

Calendar of Events

MARCH 2024

- Lenten Study on Wednesdays, March 6 - March 27
- Daylight Savings Time Starts - March 10
- Lenten Cantata - March 17
- Erie Coast Harbor Opera Concert - March 23
- NOICA Iftar Dinner - March 25
- Maundy Thursday - March 28
- Good Friday - March 29
- Easter Vigil @ Christ UMC - March 30
- Easter Sunday - March 31

APRIL 2024

- Office Closed - Easter Monday - April 1
- Office Closed - Eclipse - April 8

MAY 2024

- Pentecost Sunday - May 19
- All Church Retreat May 24-26

JUNE 2024

- Choir Sunday - June 2
- Strawberry Social - June 8
- Church Picnic - June 16



The Good News

Quarterly Newsletter of West Park United Church of Christ

Spring
2024



**WEST PARK UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

An Open and Affirming Congregation

3909 Rocky River Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44111
www.westparkucc.org

Following Christ, Caring for All, Growing Together



Thoughts in my head from Pastor Jason

The month of Ramadan is a holy time for our Muslim friends. According to Islamic tradition, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was on a spiritual retreat in a cave near Mecca when the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and revealed the first verses of the Qur'an (Islam's sacred scripture). Whereas we believe our Holy Bible was inspired by God and written by human beings, our Muslim friends believe the Qur'an was dictated word for word. As such, their belief is that the Qur'an is the word of God.

For Christians, we believe that Jesus is the Word of God, not our bible. The Gospel of John sums this up quite nicely in its opening verse: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John1:1).

The season of Lent and the month of Ramadan have many similarities. Both are a time of fasting, reflection, and prayer. Both are meant to bring us in to closer relationship with God and with each other. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, so the month of Ramadan moves back a little each year. Of course, Easter and Lent are also different dates each year, as the dates are based on the Spring equinox. This year, Lent and Ramadan overlap quite a bit. A central part of each holy season is the spiritual discipline of fasting.

Fasting is a part of many religious traditions and has been observed by Christians for thousands of years. The purpose of our fasting during Lent is to emulate Jesus and memorialize his forty days of fasting in the wilderness and being tempted. Our lives, though, are filled with many more than forty days of temptation. From the time we are born until the time we die, we face trials that can often lead us astray. Our Lenten fast is meant to remind us that we are children of God and siblings of Christ.

We will celebrate iftar (breaking of the daily Ramadan fast) with our Muslims friends again this year – on the Monday of Holy Week. I invite you to share with them what you have learned during Lent and what your fast has meant to you. May God continue to guide us and light our way during the solemnness of this season.

Pastor Jason



Special Mission Offerings: Pink Envelope

Each month, our church supports a special offering to benefit other organization's missions to serve God and neighbor.

March 2024: Community Meal is a new Pink Envelope offering, to help with the costs of our very successful Community Meal. Every month, the Growth and Outreach team feed 60 - 80+ people, who come to share dinner, and/or take dinners to go. The money goes to cover the cost of the food and supplies.

April 2024: ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING is an ecumenical offering supported by the United Church of Christ. The funds collected are used to support disaster relief and economic development to underserved communities around the world, proclaiming our shared faith in Jesus Christ to all the nations.

May 2023: The Alber Scholarship offers annual awards to college students in our congregation. This fund is an historic partnership between West Park UCC and Wittenberg University. The monies collected in this offering are used to bolster the amounts awarded, providing aid with ongoing educational expenses.

NOICA Iftar Dinner

On Monday, March 25 in Bartter Hall, join us at 7:00 p.m. in Bartter Hall as we celebrate with our NOICA neighbors as they break their daytime fast during the month of Ramadan. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex or call the church office to sign up.

All Church Retreat

Save the Date! Our annual All Church Retreat will be May 24-26, 2024. The theme for this year is, "ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL: Reflect and Rejoice in God's Creation." The biblical basis is Genesis 1:31a, "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." Watch for more information and registrations in the weeks to come!



COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

March Volunteer Opportunities

Wednesday, March 6: 12:30pm - Truck Day
Friday, March 8: 3:30pm - Prep Day
Saturday, March 9: 9:00am - Pantry Day
Friday, March 15: 3:30pm - Prep Day
Saturday, March 16: 9:00am - Pantry Day

April Volunteer Opportunities

Wednesday, April 3: 12:30pm - Truck Day
Friday, April 12: 3:30pm - Prep Day
Saturday, April 13: 9:00am - Pantry Day
Friday, April 19: 3:30pm - Prep Day
Saturday, April 20: 9:00am - Pantry Day

May Volunteer Opportunities

Wednesday, May 1: 12:30pm - Truck Day
Friday, May 10: 3:30pm - Prep Day
Saturday, May 11: 9:00am - Pantry Day
Friday, May 17: 3:30pm - Prep Day
Saturday, May 18: 9:00am - Pantry Day

Easter Flowers And Memorial Gifts

At West Park UCC, we beautify our sanctuary and strengthen our church in celebration of Christ's resurrection. Our Risen Savior is honored in a number of ways on Easter Sunday. For those who wish to provide a spring flower, or contribute to the Memorial or Endowment Funds, a form is enclosed with this newsletter. Let us remember to give praise to the One who gives us new life.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

WITH WEST PARK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

3909 Rocky River Drive Cleveland, Ohio 44111 216.671.7228

Holy Week is a time to reflect on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Remembering Jesus' actions, reflecting on his messages and recommitting to living as his disciples in the world today.

We hope this schedule helps you plan to observe these important days, both on your own and with others. May you have a blessed Holy Week and Easter.

Sunday, March 24, 2024

10:00am Palm/Passion Sunday
Palm Parade, Holy Communion

Monday, March 25, 2024

7:00pm Ramadan Iftar with NOICA

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

5:30pm Lenten Supper Study

Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2024

6:00pm Soup Supper and Worship
Foot Washing, Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday, March 29, 2024

7:30pm Tenebrae Candlelight Worship

Saturday, March 30, 2024

7:00pm Worship Vigil
@ Christ United Methodist

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

10:00am Easter Morning Worship with
Baptism and Holy Communion



Moderator's Moment

Hope this message finds you and your family well. As for me and mine, we are doing well. We're looking forward to the warmer and nicer weather, and being outside.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself. Most of you know me as Annie's mom, or rarely Dan's wife, both of these roles I love dearly. By trade I am a preschool teacher; my specialty is religion. Teaching at a private Christian day school, I teach religion every day. I not only get to talk the talk, but walk the walk with my littlest friends.

We are in the season of Lent, a time of absence. I've never been one to give something up for Lent. I'm more focused on the practice of patience and kindness. I know these are things that one should always do, but for me, Lent seems a good time to really focus on it. I often wonder if one act of kindness would have changed the Passion story. I know it was a plan long before any one of the people who were part of it were thought of.

I do believe that one simple act of kindness can change the world. My friends, we can be that change: one word, one action, one kind gesture at a time. So today and every day, I challenge you to take to path of kindness, even if it's less traveled.

Many blessings on your day,
Mandi Salvino
Moderator

Third Sunday, March 17 - STARS

On Sunday, March 17, at 11:30 am, Nathan Rhea will present a program on STARS (Specialized Treatment, Advocacy, and Recovery Services for Schizophrenia). In this presentation, he will lead us as we delve into the world of First Episode Psychosis (FEP), exploring the "what" and "why" behind this complex mental health experience. We'll unpack the term "psychosis," shedding light on its symptoms like hallucinations and delusions, and how they can disrupt someone's perception of the world. By understanding FEP, we can better support individuals navigating this challenging journey and create a more informed and empathetic community. Join us to demystify FEP and gain valuable insights into this important topic. Remember, knowledge is power, and together we can break down barriers and foster understanding.

Erie Coast Harbor Opera Concert

Erie Coast Harbor Opera presents

"Duetti d'amore: Operatic Love Duets"

*Saturday, March 23, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., Reception following
A Freewill Offering will be taken to benefit the Community Cupboard Food
Pantry at West Park UCC.*

ERIE COAST HARBOR OPERA

PRESENTS

Duetti
d'amore

Operatic Love Duets

SATURDAY, MARCH
23RD, 2024

CONCERT AT 4:00 PM

WEST PARK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
3909 ROCKY RIVER DR. CLEVELAND, OH 44111

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO THE WUCC FOOD PANTRY.

PRESENTED BY

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