



LINK 'N' TOWER

Collenbrook United Church

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) United Church of Christ

The Rev. Scott L. Barton, Pastor



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MY (PASTORAL) SPACE

By the time you read this we will have finished assembling 50 “Gifts-of-the-Heart” Hygiene Kits for Church World Service. Some of the materials were donated by several of you and the rest purchased by the church thanks to Carolyn Johnson and Jack Bryson. These are collections of simple items that CWS collects and stockpiles in Maryland for just the kind of disaster that has recently occurred in Haiti. The need is so great, that is where they will likely go now. In January, we gave a total of \$1,840 to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the United Church of Christ’s Wider Church Mission for Haiti. As of the end of February, our goal will be to be able to give – along with the Women’s Fellowship -- at least another \$1,000 to the Blankets+ program of Church World Service, which is also being targeted to Haiti at this point. These are remarkable contributions. Added to the gifts of so many others, they will help many people.

But they do not make everything “better.” That is a bigger issue, for all of us. That is a matter of faith. On this issue, it occurs to me that we can learn, as well as help. I watched a webinar the other day about the Presbyterian response to the earthquake. Much work is coordinated with the Episcopal Church, which is strong there. I looked up some of the referred-to remarks by Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin of Haiti, who wrote for the Episcopal News Service:

“As for resources, we have next to nothing. The wreckage is beyond imagination.

“However, this situation delivers us into faith. I look at this as a baptism. We who are still alive have had the blessing of survival, but in many ways we have died to the ways of the past. We have the opportunity to rise up and start anew. In this moment of grief and mourning, life must continue.

“During this Lenten season, it is important for us in Haiti to turn inward and rediscover all that is just within us. It is imperative that we be reborn in this moment. We will live without the physical trappings of the church because we still have the same spiritual guidance, the confessions, the conversations, the reflections.

“We need faith. We must go forward with confidence and hope. The Haitian people are fighters. We will not give up. We must see within this situation the possibilities that exist. Jealousy, anger, hatred – this is not the time for these. We turn to Jesus Christ, who did not fall into temptation; though he was in hard situations, he overcame death in victory.

“We await the resurrection of Christ as we explore what is found in this wreckage. Dear ones were lost, houses, clothes, possessions, memories – lives are reduced to nothing. The church lost precious belongings, and the physical foundation of the state is in ruins.

“Yet, we Haitians are speaking to each other in new ways. We can look at each other with new eyes. We can create a society of respect and love so that we may truly live as children of God. This is how we can rebuild our country.

“We have also seen how other people – other nations – love us. ...People...have sent countless messages witnessing sympathy. Knowing we are not alone gives us confidence in new life. We receive comfort and consolation in our relationships. ... It is natural to question, but we hold on in faith to God – God who is always good, the God of infinite compassion. That we were struck by this tragedy does not mean God is not with us. He is here. We must always remember that God lives in this world. There is pain, but there is also joy. He gives us assurance not of the life that ends, but the life that is eternal.”

In addition to our giving, may we learn faith in such a situation as this, always faith in the one who stands by us in all kinds of trouble, and helps us stand with each other. We are the people who proclaim such faith always, and always seek to show it.

Grace and peace, and see you in church,
Scott

MARCH MISSION OF THE MONTH

Southwest Indian Foundation Stove Assistance Program

The SWIF was founded in 1968 by Father Dunstan Schmidlin who was deeply troubled by the plight of his Native American brothers and sisters. This is a non-profit, charitable organization relying solely on private donations. They receive NO federal dollars. The SWIF is strictly limited to Native Americans with priorities given to the elderly, handicapped, and families with dependent children.

The “Stove Assistance Program” helps many Native American families who are in desperate need of heat during cold winters in the southwest. This has been a record breaking year. It may be difficult to believe that in this day and age, many Native Americans still live in Hogans with dirt floors. They cannot afford real wood stoves and instead fashion stoves out of sawed-off water barrels or other metal containers which are notoriously dangerous.

This project installs new wood stoves for families in need, accomplished by their own 2-man crews handling all installation. The goal is to install between 200-250 stoves annually. Costs to install a stove in a conventional house range between \$800--\$1,000; for a Hogan, between \$600-\$800. The organization supplies building materials to repair walls, ceilings and roofs supporting the stovepipes and chimney sections.

This is a most deserving and hard working Foundation in desperate need. To donate, use your designated Mission of the Month envelopes or a brown pew envelope. When writing a check, please make it payable to Collenbrook United Church with Mission of the Month noted in the memo section. Ongoing: Organ Fund and Piano Fund; Food and seasonal clothing donations for Chester Eastside (put in bin by church office)

WORSHIP IN MARCH

Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 to greet each other as the people of God and worship the One who calls us together in the first place.

On March 21, the Rev. Bernice Warren will be the guest preacher. Bernice is director of Chester Eastside Ministries, which we have supported for a long time with food and clothing donations. Just this past week, Barb Pitcairn emptied the food box of at least 97 packages of food (some packages are multiple items) and 5 bags of clothing, and took them to Chester Eastside. Our guest may have some things to say about Haiti, from which she will have just returned.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Lenten Series: *How, Then, Shall We Pray?* continues

Throughout the ages, people have written prayers to God. Just like people, prayers have come in different shapes and styles, often depending on the situation, but also the time.

We have had to reschedule the first session because of the snow on February 25, and compress two of the other sessions. All sessions are at 7:30 as follows:

Wednesday, March 3: We begin with a look some of the Psalms. Some say things we may think are unusual for the Bible, things that surprise us by their honesty, but which can lead us to deeper faith. Please bring a Bible you like.

Wednesday, March 10: How did people like John Calvin and Martin Luther pray? Also, prayers from the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship and the U.C.C. Book of Worship.

Wednesday, March 17: Prayers by Walter Brueggemann, contemporary Biblical scholar, and Thomas Troeger, contemporary hymnwriter.

Thursday, March 25: There are some classic devotional writers such as John Baillie, who we will look at. We will also try some of Barrie Shepherd's prayers, and perhaps some by Ann Weems. To close our series, our special guest will be J. Barrie Shepherd himself!

MEDITATIONS FOR LENT

Please pick up your copy of our homegrown Meditations for Lent booklet if you haven't already, or call the church office to have one sent to you. There are a few more.

"WINTER THING" POSTPONED YET AGAIN--NOW IT'S MARCH 6!

Because of round one of February's storms, we had to postpone the "Winter Thing" again. This is a pot luck supper with music, beginning at 5:30, organized by Marie and Bill Dolton and friends.

"John Flynn has committed himself to a life of service and songs for and about 'the lost and the lonely, the shackled and scarred.' His work in prisons, rehabs, and half-way houses is distilled into the truth and the beauty of these heartfelt and heartwarming slices of life. America's Waiting is a great album, distinguished by its courage and sincerity. 'The Prodigal Father' is a perfect song. This is an important album by an important artist." -- Kris Kristofferson

We'll be passing a box around for donations (\$15 suggested) to pay the musician. John will also have CD's for sale. So come on out for a great night of good food and wonderful music. John's friends from the Philadelphia Folksong Society have also been invited. If you have any questions, call Marie at (610) 353-6716, or write mariedolton@gmail.com. Go to www.JohnFlynn.net for more information about John. You won't want to miss this!

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH

11 Lindsay Taylor
14 Frank Bell
17 Nayo Jones
17 Gerry Priddey
18 Steven Scherer
25 Jack Bryson, Jr.
26 Ricky Heinze
30 Carol-Ann Helduser



A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

In January and February, the people of Collenbrook gave the following in special offerings:

- January Mission of the Month – Old First Reformed Church Men’s Shelter - \$370.
- Souper Bowl Sunday (split between Old First and Chester Eastside Ministries) - \$158.
- Special offering for Haiti, divided between Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and U.C.C. Wider Church Mission for Haiti - \$1,840 (includes \$500 from Deacons’ Fund)
- February M.O.M. – Church World Service Blankets+ and Gifts-of-the-Heart Hygiene Kits (as of 2/21) - \$986.00