



GOOD NEWS

Congregational United Church of Christ

April 2020

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' - Acts 16:25-30

Greetings Members and Friends of
Congregational UCC,

I pray this message finds you safe, secure, and well.

What a difference a month can make. Last month my message was about how churches had gotten stuck in familiar routines and how so many had lost sight of the *why* we do all this. Well, cut to one month later and questions of why and how we do what we do are suddenly front-and-center in all church conversations. To that end, I want to begin by saying how impressed and excited I have been working with the leadership of this church. In difficult times they have needed to make some tough decisions. In my participation in state government calls with clergy, I can assure you not all churches are as willing to make necessary decisions nor putting in the work and imagination required to find new ways to remain a community and be the church in a pandemic.

That is not to say that any of this has been, or will be, easy. As proud as I am of this church for finding ways to remain in community, we must also create space to grieve what was. There is no substitute for getting to be physically together. This is not something to be glossed over or pretend that everything is the exactly same. This is a loss. Beyond missing our familiar worship patterns, there is the fear and concern our society is holding onto generally in this time. There are terrifying things swirling in the news suggesting some are willing to offer human sacrifices to the

false god of 'the economy' and imagining it could actually be appeased by such horrific offerings. This is truly an anxious time.

Which is why we worship. In our scripture reading Paul and Silas were in prison. What for? Because they dared to free a young woman of a spirit and, in doing so, made her no longer profitable for some men who were using the 'gift' the spirit had given her to make money. In anxious times Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns. Suddenly the earth shook and all the prison doors were opened. Two men were praying but by the end of the story everyone was set free, even the prison guard himself.

[In a sermon from a few weeks ago on this passage](#), Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III pointed to this story as a reminder that our worship is not only about us. Our worship, our prayer, our singing has the power to release those around us. In fact, if it wasn't for others worshipping in our lives, we would have no idea how to worship ourselves. Worship is not something we should do only when we feel like it or only when conditions are exactly right. It is powerful and meaningful. Singing God's praises puts things into perspective and helps our own mental as well as spiritual well-being. And we have no idea how God is using our worship to be a blessing in others' lives as well as our own.

So, in this time of necessary physical isolation, I implore you not to become disconnected. Open yourself up to worship, *especially* when you're not

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feeling like it. Realize that you are not alone. You are a beloved child of God and God will not abandon you. As our worship moves online for the time-being, remember this story from Acts. Though we are the ones who are worshipping, there is no telling who could receive blessings by our praises. Church, this is good and holy work we do, for the good of our spirits and for the good of our world.

Know you are in my prayers. Stay healthy and safe. Reach out to your church family if you need anything and know that, whatever this world may do, God will not abandon you. Sing praise to the Lord.

God's grace and peace be with you all,

Pastor Shaun



We practice open (and virtual!) communion. All who desire the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus are invited to the table. (Currently you will need to provide your own elements for virtual blessing however.) Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you're welcome at Evansville Congregational UCC.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/999772688>

Meeting ID: 999 772 688

Call in: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 999 772 688

Help the Church by Shopping

Amazon has a program to support non-profit groups. Our church can now

receive **0.5%** of your qualifying Amazon purchases back in cash each

quarter. Go to: smile.amazon.com to sign up. When prompted, search for

Evansville Congregational United Church of Church Christ. Remember to return to smile.amazon.com (not amazon.com) for all your purchases.

If you have any questions, call Mary Pitas 279-5768.



We will not be having a Good Friday Service, but we will have a Holy Saturday Prayer Vigil. More information about the vigil is in this newsletter.

Holy Saturday Prayer Vigil

This year join us for a Holy Saturday virtual Prayer Vigil. Holy Saturday is the day Christians remember Jesus in the tomb and reflect on how hopeless that day felt for Jesus' first followers. We connect the story to on our own struggles finding hope today to learn tools to persevere and thrive, remembering God is at work and Easter is coming.

Beginning at 6 a.m. and going through 10 p.m., every hour on the hour this meeting will open for a few minutes of scripture and prayer focusing on patience and trust, peace and hope in difficult times. Join us in these meetings when you can throughout the day to find connection with others and with God, even in troubled times.

This will be on Zoom. The link is below and will also be available on our announcements and on our website calendar.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/194194315>

Call in: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 194 194 315



All UCCI (Church Camps) events at all three locations will be cancelled through May 10!

Women's Fellowship

April 8 at 1:30 p.m.

CANCELLED

Hard copy newsletter

Due to limited printing capabilities during the "Safe at Home" order we will only be mailing out hard copies to those who do not have access to email.



Change of address:
Arnold and Beth Willis
Unit 2020
618 **Jupiter** Drive
Madison WI 53718

IN OUR PRAYERS

✝ Kent and Mary Libby

✝ Beth Ammerman

✝ Dolores Schumacher

✝ First responders & healthcare workers

✝ Grocery store workers

✝ Those that are sick

MISSION

****We will still be collecting things monthly as the pantry will likely be experiencing shortages of these very essential contributions.****

In April we will be collecting soap and shower gel for the Evansville Care Closet.

Donations can be dropped off at the Care Closet by individual donors at the big brown side door on Liberty St. during food pantry hours -Tu and Th 12:00-5:00 and Sat 9:00-12:00. Just knock on the door or call and let them know you're at the door. Someone will come to take the donations while maintaining a safe social distance with you.

If you have donations but have decided not to deliver them in person, please contact:

Chris Felton

608-882-6945

felton.christine1@gmail.com

She will pick up and deliver safely to the Care Closet.

Thank You!



- Thank you to Sue Deininger for keeping track of supplies we use at church. We always have a supply of coffee, creamers, plates etc. We just have to open a cupboard door and there is everything we need! Thanks Sue!

- Thanks to Elvina Patterson for purchasing coffee recently and to Ruth Sperry for providing luncheon plates, napkins and place mats.

- Thank you to those who provided coffee hour treats: Norma Bjugstad, Sue Deininger and Kendall & Debbie Schneider.

- Thank you to Dan and Terri Weaver for purchasing a new/ lighter handicap parking sign for the church.
- Thank you to Pastor Shaun for picking up the two additional signs purchased by the church.



April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:45 Diaconate Meeting On Zoom	2	3	4
5 9:15 Book Study- Zoom 10:30 Worship on Facebook & Zoom Link in the announcements	6	7	8	9 Maundy Thursday Potluck Cancelled	10 Good Friday 	11 Holy Saturday Prayer Vigil 6 a.m. -10:00 p.m. Link to join in the announcements.
12 Easter Sunday 10:30 Worship on Facebook & Zoom Link in the announcements	13	14	15 Camp Scholarship forms due in office 6:00 Council Meeting - Zoom	16	17	18
19 10:30 Worship on Facebook & Zoom Link in the announcements	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 10:30 Worship on Facebook & Zoom Link in the announcements	27	28	29	30		

Evansvilleucc.org

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CONGREGATIONAL UCC

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