



The Branchline

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

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**Wilbraham United
Church**
500 Main St.
Wilbraham, MA 01095
[www.WilbrahamUnited
Church.org](http://www.WilbrahamUnitedChurch.org)

May 2020



*A note from Pastor
Chip...*

Dear Church Family-

In the last eight weeks, the world has changed. Every aspect of our lives has been touched by the pandemic that we are facing. We have adopted new ways of living, and adapted to the new reality that we face. Even if we have not contracted the virus, even if we have not lost our job, even if we have not personally been affected by the virus itself, we have been touched by it in ways that we will long remember.

Our church life is no different. Everything that we do is at least a little different now. We no longer gather in our building for worship and fellowship, but on Facebook Live. Meetings aren't held in the Library or Zeckhausen Room, but on Zoom and over email. Lines of cars snake through the parking lot so that we can collect food and toiletries, masks and cards. We have mourned the loss of loved ones from a distance, and discovered new ways to celebrate the joys that ease the pain of isolation.

I have recently taken to saying, "Our building is closed. Our church is still active." It has been important to me -- and, I believe, to all of you -- that our church continues to be a sign of hope and agent of welcome and love in this new reality. The virus challenges our understanding of those very concepts: hope, welcome and love. But we have risen to those challenges, and offered our best even as we face the worst.

We do not lose hope in these times because we have faith in God's presence with us, especially when things are difficult. That faith allows us to bring hope to others, to bring light into the darkness. We share the welcome that we have received from God with those around us, sharing not only words of encouragement but acts of generosity and kindness, that build up community and strengthen the bonds between us.

We show our love for one another in unexpected ways, by wearing masks and remaining physically distant, by staying home and checking in. This would not have seemed like love three months ago. But we have learned much in that time: how to keep our community safe; how to keep our community connected; how to keep our faith alive.

We have learned, and we are still learning. We have adapted, and we will continue to adapt. We have been the church and we will continue to be the church. We have been blessed, and we will continue to share our blessings with all God's children.

Peace,

Pastor Chip

A Note from Rev. Paul

***“We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we’ll guard human dignity and save human pride.”***

In various times of my life, I have been able to experience community, either as a participant or an observer. It has been interesting to study the dynamics of how a group is formed, how the bonds have been made, and how people interact. I have always dabbled in this aspect of Sociology, especially as I lived in different parts of the country as an adult.

People in geographically separate areas have various cultural differences and ways of interacting with one another. However, one trait that remained consistent was the fact that Christian communities exhibited the same hallmarks: they worshipped together, they cared for one another, and they came together in times of crisis. These observations have not been lost on me, particularly in the past 49 (at this writing) days of dealing with outbreak of COVID-19 in Massachusetts.

The response of the Christian community of Wilbraham United Church should not come as a surprise to me. I have been a member of this community for over ten years and have had the pleasure of serving in various capacities for over five years. The way in which all of us have reacted to the challenges brought forth in a Stay-at-home Advisory and closure on non-essential businesses has been so heart-warming. What have we done? We have showed time and again that Wilbraham United Church is truly the heart of the community.

- * We have been able to spread the Good News of Jesus on Facebook Live and our website. The efforts of our community to share posts have allowed thousands to worship with us hear about what we do to spread the Gospel here in Wilbraham and in surrounding communities.
- * We have donated, collected and distributed three truck-loads of groceries and toiletries to those in need.
- * We organized and made hundreds of facemasks for those who would otherwise go without.
- * We gathered other PPE that we were able to donate to hospitals and care facilities in the area.
- * People of all ages made cards and letters for patients at Baystate Medical Center who must go without seeing loved ones as they recover.
- * We’ve made phone calls, driveway visits, grocery runs and pharmacy trips for those who either couldn’t or were too at risk to be in public.

We only knew that someone was in need and that we must answer the call to care for those less fortunate. Even in our own homes or in the parking lot from our own cars, we worked side by side to guard human dignity and save human pride. We continue to answer our call as Christians to love our neighbor. I am so very proud and blessed to serve the community of Wilbraham United Church.

I miss seeing you in person but feel your love and prayers each and every day.

***“And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.”***

***Peace,
Rev. Paul***



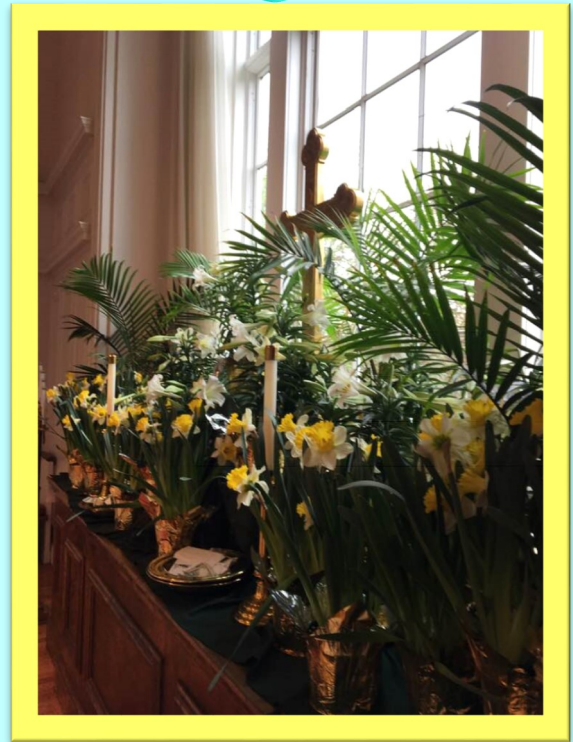
News from the Choir Room



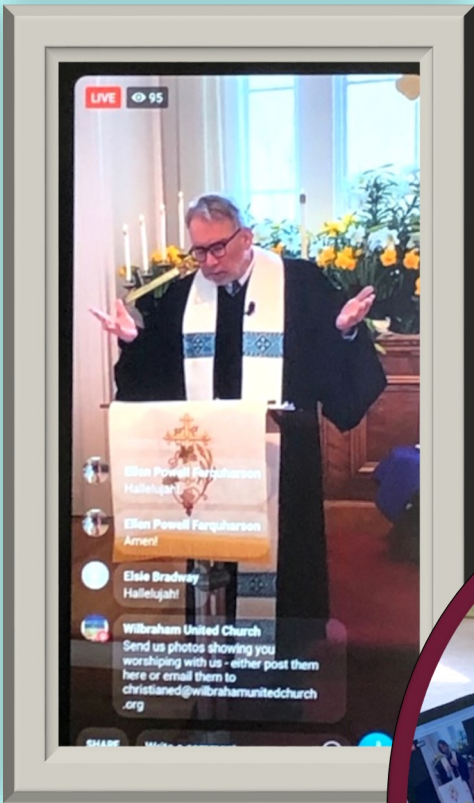
**The view from the organ bench.....
is pretty spare
you're not there
just some equipment to keep the heart beating
camera equipment, make shift pulpits, artificial flowers
I miss you people
I miss the synergy
I miss your singing
as these days move forward I find myself adapting
to a new understanding
of how community works
of how resilient love is, of how strong we really are
of how the Holy Spirit hovers near
social media keeps us connected and maybe feeling
less isolated
God works in mysterious ways**



Easter Blessings



Easter Celebrations and Connections



Helping our Community

Our Drive thru Collection on Friday was a big success and a wonderful way for WUC to support our community. Many thanks to everyone who helped to organize, collect and donate as well as 22News Mass Appeal for featuring our event with Rev. Paul.

We had over 60 cars bring non perishable food items which were donated to the Community Survival Center, toiletries which were donated locally and cards which will be sent to Baystate Medical Center.

**695 lbs.
of food!**

Community Survival Center
240 Main Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151
413-543-3930 survivalcenter10@gmail.com
www.communitysurvivalcenter.org

April 28, 2020

Rev. Paul Nesbit
Wilbraham United Church
500 Main Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095

Dear Rev. Paul Nesbit:

A drive-thru food drive is very clever and a great way to keep everyone safe. Thanks so much to you and your friend Larry for standing out in the rain to collect all that food. Thanks for driving it over to the Center and unloading it for us.

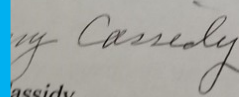
That is so wonderful of you; thanks for helping to stock the Pantry shelves. Your drive collected and donated 695 lbs. of food along with \$90 in financial donations. Thank you for all your hard work to help feed area people in need. I am so grateful to live and work in such a generous and supportive community.

The Pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 till 3:00 and clients are served outside. We are doing our best to minimize contact and maintain social distancing.

The Center's Emergency Pantry provides bagged groceries, up to six times a year, to low-income households from Ludlow, Wilbraham, and Hampden, as well as from the Indian Orchard, Sixteen Acres, and Pine Point areas of Springfield. Senior clients may reside anywhere in Hampden County and visit the Pantry each month. Families enrolled in the Preschool Program also visit the Pantry every month to collect 20 breakfast, lunch, and snack items for their children who are not yet enrolled in school.

The mission of the Community Survival Center is to provide survival items of food, clothing, and household goods to members of our community in times of need. Our programs are self-sustaining through the support of the community, wonderful people like you.

Sincerely,



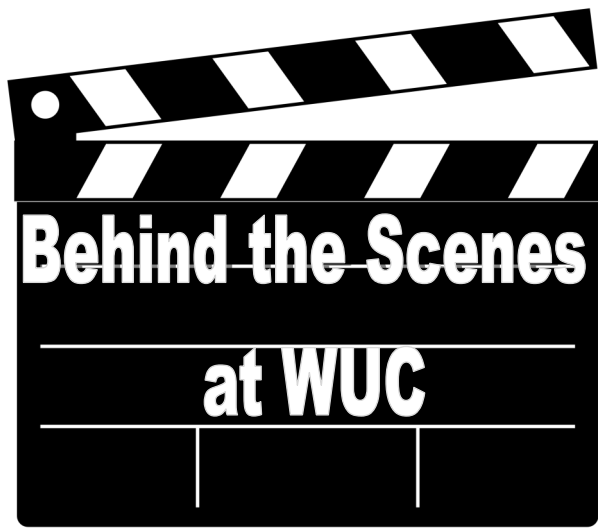
Mary Cassidy
Executive Director

Community Survival Center is a non-profit charitable organization recognized under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. The Community Survival Center did not provide any goods or services in return for your gift. Contributions are tax deductible.



May 2020

VISIT US ONLINE wilbrahamunitedchurch.org



Pastor Chip and Rev. Paul for keeping us connected to our faith in our homes through our virtual worship services. Thank you for continuing to find ways for us to help each other and our community!



Deb Trimble for being the technical and artistic director for taping our worship services and keeping our website up to date.

Mark Jacobson for continuing to fill our hearts with music and hymns during our worship services.

Outreach



Are you looking for another way to serve your church,
God, and community?

Consider supporting Loaves and Fishes!

Every third Thursday of the month at 11 am volunteers from this worthwhile ministry gather to deliver dinners and desserts to the South Congregational church in Springfield. Stuart Johnsen makes casseroles while additional volunteers make cakes and transport the food. In usual circumstances, the food is served by members of this mission to those in the community who are underserved and unhoused. Currently due to the Coronavirus pandemic, our volunteers are not serving the food.

Please contact Judy Hoffman if you are interested in baking or Nancy Peck to assist with transporting food.

Judy - Email: imjrhoffman@hotmail.com, Phone: 413-596-8353
Nancy – Phone: 413-596-6952



**In March WUC donated from the Outreach Endowment:
\$1000 to Church World Service for tornado relief in Tenn.
\$1000 to the Survival Center in Indian Orchard.**



\$1000 to Western Mass. Food Bank.

In March only \$120 was donated by WUC for One Great Hour of Sharing.

Stay well. Thanks, Ruth Karlson

An Interview with WUC's own Wilbur the Chicken

Reporter: Aimee Walat

Hi Wilbur:

“You seem to be the mascot for Wilbraham United Church and we would love to hear from you. What have you been doing lately? Read any good books? Play any games?”



Hi Aimee:

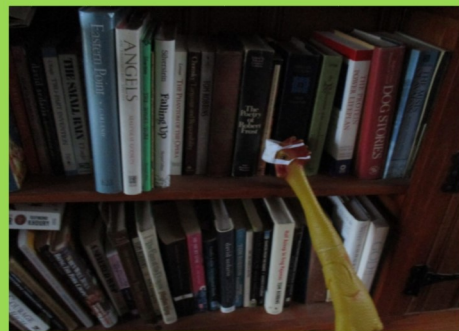
“Thanks for having me. I've been reading (I just finished the "The Life of Chicken Little," it was riveting).

I've been trying to learn the piano but it's really hard because I don't have any arms. But I have been doing Yoga, which is really easy because I'm made out of rubber.

I watch TV sometimes. I especially enjoy anything with Big Bird. His acting is superb. I think his good looks have actually prevented him from getting more starring roles. “

Well there you have it folks, Wilbur the Chicken.

Reader, pianist, yoga master and fan of Big Bird! Who knew?



What is keeping WUC busy?

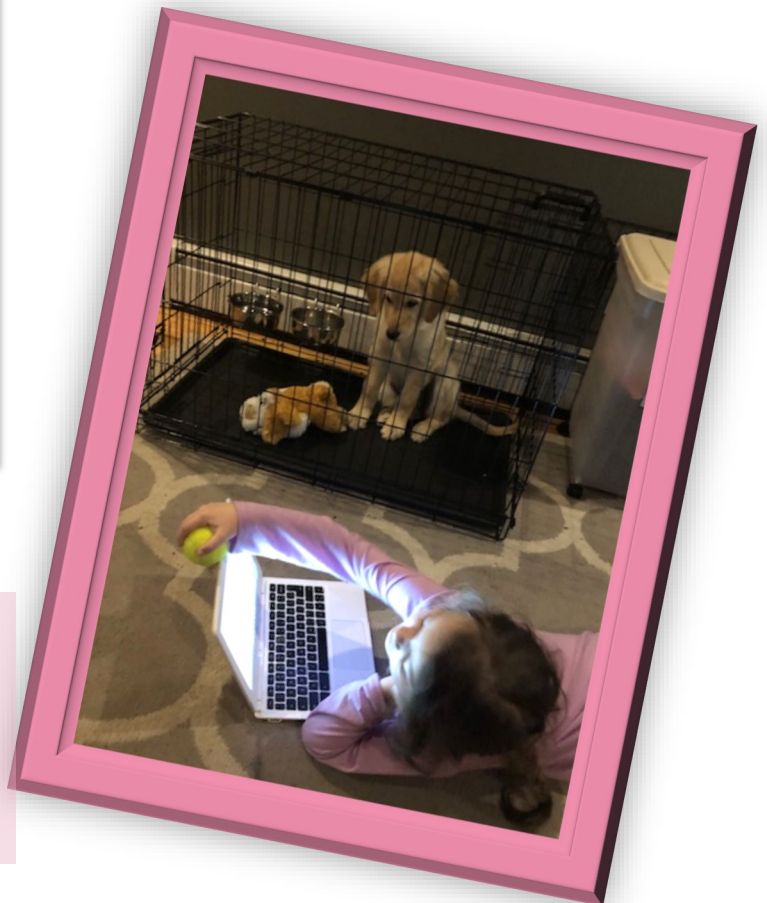
New Grandchildren for Nan Shephard



A new puppy named Abby at the Beston house



Homemade Cards by Connie Steifel



What is keeping WUC busy?

Bible Stories with Rev. Paul and Wilbur

Remodeling at the Weinberg's



Before and after



The Farquharson's enjoying the Florida sun!

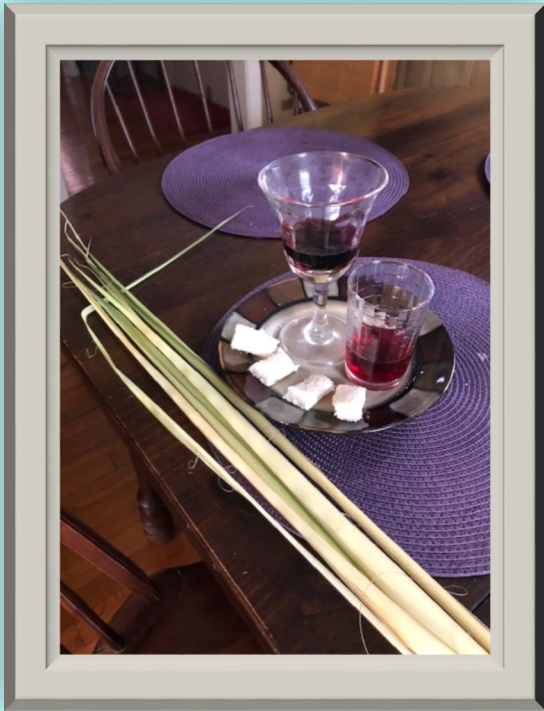


Skip and Candy Dearborn enjoying a walk with a view



Not busy... but very cute dog named Duke

Our Building is closed...
but our Church is active



VBC Updates

Dear Friends,

As we are well aware, the health crisis presented by COVID-19 has caused many life changes and cancellations. Unfortunately, Vacation Bible Camp this year is going to be one of them. Our VBC program had 154 participants and over 130 volunteers. This meant that at any given moment, we had 240-250 people on the grounds and in the building. We cannot guarantee physical or social distancing during this program.

It is very sad to have to cancel VBC 2020; we hope to see every once back for VBC 2021!! Please be assured of our prayers for your good health and safety.

Peace,
Paul

The Thrift Shop
At Wilbraham United Church

Our Thrift Shop at this time is not open or accepting donations until further notice.

We are always thinking of you and are so thankful for all of your support.

We look forward to when we can be together again.

Donna and Nancy

We are together in our faith

BE THE CHURCH



Stay Home. Social Distance. Wash Your Hands.
Check on the Elderly. Live Stream Worship.
Give electronically. Support each other.
Love God. Flatten the curve. Pray Daily.
So we can all enjoy this life.

Content Credit: Julia Roberts,
LCSW, Philadelphia, PA



May's Featured Recipe....
From the kitchen of Marge Trimble



Recipe

Applesauce Oatmeal Bread

Prep Time: 10 Min.

Bake Time: 1 Hour

Ingredients

1 C sugar
2 large eggs
1/2 C vegetable oil
1 1/2 tsp vanilla
1/2 C whole wheat flour
1 C unbleached all purpose flour
1/4 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp allspice
1/4 tsp nutmeg
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 C rolled oats
3/4 C applesauce (unsweetened)

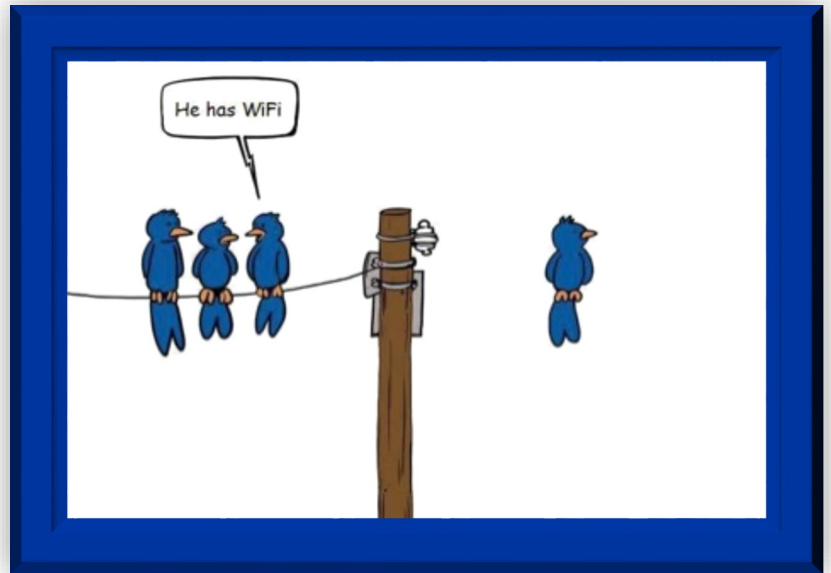
Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9" x 5" loaf pan. In a large bowl, mix together the sugar, eggs, oil and vanilla. In a separate bowl, mix together the flours, baking powder and soda, spices, and salt, and add them to the wet ingredients in the bowl. Mix in the rolled oats, applesauce, and walnuts. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan. Bake the bread for 55 to 60 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Remove the bread from the oven, and cool completely. Store cooled bread, well wrapped, at room temperature

I
Love
Baking



Connections Count!



How can I stay connected?

- **Sun. Worship service** 9:55 a.m. Facebook Live
- **Tues. Bedtime Bible Stories** 7:15 p.m. Facebook Live
- **Wed. Evening prayer service** 7:15 p.m. Facebook Live
- **Fri. Conversations with Chip** 12:30p.m. Facebook Live

As always, feel free to call us at 596-2511

Pastor Chip: Ext. 103

Rev. Paul: Ext. 105

Happy Birthday



Theresa Munn	May 1	Catherine Tucker	May 18
Bill Sanderson	May 8	Ross Karlson	May 19
Marge Trimble	May 8	Evie Auchter	May 20
Claire McCollough	May 13	Suzanne Zeckhausen	May 24
Phyllis Gould	May 18		

Do you love reading the Branchline?

Would you, a family member or friend like to receive this newsletter by mail? If so, please contact admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org or call Aimee Walat at 413-596-2511 ext. 100.

We would be happy to send along a copy of the Branchline and share all the great happenings here at Wilbraham United Church!

Shopping Card Program



Dear Church Family,

I hope you are all healthy and staying safe during this time of uncertainty. As we continue to social distance and fill our cupboards, please keep our gift card program in mind. This is one way we can keep contributing to our church while shopping for grocery and other essentials (gas and pharmacy, for example, as well as Amazon). As the nice weather of spring is approaching, maybe you'll be outside working on some projects (I have Lowes, Home Depot and Walmart cards available).

Please contact me at cdstiefel@gmail.com or 413/949-1057 (text or call) to arrange pick up or delivery of cards from a healthy household, of course respecting social distance. I am happy to accommodate your requests. And now may be a good time to check out online ordering at www.shopwithscrip.com. The easiest way is to let me know you're interested and I can send you a link to set up an account. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with your gift card needs and questions.

Thanks,
Connie Stiefel

Physical cards of retailers available by texting, calling or emailing me

Amazon, Big Y (includes Fresh Acres, gas, Table and Vine), Chipotle, CVS, Dunkin, Home Depot, Kohls, Lowes, Olive Garden, Panera, Shell, Starbucks, Stop&Shop, Subway, Unos, Walgreens, Walmart



Shopping Card Program

TURN SHOPPING INTO EARNING



Support our organization while you shop

More than 50,000 organizations have used gift cards to turn everyday shopping into earnings—our organization is one of them. Pay with gift cards and offset costs for our organization.



Buy gift cards at face value



Earn a rebate up to 20%



Use gift cards for everyday shopping

Shop 750+ top brands

Use eGift cards and physical gift cards, and earn on gas, groceries, eating out, clothes—the list goes on. It's easy, it's rewarding, and it fits right into your busy schedule.

See a full list of brands at ShopWithScrip.com or MyScripWallet.com



"It's super convenient. All I need to go shopping is my phone—I don't even need credit cards or my purse. I'm going to pay for these things anyway, I love being able to use gift cards so we get something in return."

Jen H., earns for hockey



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Daily Lectionary Scripture References -May 2020 (Year A)

Fri. May 1

Psalm 23
Exodus 3:16-22; 4:18-20
1 Peter 2:13-17

Sat., May 2

Psalm 23
Ezekiel 34:1-16
Luke 15:1-7

Sun., May 3

Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

Mon., May 4

Psalm 100
Ezekiel 34:17-23
1 Peter 5:1-5

Tues., May 5

Psalm 100
Ezekiel 34:23-31
Hebrews 13:20-21

Wed., May 6

Psalm 100
Jeremiah 23:1-8
Matthew 20:17-28

Thurs., May 7

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Genesis 12:1-3 Acts
6:8-15

Fri., May 8

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Exodus 3:1-12
Acts 7:1-16

Sat., May 9

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Jeremiah 26:20-24
John 8:48-59

Sun., May 10

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
1 Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

Mon., May 11

Psalm 102:1-17
Exodus 13:17-22
Acts 7:17-40

Tues., May 12

Psalm 102:1-17
Proverbs 3:5-12
Acts 7:44-56

Wed., May 13

Psalm 102:1-17
Proverbs 3:13-18
John 8:31-38

Thurs., May 14

Psalm 66:8-20
Genesis 6:5-22
Acts 27:1-12

Fri., May 15

Psalm 66:8-20
Genesis 7:1-24
Acts 27:13-38

Sat., May 16

Psalm 66:8-20
Genesis 8:13-19
John 14:27-29

Sun., May 17

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:8-20
1 Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

Mon., May 18

Psalm 93
Genesis 9:8-17
Acts 27:39-44

Tues., May 19

Psalm 93
Deuteronomy 5:22-33
1 Peter 3:8-12

Wed., May 20

Psalm 93
Deuteronomy 31:1-13
John 16:16-24

Thurs., May 21

Ascension of the Lord
Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47 or Psalm 93
Ephesians 1:15-23
Luke 24:44-53

Fri., May 22

Psalm 93
2 Kings 2:1-12
Ephesians 2:1-7

Sat., May 23

Psalm 93
2 Kings 2:13-15
John 8:21-30

Sun., May 24

Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:6-14
Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

Mon., May 25

Psalm 99
Leviticus 9:1-11, 22-24
1 Peter 4:1-6

Tues., May 26

Psalm 99
Numbers 16:41-50
1 Peter 4:7-11

Wed., May 27

Psalm 99
1 Kings 8:54-65
John 3:31-36

Thurs., May 28

Psalm 33:12-22
Exodus 19:1-9a
Acts 2:1-11

Fri., May 29

Psalm 33:12-22
Exodus 19:16-25
Romans 8:14-17

Sat., May 30

Psalm 33:12-22
Exodus 20:1-21
Matthew 5:1-12

Sun., May 31

Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21
John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

May 2020

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
24	9:55 am - Worship – FB Live	25		26	7:15 pm – Bedtime Bible Stories – FB Live	27	7:15 pm – Evening Prayer Service – FB Live	28		1	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 12:30 pm – Conversations with Pastor Chip	2	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed
3	9:55 am - Worship – FB Live	4		5	7:15 pm – Bedtime Bible Stories – FB Live	6	7:15 pm – Evening Prayer Service – FB Live	7		8	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 12:30 pm – Conversations with Pastor Chip	9	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed
10	9:55 am - Worship – FB Live	11		12	7:15 pm – Bedtime Bible Stories – FB Live	13	7:15 pm – Evening Prayer Service – FB Live	14	7 pm – Gov Board Zoom Meeting	15	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 12:30 pm – Conversations with Pastor Chip	16	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed
17	9:55 am - Worship – FB Live 1 pm – Church Without Walls	18		19	7:15 pm – Bedtime Bible Stories – FB Live	20	7:15 pm – Evening Prayer Service – FB Live	21	11 am – Loaves and Fishes	22	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 12:30 pm – Conversations with Pastor Chip	23	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed
24	9:55 am - Worship – FB Live	25		26	7:15 pm – Bedtime Bible Stories – FB Live	27	7:15 pm – Evening Prayer Service – FB Live	28		29	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 12:30 pm – Conversations with Pastor Chip	30	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed
31	9:55 am - Worship – FB Live	1	2 pm – Farmer’s Market	2	7:15 pm – Bedtime Bible Stories – FB Live	3	7:15 pm – Evening Prayer Service – FB Live	4		5	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 12:30 pm – Conversations with Pastor Chip 5 pm - Wedding	6	9:30 am - Thrift Shop – Closed 11 am - Wedding

Church Staff



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