

Good News and good news

Volume 5, Number 7 • March 26, 2024

Icy Hearts...

by Judi Sweeney

When I woke up at 6:30 am on Saturday, I got an unexpected surprise. As I walked out of our bedroom, I glanced out the first window I could look out. At this time of year, the entire window view is taken up with lilac branches. I could see it was raining, and the branches were obviously wet. I started to walk away, but something pulled me back. I think it was the drops on the bottom of the branches. I looked at them carefully. They were all about the same size, bigger than I would usually see. And the wet branches were actually a little shiny. I looked closer...ICE! The branches were covered with ice. I went over to the living room door. The driveway was wet also, but again, I looked more closely. It was ice, the kind of ice that people sometimes miss. Ice on surfaces can be so deceptive. It's just a thin, perfectly clear coat most of the time; but when you don't expect it, ice can have disastrous impacts.

In November of 2010, I had my left knee replaced. It was a difficult recovery, and I didn't like being stuck in the house one little bit. I went to PT. I did the exercises. I just wanted to go outside and walk. One very sunny day, after watching people out on the ice on the lake, I decided I wanted to take a walk on the ice. I figured I was safe. There was a little snow covering the ice, so I thought that would add traction. Out Jack and I went...and down I went. The ice under the snow was super slippery. I threw my arm out at the last minute to try to avoid hurting my new knee. Thankfully, the knee was fine. However, within days, my shoulder started aching, and it got worse. Several months later, I had another surgery for a torn rotator cuff in my shoulder. I had learned a lesson about ice. I learned how dangerous it could be.

Just seeing ice on branches wouldn't normally lead me to write about it in the meditation, but God then led me to an article with a verse from Luke 21. In verse 34, a The Passion Translation of the Bible reads, "Be careful that

Continued on page 4...

Holy Week

Thursday, March 27
Tenebrae Communion Service • 7 pm

Day of Prayer & Fasting
6 pm Thursday to 6 pm Friday

Good Friday, March 28
church open noon - 6 pm for prayer

Easter Sunrise Service
Crook's Hill • 6 am

Easter Breakfast
after Sunrise Service

Easter Worship Service
10:45 am




good news...

These are the birthdays of people age 65 and older and couples with anniversaries from March 27th through April 15th.

Birthdays:

Carolyn Carlson	April 4
Pauline Dwelly	April 6
Paul Berry	April 6
Maria Evans	April 6
Bob Downie	April 13

Anniversaries:

Peter & Marilyn Nagle	March 31
Chet Lubelczyk & Celia Daniels	April 5
John & Rhonda Brault	April 13

Altar Flowers:

Easter, March 31 - Flowers are given by Scott and Beth Wasson to celebrate the birthday of their son, 1st Lt. James S. Wasson his birthday (3/31), his deployment and his service.

April 7 - Flowers are given by Pauline Dwelly to celebrate the birthdays of herself, her twin, Paul Berry and Maria Evans, all on April 6!

Flowers are also given by Sharon Combs as she remembers her parents, Kay and Shaler Combs' wedding anniversary.



Do you love to see the church full of Easter Lilies on Easter morning?

A number of people have contacted Laurie Drake about buying Easter Lilies which would be on the platform on Easter Sunday. At the end of the service, the people who purchased the flowers would then take them home or share them any way they wish.

If this is something you would like to do, please contact Laurie Drake IMMEDIATELY. She must know **by Thursday noon** how many plants to purchase and get to the church.

Email - nitnit2@icloud.com
Phone / text - (413) 530-6069

New Small Groups Starting in April

Living Single...

If you are single and want to join other Christian singles for Bible Study and activities, then please consider joining *Living Single*, a new Bible Study and Activity Small Group that will begin on **Thursday, April 4th**. Each month, the group will meet in the Conference Room for a Bible Study on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. The Bible Study is based on the book and video by Tony Evans called *Kingdom Single*. *Kingdom Single* will encourage you to see yourself as complete in Christ and free to serve Him. It will empower you to live as Kingdom men and women in a corrupt culture. On the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Thursday nights, they will be meeting to do activities in the area together.

The group is celebrating Christian singleness and growing strong relationships with other Christian singles. For more information, please contact Bridget Reynolds.

Overcomers...

A new women's Bible Study will be starting on **Monday, April 8th**. The group will be facilitated by Jeannine Fish, and they will be meeting at her home from 6:30 - 7:30 pm.

The first study will be from the new Lifeway Bible Study called *Life Under the Sun* by Hannah Anderson. Together, you will learn to name your anxieties, concerns, and disappointments. Then you'll discover how Ecclesiastes is more than self-help or good advice—how it frees us to ask the questions that Jesus Himself will eventually answer for each of us.

For more information, please contact Jeannine Fish.

Blue lettering indicates those groups that have updated information.

Adult Sunday School Class

This adult Bible Study meets weekly during the school year from 9:30 - 10:15 am in the Conference Room. Starting on January 21st, the class will be taught for awhile by Patti Barney using the book *Psalms 91*.

Monday Morning Women's Bible Study

Meeting weekly at Phyllis Cobiski's home at 23 Gilbert Street from 10 - 11:30 am. The group will be starting a new study called "*Breaking Free*" on January 8th. Contact Pauline Dwelly for information.

Women's Monday Afternoon Bible Study

This Bible Study will be meeting in the Conference Room on Monday afternoon from 12:30 - 2:00 pm. Contact Susan Gainley.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

This group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 6 to 7:30 pm. The group meets in the Parlor. Contact Karen Bessette for more information.

Overcomers - NEW

This new women's Bible Study meets on Monday nights. See article above for details.

It's All About Jesus

This Bible Study group meets to learn more about Jesus through the Scriptures. The group meets on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Contact Jade Ford for more information.

Men's Bible Study

This group is currently in the book of Exodus, working through the Bible with a Bible Study entitled *The Essential 100*. We're discovering the 100 most inspirational passages in God's Word that truly identify the



Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. We meet on Tuesday from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Conference Room. Contact Brian Roth for details.

Understanding Spiritual Gifts - Zoom

This Zoom Bible study biweekly on Wednesday nights from 6:45 pm. They are Studying Spiritual Gifts, a study by Kay Arthur (available on Amazon). Contact Marcia Cummings to get a Zoom invite for the class as well as for more information.

Christian Yoga • Balanced in Him

Meeting every Wednesday night in the parlor. Contact Holly Kularski for information.

Prayer Group

This group meets weekly on Fridays at 9:30 - 11:00 am in the Conference Room. Contact Nancy Olson for details.

Celia Daniel's Bible Study

This Bible Study meets in the Multi-Purpose Room on Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. Contact Celia Daniels for more information.

Sweeney Bible Study

We continue with our life application Bible studies. Our next meeting will be on April 11th and 25th. Contact Judi Sweeney for details.

Living Single - NEW

This new group for singles aged 30+ meets on Thursday nights. See the article above for more details.

Men's Saturday Breakfast and Study

The monthly men's breakfast and Bible Study is on the second Saturday of each month. Contact Dale Wadsworth for information. **The next breakfast is April 13th at 8:15 am.**

Drawing Closer

The Bible Journaling Group will meet in the Multi-Purpose Room from 9:30 - 11:00 am on Saturdays. Contact Deb Arnold.

Parents of Little Ones Bible Study

This new group will meet at the Hulsebus' home on the first Saturdays of the month. This group is starting a new study called "Grace Based Parenting" by Dr. Tim Kimmel. Please reach out to Brian or Jessie for more information.

Jr. KICK

This group for students in grades 6 through 8 meets from at 2:00 to 3:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Ignite

This group for high school students meets from 4 - 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Sharing Christ Through Cards

Watch the newsletter for the next session.

Joy 'n Hope

The Cancer Care Ministry supports people with cancer as well as their caregivers. They also pray for people whose life is impacted by cancer each month. See Melanie Silva Fortier for more information.

If you want information about a small group, please contact – Judi Sweeney, (508)383-5384, or jpsweeney58@charter.net

Age 4 - Grade 2

It's a "God Thing"...

by Crystal Caron

Pastor Joe shared his plans to change the order of Sunday service so that our kids would still be in the sanctuary for the Lord's Prayer before they head off to their classes. We talked about integrating the Lord's Prayer into our class time so they can get more familiar with it.

A couple days later, I started to plan my Sunday school lesson. I had to shake my head and bask in the blessing of another "God thing" in my life...like when the song we chose goes so perfectly with the sermon you'd think we planned it.

Our lesson this week was on the Lord's Prayer. We didn't plan it. God did. ♥The children's Bible provided them with their own version to help them understand what this important prayer means. We made prayer books to help us remember to pray for each other, our families, our leaders, those in need, for healing, with gratitude, and to pray God would help us grow in our relationship with Him. They also learned about this awesome phenomenon we call "God things" and to be grateful and in awe when God aligns things so beautifully in our lives.

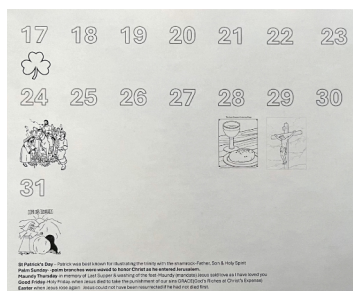


Grade 3 - 5

Samuel Listened to God...

by Karen McGrail

Our main lesson was about Samuel, one of the last Judges, who actually listened to God. We watched a brief movie about Samuel and talked about how God speaks to us today-mainly through our reading His Word and through other Christians. Because it was St. Patrick's Day, I held up a Shamrock and asked if they knew what the Trinity was. We talked about Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then we briefly discussed 4 holidays that are coming up: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. Each student received a countdown to Easter calendar. We did a brief Easter egg hunt to review some of the key concepts leading up to Easter. We ended with a craft creating resurrection cubes.



Save the Date Vacation Bible School

This summer
July 22nd - 26th, 2024

Closing Ceremony on July 28th



Grade 3 - 5

Holy Week and Easter...

by Susan Caron

On March 24, 2024 after singing praise, praying the Lord's Prayer, and shouting "Hosanna" while waving our palms in the sanctuary, we were dismissed to our classroom. First, we prayed together. Then we watched a *Douglas Talks* video about the meaning of the word "Hosanna." We talked about it being the Greek translation of the Hebrew words "yasha" and "na" meaning "Save us, now, please yay, you're here!" It's kind of a combination of "help and hooray!" The people were excited thinking that Jesus was entering Jerusalem to save them from Roman oppression.

We had a special Easter Story Snack Mix and viewed *The Easter Story* by J. John. We talked about the events that took place between Jesus' Triumphal entry on Sunday to clearing the temple, teaching parables, the last supper, praying at Gethsemane, his arrest, his death on the cross, and on the following Sunday HIS RESURRECTION!... the real reason for his coming, to conquer sin and death and to give us eternal life! The Easter wreath the kids made highlights these events with Bible verses they can look up each day of Holy Week. CHRIST IS RISEN! HALLELUJAH!



Icy Hearts...continued from page 1...

you never allow your hearts to grow cold. Be careful that you are not caught off guard, or hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the worries of this life, and that day will come upon you suddenly like a trap. Don't let me come and find you drunk or living carelessly like everyone else." This quote came from Jesus' talking to his disciples about the End Times. He had explained to them all the signs of the end times, and in this verse He warned them not to let their hearts grow cold. Immediately, cold hearts triggered the idea of icy hearts, hearts that are so weighed down with personal sin and the worries of life that even believers may not see the signs that Jesus is coming soon.

The image of icy hearts, of hearts grown cold, overwhelmed me. In Matthew 24:12, I read, "And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold." This was a teaching that Jesus gave His disciples right before the end of His life. Again, Jesus was trying to make them (and us) aware of the difficult times that would come and how that difficulty could make their love (or hearts) grow cold. Icy hearts spell trouble for everyone that they encounter. The story of Joseph and his brothers spells out how ugly people become when they let ice cover their hearts.

Icy Hearts and Blind Parents

Joseph was the second to youngest of 12 brothers. For years, the older brothers had grown jealous of Joseph because of the perceived favor their father showed toward Joseph. Year after year, the ice covered their hearts until that day when Joseph received the coat of many colors. In Genesis 37:4, we read, "But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him." Their icy hearts were now totally hard toward him, and it seems that their father didn't see what was happening. Like the clear ice covering the branches of my lilac bush, their cold and icy hearts were not even seen by Jacob. Joseph had dreams about the future that angered them even more as their icy hearts continued to harden against him. Yet, his father sent Joseph to join his brothers. Verse 18 tells us, "They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him." They didn't kill him (probably because Rueben, the eldest, didn't want to be held responsible), but the sons threw their brother into a cistern, dipped his robe in blood and carried that home to show their father. "Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days" (verse 34). They not only got rid of their brother, but they also were paid to do it by passing merchants who took Joseph into Egypt. Their icy hearts felt nothing.

The Road to an Icy Heart

Anyone can end up with an icy, hard heart. It may look the same on the surface; but the hard heart, the heart covered with ice, is not what God wants for any of us. The story of Joseph, his father Jacob and his brothers is full of selfishness, jealousy, anger, betrayal and bitterness on the part of his brothers. They did something to their father and to Joseph that I find hard to even imagine. Yet it happened, and neither Joseph nor his father Jacob saw it coming. They "missed" seeing the ice, and without God's intervention, it would have destroyed them all.

Melting an Icy, Hard Heart

We live with frozen hearts. Icy hearts need to be thawed out. In Psalm 147, the psalmist praises the Lord for His command over everything. He talks about God's command over the snow, frost and crystals of ice. Then in verse 18, he adds this, "He sends out His word and melts them." In that verse is the answer to melting an icy, hardened heart – the Word of God. With the Word of God, our heart becomes what God designed it to be – something soft enough to let the love of God to flow through us into the people around us. As we read in 1 John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God." The icy heart melts.

March Cabinet Report

by Nancy Bemis, Chairperson

The Cabinet met on Thursday, March 14. Reports were received from the Treasurer, Pastor Joe and the following committees: Diaconate, Christian Education, Finance, Nominating, Property and Missions.

Celia Daniels, our Treasurer, reported that our February income was \$18,033.95 and our expenses were \$22,003.78.

Phil Ingersoll-Mahoney reported for the Finance Committee. He said that our projected income for the current fiscal year will be \$244,614. Our budgeted expenses are \$240,535. He presented a draft budget prepared by the Finance Committee for fiscal year 2024-2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). The largest increase requested in the budget is for Christian Education. Raises of 3% for employees is being proposed.

Karen Bessette attended the meeting to discuss the chicken barbecue on Memorial Day and the cost and funds needed for the event. She also asked to set the date for the Fall Fest. It will be held on September 28 with a rain date of October 5 and will last 3 hours.

Steve Ottman reported for the Property Committee. He said that the Fire Department has completed its annual inspection.

Crystal Caron discussed the VBS budget. There is not enough in the CE budget this year to cover the expenses for the program. Donations will be requested by providing envelopes in the pews specifically for VBS prior to the event and at the closing program. There will also be an online option to give.

Permission was given for a small library sponsored Easter egg hunt on the church lawn and for the library's May Festival on May 4 which has been held annually on the church lawn.

The next Cabinet meeting will be Thursday, April 11, at 6:30.

Café at The Mill
45 River Street, Millbury, MA
Open Every Friday @ 7:00pm

April 2024 Events

MATTHEW JONES CD RELEASE PARTY !!!
W/SPECIAL GUEST ERIC LEE BRUMLEY
APRIL 5

THE MILL CHURCH PRESENTS "FIRE IN THE SPIRIT" FEATURING THE MCGUIRES !!!
APRIL 12 - 14, 2024

LOST & FOUND GOSPEL BLUEGRASS JAM !!!
April 19 - Bluegrass

Vanessa Kersting
It's Aussie Night Again!!!
April 26

cafeatthemill.millbury
YouTube: Café at The Mill
508-579-6722

Mission Fund Raising Events



clearway
CLINIC

— Join Us —

MIRACLE of LIFE

CLEARWAY CLINIC ANNUAL FUNDRAISING BANQUET

April 23rd & April 24th

THE LOG CABIN @ HOLYOKE MECHANICS HALL @ WORCESTER

TICKETS NOW ON SALE!
purchase online at:
clearwayfriends.org



Guest Speaker
KEN HARRISON
Chairman and CEO of Promise Keepers

Tickets • \$60.00 each — <https://clearwayclinic.ticketspice.com/2024-miracle-of-life-banquet>
Dinner & Program: 6:30-9PM

Doors Open: 6PM

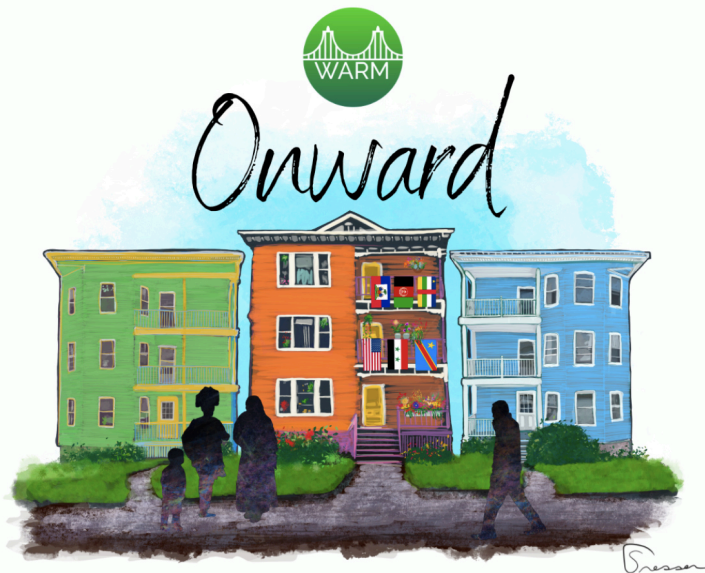
Business Attire - Adults only, as seating is limited. A delicious buffet will be served.

An opportunity to make a financial contribution will be extended.



**WELCOMING ALLIANCE
FOR REFUGEE MINISTRY**
Building a bridge between the Church
and our city's refugees

Journey *ONWARD* With Us!



WARM Gala Fundraiser Dinner
May 7, 2024 | 6:00-8:30 pm
AC Hotel Worcester

Join us on May 7th, 2024, for Onward, our 2024 Gala Fundraiser Dinner, at The AC Hotel Worcester in Worcester, MA. Experience an evening of delicious food, inspiring stories, live art performance, ethnic music, and a silent auction. We are on our journey of growth, and we would be delighted to have you join us.

TICKETS
\$75 each

Register at:
<https://givebutter.com/c/WARMGALA>

Luke 11: 29-36

V G G E N E R A T I O N
S I G N R P E O P L E E
L E G S I E T N K C A E
B Y D O B S H I O G R U
N S P L E O A N R E T Q
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GENERATION
HERE
JUDGMENT
NINEVEH
RISE
SOLOMON

BEGAN
CAME
DARK
EVIL
GIVEN
INCREASING
LAMP
PEOPLE
SEEKS
SOMETHING

BEHOLD
CONDEMN
EARTH
FULL
GREATER
JONAH
LIGHT
QUEEN
SIGN
SOUTH