

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The Rev. C. Joseph Ingraham, Pastor Emeritus