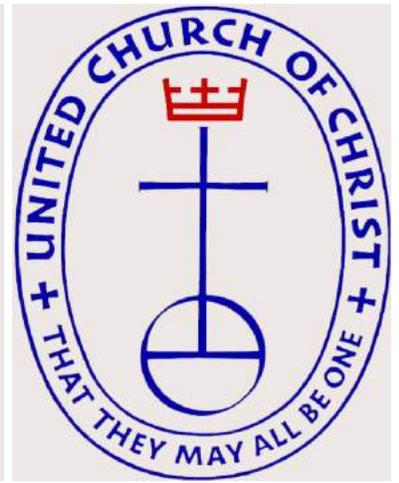


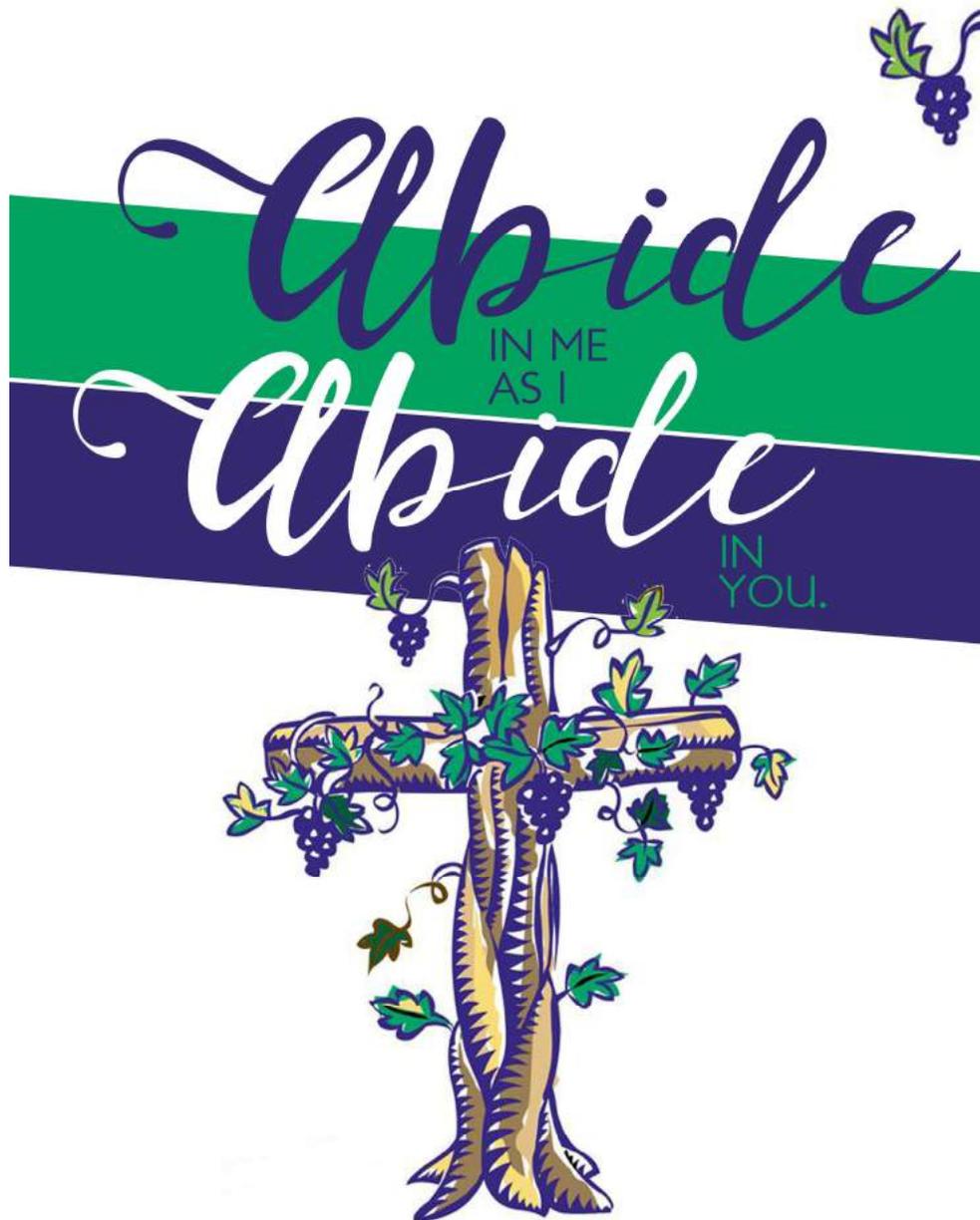
# The Hilltop News



APRIL 2018

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*John 15:4, NKJV*

*Pastor*  
Rev. Margaret Diz Philip  
*Council*  
Kelly Day, pres.  
Stephanie Gelhot, vice-pres.  
Neil Glaser, treas.  
Kari Winchester, sec.  
Dale Konneman, grounds  
Janet Moehsmer, bldg. fund  
*Music Director*  
June Jones  
*Custodian*  
Neil Glaser  
*Office Admin.*  
Gail Schneider

St. Thomas United Church of Christ | 17842 Wild Horse Creek Rd. | Chesterfield, MO 63017

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# Eastertide in the Autumn — From Aotearoa, New Zealand



In April, 2017, Maren Tirabassi, one of my favorite poets, posted this poem on her web site: <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com>. Since then I have heard its call and now share it with you. It seems so appropriate for this year - even though Easter is celebrated in autumn, not spring, in New Zealand. Recently, in many ways, it has felt a lot like autumn here in Missouri.

## EASTER PRAYER

*by Beverley Osborne of Stewart Island.*

It has been a grey weekend –  
rain and fog, low temperatures,  
nil-visibility and cancelled flights,  
dank and dripping foliage on the trees.

And then, on Easter Sunday,  
as I looked at yet more grey skies,  
the cloud began to thin  
and there was the blue!

The autumn brown of wet beech leaves  
flamed gold before my eyes.

May I remember that the blue  
is ALWAYS there behind the grey.  
The great Spirit of life-giving love  
is ALWAYS there,

even when the heavy misery clouds  
of war and terror, greed and abuse,  
poverty, homelessness and hunger  
try to conceal that awareness from our consciousness.

Remind me that Your love is my life-spirit too.

May I clear away the irritations, the pre-occupations,  
the resentments and pettinesses that cloud Your light in me,  
so that it is ONLY love that shines out  
to awaken the sparkle of hopefulness,  
the shine of happiness  
and the glow of courage in those around me.

Amen.

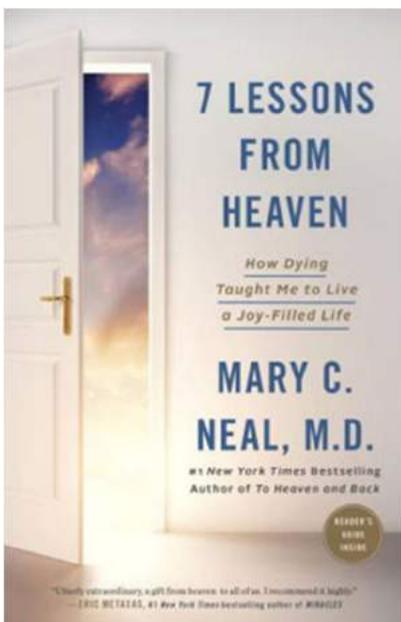
*Peace,  
Margaret*

## APRIL MISSION—EARTH DAY

Earth Day is April 22. We will use this month to care for special plot of land by sprucing it up and working on some of the recommendations made by the Missouri Department of Conservation almost 6 years ago.

Some items we could work on:

1. Spring clean up of outdoor worship area
2. Benches - clean, refinish, fix, or replace?
3. Put up shade sails
4. Clean up at road sign, touch up white paint
5. Prune lilac outside office window
6. Prune roses around the old bell
7. Clean up around pond
8. Mulch landscaped areas - front of church, west side of church, pond
9. Cut vines on front and back hillsides
10. Cut invasive honeysuckle around shed
11. Sweep and reorganize the shed
12. Plant ground cover to stop erosion along foundation - slope on east side of church
13. Spread wood chips at playground
14. Back of parking lot - clear dead weeds, protect milkweed, spread wood chips



**Our next Book Club selection** is 7 Lessons from Heaven: How Dying Taught Me to Live a Joy-Filled Life, by Mary C. Neal. In this inspired follow-up to her million-copy bestseller, *To Heaven and Back*, Dr. Mary Neal shares untold stories about her encounters with Jesus and powerful insights about how the reality of heaven can make each day magnificent.

Dr. Mary Neal's unforgettable account of a 1999 kayaking accident that took her life, and what happened next, has riveted more than a million readers. But something happened as she shared her story in the years since. Not only did Neal realize she had more to tell, she discovered she had yet to answer the biggest question of all: How does knowing heaven is real change our lives on Earth?

*"Neal combines spiritual reflection with medical facts to create lessons that are profound and eminently practical ... an inspiring work any believer can enjoy."* —Publishers Weekly



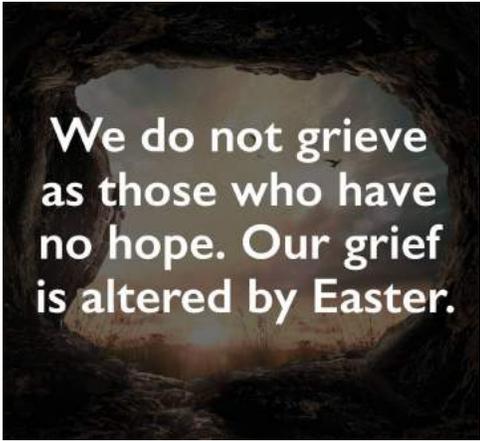
- Condiments of all kinds!
- Jelly – **CRITICAL**
- Tomato Products
- Canned Chicken
- Peanut Butter
- Rice/Dry Beans/ Dry Potatoes
- Body Wash
- Bar Soap – **CRITICAL**
- Razors
- Ibuprofen – **CRITICAL**

## FOLLOWING GOD'S LEAD

Jazz musician Thomas Dorsey traveled an unlikely road to become the “father of black gospel music.” At age 11, he dropped out of school to be a vaudeville performer and blues pianist. While Dorsey recovered from a nervous breakdown at age 21, his mother urged him to serve the Lord with his talents. It took several years, but the musician committed to composing spiritual songs — rejected by many mainstream churches as “the devil’s music.”

In 1932, after Dorsey’s wife and infant son died during childbirth, he channeled his grief into the piano, writing “Precious Lord, Take My Hand.” Known to be a favorite song of Martin Luther King Jr., it ends with these lyrics: “Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light. Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.”

# An Easter People's Lamentation of Hope



We do not grieve as those who have no hope. Our grief is altered by Easter.

*In his Easter Message, United Church of Christ General Minister and President the Rev. John C. Dorhauer invites all in the wider church to celebrate the hope of Easter.*

We are an Easter people.

Shaped by the experiences of death, the wells of our enduring faith spring up and speak to us of the eternal.

This fundament, this bedrock, it grounds us.

And, as Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians — we therefore do not grieve as those who have no hope.

I can't tell you how many times over the last year and a half I have had to remind myself that we are, in the end, an Easter people.

No death we experience will be allowed to offer the last word.

Hope will always abide in the shadows that come with grief and loss.

Let us, then, speak of grief and loss - the collective ennui we share with a suffering planet that is smeared with our toil.

We see tens of millions of refugees swarming the globe. We see decades of advances in social justice being erased by a global shift to the political fringes. We watch nations and their leaders play war games with big and very destructive weapons. We know children are being trafficked, women are being violated, and black and brown bodies are continuously treated with disdain by whites.

My mood has shifted and I am not alone. Say what you want about the current political climate in America, but something has happened to our shared narrative.

Immigrants are enemies.

*(Continued next page)*

Unarmed black bodies are gunned down with impunity.

Women's bodies are trivialized as solely the object of men's passions and desires.

Fascism is on the rise, creeping into the light after decades lurking in the shadows.

Children go through 'code red' exercises that have them rehearsing live shooter drills, wondering not if, but when.

We talk without shame about arming teachers.

I'm looking for my Easter hope.

I'm asking if this is the dying beyond which God has nothing more to say.

And...

God is not silent.

God's speech resonates not from beyond the madness, but from within it.

On a street corner in St. Louis, a woman preaches at the opening of a child wellbeing center. The preacher has an Easter story to tell. She was left abandoned on that very street corner when she was 9 months old.

In a sanctuary in Madbury, New Hampshire the Maranatha Indonesian United Church of Christ celebrates 14 years of shared life and ministry. They have their own Easter story to tell. Many in the room just weeks ago were detained and threatened with deportation. One pastor's intervention and dogged determination affected their release. On this Sunday, much more than an anniversary is celebrated as families are re-united.

In the aftermath of one of the most violent and ugly chapters of our collective narrative, teenagers produce their own Easter hope by calling a nation to recognize that our love affair with gun violence is destroying the hope of children. Their fierce resistance has an entire nation marching for our lives.

The tomb is empty.

Oh, to be sure, death has its sting.

There was a body. But the body rises.

God speaks, and beyond the seemingly impenetrable tomb a new word is heard.

Let those who have ears to hear, hear.

May the joy of an embodied resurrection call you to see through grief, listen beyond lamentation, and know beyond a shadow of doubt, Jesus lives.

We do not grieve as those who have no hope. Our grief is altered by Easter.

Jesus is risen.

He is risen indeed.





*If you have knowledge of someone on the Prayer List who no longer needs our prayers, please let us know.*

Spring is just around the corner! To start 2018, we've updated our web-site to a new look – check it out at [http://](http://www.gatewayringers.org)

[www.gatewayringers.org](http://www.gatewayringers.org). And for your calendars, we have four Spring concerts. Our concert series is called "Seasons," and features closers and audience favorites from our last ten years of concerts. The program includes "The Magnificent Seven," Vierne's "Carillon," and "How Can I Keep from Singing," as well as some music new to us such as "Seasons of Love" from the musical "Rent" and the world premiere of a piece newly commissioned for the Gateway Ringers. Concerts are open to the public, require no tickets and have no admission charge. Dates and times below. Hope to see you there!

**Dates & Times**

- April 15, 2018, 4 pm, St. John United Church of Christ, 405 S. 5th Street, Saint Charles, MO 63301

Contact: Sarah Price 636-724-1015

- April 22, 2018, 4:00 pm, Zion Lutheran Church, 3866 Harvester Road, St. Charles, MO 63304

Contact: Mark Thaelke 636-441-7425 x218

- April 29, 2018, 4 pm, Faith Lutheran Church, 520 East US 50, O'Fallon, Illinois 62269

Contact: Paul Runyan 618-622-1986

- May 20, 2018, 4 pm, Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, 14820 Conway Road, Chesterfield, MO 63017

More info: [info@gatewayringers.org](mailto:info@gatewayringers.org)

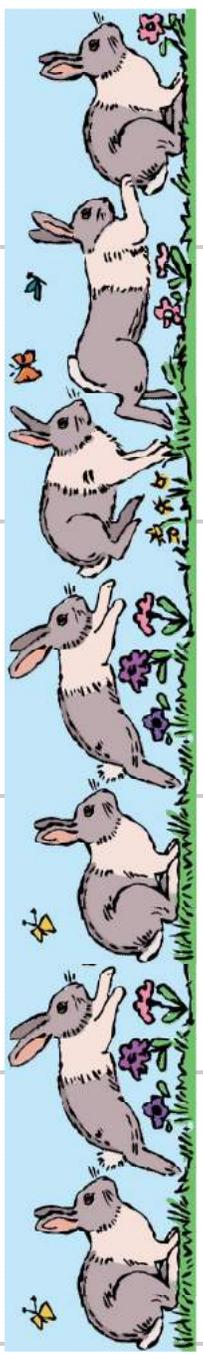
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**COUNCIL CONTACTS**

President	Kelly Day	314-307-7890 kmday44@gmail.com
Vice-President	Stephanie Gelhot	314-562-5320 sng629@mail.missouri.edu
Treasurer	Neil Glaser	636-391-0279 njglaser@att.net
Secretary	Kari Winchester	636-236-7071 k_winchester@outlook.com
Buildings & Grounds	Dale Konneman	636-458-5643 dalekonneman@hotmail.com
Building Fund	Janet Moehsmer	636-458-1058 jmoehsmer@gmail.com

# April 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 6:30 Easter Sunrise Service	2	3 Election Day *Luke Winchester	4*Kelly Day	5	6	7
8	9*Ken Gelhot	10	11	12	13*Taylor Clark *Brad Mudd	14
15	16	17 1:30pm Centering Prayer	18 *Bonnie Schurmann	19 noon Spring Luncheon	20 +Barbara & Ken Hutchison	21
22	23 *Betty Lindauer	24	25	26	27	28
29*Linda Bopp *Leroy Brune	30*Jeanne Clark					



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E-mail: ucc.st.thomas@gmail.com

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



Worship: 8:30 (summer) & 10:00 am (all year)

11:00 am Fellowship Time

We are ADA Accessible.

Childcare is provided during Worship.

Office Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Please call first if you need to stop by!

Office Phone: 636.532.3556

## About Us

### Mission Statement

We are St. Thomas UCC, a caring faith community welcoming all to share with us. You will find us supportive, nurturing, and encouraging. Our worship is traditional yet contemporary, applying scripture and Christ's teachings to everyday life. Accepting all who come as family, we are St. Thomas UCC.

### Value Statement

We are a close-knit welcoming community. We cherish and honor the traditions of our 100 years past. With respect and compassion we work together. We strive to grow in our faith by serving the community. We embrace and celebrate our youth and the promise of each new generation of God's children. We seek God's blessings and wisdom in the joys and challenges of our daily lives. We grow in our understanding of Christ's teachings while being respectful of our differences.

### Vision Statement

We seek to :

- Invite others to join in our faith journey
- Explore worship opportunities
- Enhance our fellowship and service outreach
- Expand our use of technology
- Increase our community involvement