

Circuit Writer

Jesse Lee United Methodist Church

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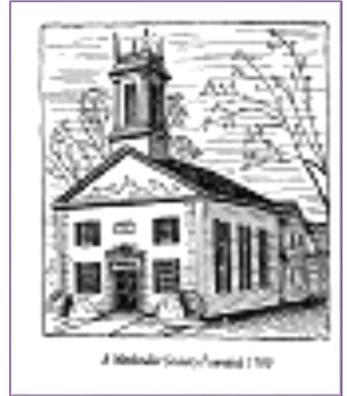
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A Message from Reverend Jim Stinson

Sister Helen Prejean, a Roman Catholic nun, is a leading advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. Her story and her specialized ministry was popularized in *Dead Man Walking*, a movie released in 1995. It is a fascinating film, that does not sugar coat the barbaric behaviors that have led some to death row, even as it holds true to Prejean's steadfast belief that the taking of a life, no matter who takes it, is ethically unjustified. I don't think it came from the movie, but a famous statement of Prejean sums up her reasoning. People are more than the worst thing they have ever done in their lives. I saw these words quoted in a novel I was reading the other night, which caused my reading to come to a halt. I wanted to think about these words more than I wanted to continue reading. Perhaps it was because I have been spending time during this period musing on the meaning and message of Lent, and how to translate it faithfully in the 21st century. When the quote appeared, it was an "Aha" moment.

Easter announces in one way or another that every life is worth saving. It says, as bad as things can get, as sinful as we and the world around us can get, God will not let us go because Love sees beyond the moment and sees possibility. In a way, the Easter announcement is a repeat of the Genesis account of humankind. God saw what God had made and called it good. People are worth saving. We are worth redeeming. And not because we are blameless, but because we are more than the worst



Church Calendar

Palm Sunday-April 14, 10:00
Maundy Thursday Service-April 18-7:30
Good Friday Service-April 19 7:30
Easter Sunday-April 21 10:00
Easter Egg Hunt-April 20-11:00
Church Council-April 7, 11:30
Choir Rehearsal-April 7, 14, 21, 28
CT District Conference-May 19, 2:00

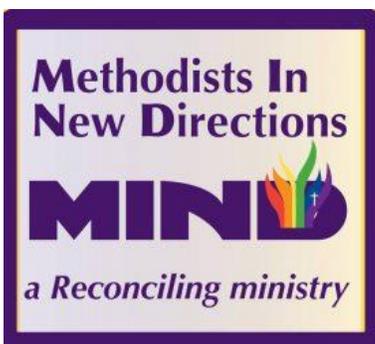
Jesse Lee Birthdays



Rosie Herlihy-April 10
Amy McKeon-April 12
David Marsh-April 14
Charlie Kenny-April 16
Christina Rao-April 26
Amanda Currier-April 29



thing we have ever done. God sees us differently than we see ourselves. Love sees not only our faults, love sees our possibilities. The resurrection accounts in our Scriptures differ from one another in their detail, but they agree on their conclusion. Because he lives, we too can live. That, despite any different interpretations of Jesus' resurrection we may have, is the unmistakable message. We are more than the worst thing we have ever done. The Cross, the empty tomb, remind us that Jesus knew the truth of that and was willing to die rather than give up, or give in, to any other vision. We are worth a second, a third chance. Easter is always one of those chances. He is not here. He is risen. Because he lives, we too can live. We are, in fact, more than we have done or not done. We are those who are invited to share in a new, a resurrected life, as those who see the reality, and offer the same reality to everyone else. We are those who know our worth and know the worth of everyone else. Thanks be to God! For when we know this, Easter is an everyday event. May the dwindling days of Lent lead to a never ending Easter.



In February 2019, a Special General Conference of the United Methodist Church convened to discern A Way Forward for our church with regard to the inclusion or exclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons. The regressive actions of the Special Session leave United Methodists in a defining moment in our history. Each of us as United Methodist lay persons, clergy, and congregations faces an inescapable challenge: where do we stand?

The stand taken by the New York Annual Conference is clear: *“our way forward is the way of a just, inclusive, loving church that embraces the full spectrum of the children of God. We seek to embody the beloved community of hope by openly and joyfully affirming the lives and loves of all United Methodists, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression.”* (2016 NYAC Resolution, A Way Forward Together).

If you would like to personally “Take a Stand”, go to www.mindny.org and click on Covenant of Conscience to sign your support.

Covenant of Conscience

We seek to embody the beloved community of hope by openly and joyfully affirming the lives and loves of all United Methodists, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression.

We, United Methodist clergy, in accordance with our ordination vows to seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people, commit to marrying all people, both gay and straight, who seek the blessing of the church, without bias or discrimination.

We, United Methodist laity, in accordance with our membership vows to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves, commit to supporting our clergy in faithfully ministering to all, including through any consequences of their living fully into that duty.

We, United Methodist congregations, refuse to discriminate in the sacraments and rituals provided to our members and pledge the full and equal use of our facilities as we welcome and celebrate equally all couples and the families they may choose to create.

Further, each of us, clergy, laity, and congregations, pledge to one another our spiritual and material support in fulfilling this covenant of conscience.



Look for our new banner at Jesse Lee!

Upcoming Events



Easter Egg Hunt

Jesse Lee Easter Egg Hunt-April 20 11:00

All are welcome! Children will be divided into two age groups. First grade and under will be searching for eggs in the fenced in playground. Second-fifth will search alongside the church. Find the golden egg (One for each age group) and you win a giant chocolate bunny. Activities and crafts will follow in Bennett Hall inside the church. There will be cupcake decorating, jewelry making, puzzles, and coloring. Participants are asked to bring his/her own Easter basket. This is a free event. Please RSVP with how many children are participating at jesselee.umc@gmail.com

Carrie June, who will be coordinating the Hunt, would like some help from anyone who can do it. Below is her request:

I would love some assistance purchasing candy which can be left in Bennett Hall and filling the eggs the Sunday before. If anyone would like to volunteer to donate baked cupcakes and icing, time at the event for set-up/clean-up, hiding the eggs, and monitoring the stations to please speak to Carrie June or email her pzafir@optonline.net





Voices Café-April 13 at 8:00 Unitarian Church in Westport

With beautifully performed songs and words Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway share a compelling story of racial injustice faced down with creative resistance, friendship, music and joy. Deeper Than The Skin is an experience of singing and listening of a connection so deep that it makes you laugh, smile, cry and reconsider what you know about our racial history. It's an invitation to open your heart and mind to a story of shared humanity that resonates with your own. Seating at Voices is at tables, cabaret-style. Snacks and beverages can be brought; coffee and desserts are for sale at intermission. Table reservations (minimum 4 people) are accepted by contacting David Vita, david@uuwestport.org or calling 203.227.7205 x14. Doors open at 7:30. Purchase tickets - \$25 ó at <https://voicescafe.org/>

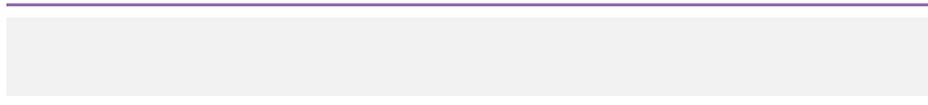


Crop Hunger Walk –May 5 1:30-4:00

Start Location-Seaside Park at the South end of Park Ave. Bridgeport
25% of monies raised goes to hunger related programs in the Bridgeport Area
For more information contact 203 375-1284 or www.cropwalk.org

Men's Conference at Shiloh Baptist Church - April 13th

The Rev. Carl McCluster, Senior Pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church in Bridgeport invites men to this vital conference. Michael & Corey (Dynamic Father and Son Team Ministry) will be presenters for the event, Pastor Joshua Kuteesa. Pastor of the Prayer Palace Church and Founder of the 350+ Student Shiloh Junior School in Kampala Uganda will be the luncheon speaker.





Holy Week

Holy Week Services at Jesse Lee

Palm Sunday April 14 10:00
 Holy Thursday Communion Service-
 April 18 7:30
 Good Friday-April 19 7:30
 Easter Sunday-April 21 10:00

OUTREACH



FEED THE HUNGRY

For many vulnerable children, a constant in their challenging lives is the school nutrition program that provides school day meals five days a week. But what happens on the weekend? Thanks to the Back Pack program at Golden Hill UMC many children in need are provided packages of nutritious food, discretely distributed in backpacks through their schools, for them to take home and bridge the weekend meal gap. The Outreach Committee is joining with Golden Hill UMC to collect food for the back packs **through April 28**. Desired food items include: individual servings of boxed cereal, oatmeal, ravioli, spaghetti-o's, soup, pudding, fruit, applesauce, boxes of macaroni and cheese mix, individual milk or juice, packets of hot chocolate mix, small cans of tuna, vegetables, Hormel Compleats dinners. Donations can be placed in Bennett Hall.

Blanket Sunday-Thanks Jesse Lee members! Through your generosity we collected \$190 for the Church World Service program to provide blankets and humanitarian aid to people suffering through disasters.

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Grand Opening-Priscilla's Place

On February 1st Shelley Stewart opened a daycare center in the lower level of Bennett Hall. It's a bright and cheerful place where Shelley just wants the children to be safe and happy and have fun. The center is open from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM and serves children from 6 weeks of age to school age. It has a capacity for 16 children with 4 adult staff members. Shelley learned first hand the need for quality daycare in Easton when she was looking for care for her own children. That Priscilla's Place fills this need is evidenced by the fact that 14 of the 16 slots are already filled. Shelley did a lot of work renovating the old nursery school space. Jesse Lee also upgraded the lower level by removing the old Sunday school dividers, removing mold, addressing

snow/rain water issues, and installing a dehumidifier system. This is a Win-Win. The Easton community has a new resource for child care and Jesse Lee has regular income for our church budget.



Prayer Requests raised at March worship services



Bruce, Carla Jaffe
Dwight Smith
Ann Martin
Barbara Hamman
Shirley Fredericks

Bob Caterson
Methodist Denomination
Family of Virginia Peel
Brian Sideleau, Jr
Ryan Wendt



CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

March 24, 2019

- **Celebrations**-Brendan Wendt will be moving to a new place in Bridgeport at Cartright Towers. Ryan Wendt will graduate this spring and has secured a job at Pratt and Whitney
- **Pastor's Report**- On February 26 the Methodist General Council voted to exclude LBGT persons from the full life of the church. Our bishop is very supportive of a progressive stand and has indicated to the clergy in a special annual conference pledged to support anyone who may be getting into trouble for practicing an open and welcoming congregation. There are very strong feelings on both sides. There was discussion how to make it clear to the public that Jesse Lee is a church where all are welcome. Rev. Jim discussed steps that will occur at the NY Annual conference and the next general conference. The council recognizes the wonderful service Rev. Jim provides to meet the needs of our congregants who are unable to attend church on a regular basis.
- **Treasurer's Report**-Laura distributed the treasurer's report to the Finance Committee. For Feb/ we were net negative \$1500 but it is not clear if this figure included the rental payment from the Daycare. We have asked Laura for a job description and a time allocation and will be looking to hire a bookkeeper.
- **Urgent Business**-Daycare Center seems to be doing well and has 16 of 18 slots filled. Rev. Jim will check with Carrie June to see if she would be willing to co-ordinate an Easter Egg Hunt again this year.
- **Next meeting**-April 7

