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November 2020



The Steeple View

Old Steeple Community Church

United Church of Christ
POB 154/656 Main Road
Aquebogue, NY 11931

Pastor's Message:

By the time you receive this newsletter we will probably all be preparing for the last few days before the election.

Arriving in this country 27 years ago, I have, at the conclusion of every election, expressed my gratitude for living in a country where elections are not followed by tanks in the street or violence in the cities. I pray that we will be able to celebrate that this year too.

The question in my mind is, how do we react if our candidate wins or loses?

The amount of emotional investment we make in an idea or ideology or an election, often determines our reaction to the outcomes of such competitive events as an election. There are always people feeling either jubilant and elated, or shocked, even angry, depending on whether they feel they have won or lost.

But emotion is not a dependable yardstick.

So, how can we prepare for the outcome of the election?

By keeping our eye on the prize, and for those of faith, the prize is not only the presidency or the political power group we associate with best. The "prize" is the call of God as summed up in Micah 6:8, **"...to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God."**

Friends, if your candidate, the side you support, comes the closest to this call, then, by all means, support that side. If self-interest or fear or tradition keeps you fettered to the group that shows the least willingness "to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God", we might need some work on our relationship with God.

As I see it, neither party has a monopoly on this test of integrity. I personally will vote for the best of two very flawed options.

But I hope and pray that God will guide me so that my reaction after the election is not a hubristic happy-dance or a down-in-the-dumps, the world is coming to an end, lamentation.

In all things, keep the faith. Stay united as a faith-family, the church, as together, "we strive to do what is just, to show constant love and to live in humble fellowship with our God". That way God wins every time.

May it be so.

In Christian friendship to all,
Anton

From Andrea (Outreach):

Many thanks to all our Old Steeple People - your generosity is astounding! We have met our October goal of gathering \$1000 for Maureen's Haven. Twice a month, starting in November, OSC will again sponsor Maureen's Haven guests to spend a warm night with dinner, breakfast and a to-go lunch. The money we raised will provide a counselor to stay the night.

Our ongoing weekly collection for the St John's food pantry is going strong. Thanks to the Kratoville family who so kindly requested donations be sent to the Food Pantry in memory of Louise. This is a wonderful way to honor Louise, OSC and St John's Church.

As we look forward to November, our special collection will be for Habitat for Humanity.

Again, thank you for your support of our monthly special collections. We recognize the great need in our community and our world, and we give as we can to help.

Sister Margaret at the St. John's Food Pantry is so grateful for all our donations. She expressed her thanks by giving us the fabric banner pictured here ... "You are my Star".

Andrea, Outreach



Book Study Resumes November 13 at 10:30

We meet in the fellowship hall, masks and distancing will apply.

All are welcome to participate. We read a few chapters in advance, and then it's time to discuss when we get together. Our first book after a long absence is "**The Elephant Whisperer**" by **Lawrence Anthony**.

Here is Amazon's description of the book:

"An engaging and vividly personal account, **The Elephant Whisperer** invites you in, as confidant and confederate, from the first page and holds you rapt to the very last. A compelling reminder of the power and mysteries of the natural world, Thula Thula's **elephants** are lucky to have a friend like Lawrence Anthony.

Council Meeting Minutes:

October 14, 2020

Before our meeting began, Marisa Kramer arrived with some information for our group. The Council was trying to track down a license for the Playschool and was informed by the Suffolk County Public Health Department that no paperwork was on file for the Playschool. Rev. Janet Wright had spoken to Marisa early on this day about this topic. Rev. Wright was told by the SCPH Dept. that Marisa had the pertinent information for her School and did not need a license. However, Marisa came to the meeting to show her credentials. We thanked her and she will make her own determination on if and when she will open her school. We still need a written plan submitted for the Council approval. The regular meeting followed.



Old Steeple Community Church Council Meeting was called to order by the Moderator, Jean Lapinski, at 7:04 pm in Luce Fellowship Hall. Those in attendance were Tom Behr, Amy Cosgrove, Rev. Dr. Anton DeWet, Edgar Goodale, Andrea Hanulec, Jean Lapinski, Rick Reeve, Sandra Reeve, Rev. Janet Wright and Keith Young. Pastor Anton opened the meeting with prayer.

The minutes of the two Council Meetings in September (on the 9th and the 16th) were published in the October newsletter. As there were no corrections, additions or deletions, Edgar Goodale made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Rick Reeve and passed.

Treasurer's Report

Edgar Goodale presented the treasurer's report highlighting the items that might be considered out of the ordinary. With the fluctuating stock market, the endowment funds show large ups and downs. This past month was a loss of slightly more than \$28,000. We have canceled our fundraisers, which will show a further loss for this year. All bills have been paid. Our pledges are close to what was budgeted. All in all, we are "holding our own" at the present time.

Edgar will be presenting the 2021 Budget at the Corporate Meeting, which will be following the

worship service in the sanctuary on Sunday, October 25, 2020.

Rick Reeve made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Sandra Reeve and passed.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Anton has been working with Tom Behr in preparation of opening the sanctuary for worship. Following guidelines from New York State and the NY Conference, United Church of Christ, the seating will hold approximately 45-55 people.

To update us on the congregation, Kathy Eberle will be moving to Savannah, Georgia to be nearer to one of her sons. We will miss her and wish

her well. Louise Kratoville has passed into Life Eternal. Her funeral was at St. John's RC Church and a moving and heartfelt eulogy was given by her son, Jack, Jr. Also of note, Jack Kratoville is scheduled for surgery on October 21. Katie Reeve's grandmother has also passed. Betty terKuille has been in and out of the hospital. Gerry Hegner is happy and content in her Assisted Living arrangement. Calls have been made to homebound folks. Others who are homebound by the CoVid-19 pandemic are greatly. Pastor Anton suggested that any or all of these folks would love to have a card or a call. Our Sunshine committee does an outstanding job of sending out cards every week, but an extra one would be appreciated.

The topic of what to do for Christmas Eve must be addressed and will be mentioned under the Worship Ministry.

Ministry Reports

Building and Grounds

Our Moderator, Jean Lapinski has spoken with Jonathan Brown about the wording in the application for Verizon's lease for placing a cell tower in our church steeple. This must be approved by a vote of the congregation at the Corporate meeting on October 25th.

It appears that the bird problem (birds getting into the sanctuary through broken screening in the

steeple) has been fixed temporarily. It will be necessary to hire a lift to make further repairs to the steeple. Edgar Goodale has been working on this problem. Sandra Reeve stated that her son also has a lift and she will ask him about this repair.

The screen door and the door frame on the west side of the church will be replaced when the fixture that has been ordered arrives. The three decaying trees that bordered the parking lot on West Lane have been removed. The blacktop cracks have been corrected. Rick Reeve will be spraying the weeds by the side of the building. The AC unit in the Administrative office will be removed. The filters for the large AC unit that cools the Fellowship Hall will be checked and replaced, if necessary.

Fundraisers

It was determined that the Annual Christmas Bazaar and Luncheon will be canceled this year. This and the Chicken BBQ were canceled due to the pandemic this year. Our church members are asked to come forth with any ideas for new and different ways of raising funds for the church.

Outreach

Andrea Hanulec reported that the goal of \$1000 for Maureen's Haven for the overnight "watchman" has been met. Thank you to all that contributed. There will be other opportunities to supply the evening meals, lunches and breakfasts as the program begins on November 2, 2020.

The non-perishable items given to the food pantry are always over 200 products. The monetary funds donated are used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables or paper products. All donations are greatly appreciated!

This month's focus is on the CROP Walk, which we participate in every year. Due to the pandemic, there will be no physical walking, however, donations may be made to Old Steeple Church and in the memo line state it is for the CROP WALK.

The November focus will be on Habitat for Humanity.

The Memorial donations from the passing of Louise Kratoville will be used for the purchase of items for the Food Pantry at St. John's RC Church.

Caring

Sandra Reeve reported that there was no activity in this ministry since the last meeting.

Faith Formation

Rev. Janet Wright reported on the successful "Blessing of the Animals" service held on Saturday, October 3rd at 10 am in the church parking lot. Not knowing what to expect, the faithful arrived to receive blessings (in their cars) for their animals, a treat for their animals, and a small card with an additional blessing that they could use often at home. The donations received (\$100) will be sent to the Kent Animal Shelter this year. Many thanks for the support and help from Tom Behr and Pastor Anton and their blessings.

The Book Discussion group led by Pastor Anton will be gearing up in November. The book selected for discussion is "The Elephant Whisper" by Lawrence Anthony. This group is relaxed and enjoyable and a great opportunity to share thoughts. The discussion ranges far and wide. All are invited to come. The exact date will be forthcoming.

At this time there will be no Sunday School. There may be discussions with parents and students that have been a part of this ministry about how to best serve and teach our children about the wonders of God.

Rev. Wright has signed up for a Webinar on "Small Christmas" to glean some ideas on how to best celebrate this joyful holiday safely during this pandemic. She will report back at the next meeting.

Worship

Tom Behr has had several meetings with Pastor Anton to prepare the sanctuary for re-opening on Sunday, October 18, 2020. The guidelines have been sent to all the membership either through email or by



snail mail. Of note, persons will be met at the front door to have their temperature taken, use hand sanitizer and will be ushered to seating. The cushions will be removed, so if the pew seat is too hard, people will be asked to bring their own cushions. All attendees will exit by the side door except for those who must use the ramp. The pews will be roped off and blue tape will be placed on the pews for safe distancing. Tom will have several helpers this Sunday and we all pray that all goes well. We look forward to returning to our beloved sanctuary to worship.

Plans for Christmas will be discussed at the November meeting.

At this point the meeting recessed to the sanctuary to see how the arrangements for seating will work.

The meeting reconvened and continuing business was discussed.

2021 budget - congregational meeting, stewardship letter (already discussed, passed over this item)

Safe Conduct Policy - (tabled until next month, since we have until January to finalize)

Preschool plan for reopening - (Marisa already discussed this with us, but we'll put it on next month's agenda)

Legal issues - (already discussed earlier).

So the only item that needs to be added is in regard to the remaining issue:

Use of building by outside groups - contracts, liability.

As requested, Jean looked into the development of a new contract with groups leasing our facilities, particularly the Luce Fellowship Hall, with new COVID restrictions in mind. She reviewed a number of contracts from other churches, most of which were very lengthy (6-10 pages). She recom-

mended that we work from our existing much shorter OSCC "Rental Agreement for Cedric Luce Fellowship Hall", including the "Check List for the Use of Cedric Luce Fellowship Hall". Two documents can be revised, one for single use (like the one presently in use) and one for year by year rental. Both can be modified to include COVID requirements, as well as liability and indemnity statements as required by law. Edgar suggested that the draft(s) be forwarded to all Council members for their input.

That was the only item discussed.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

The next Council Meeting will be on November 18, 2020.

The Corporate Meeting to vote on the 2021 budget and the lease agreement for Verizon will be held following worship on Sunday, October 25, 2020.

The next Community Board meeting will be held on Sunday, November 15, 2020 following the worship service. If there is any change in this meeting time or place, the membership will be contacted.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Janet Wright, Clerk



Summary of our financial position as of this month:

Our Church remains remarkably in an OK position during this period of extreme uncertainty. Our endowment account has been performing as designed as we have limited our exposure to current market fluctuations.

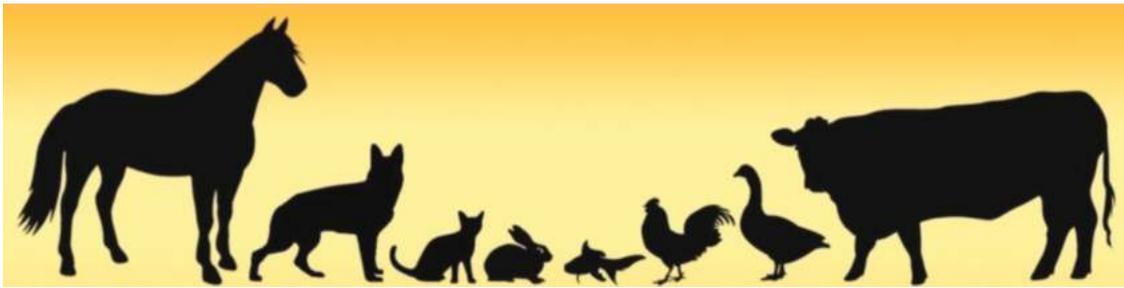
Our expenses have remained relatively flat (outside of some 1-time council projects) Our income has been cut due to the cancelations of our fund raisers and our weekly cash offering have declined due to not having services in the church.

Some of the declines have been offset by your pledged contributions exceeding our budget! This is absolutely remarkable and shows the character and the love of the church by its members. All in all, we will most likely miss our projected gross revenue for 2020, however one never knows, our congregation has always come thru in the past when asked. Please reach out to me at any time if you want any further information.

Edgar Goodale



In celebration of **Clergy Appreciation** month, Rev. Anton & Henza and Rev. Janet Wright were presented with Modern Snack Bar gift certificates to enjoy a meal with our thanks for all they do for Old Steeple Community Church and our community. Thank you for your leadership and guidance! ... And Anton and Janet would like to include a big "Thank you for thinking of us!"



Blessed Be The Animals!

Saturday, October 3rd arrived with bright sunshine and cool temperatures. A perfect day for Blessing the Animals in our community. This Annual event has become a tradition for Old Steeple Community Church and there are many in the community that attend every year. Even the Covid-19 virus could not stop this joyful occasion!

This year it was a drive through affair. Pastor Anton, Tom Behr and Rev. Janet were on hand to bless the animals in their vehicles. Each creature was given a treat, a card with a blessing that can be given to them at any time at home and a truly heartfelt blessing with a pat on the head. There were many dogs, two rabbits, a guinea pig and a Potbelly pig. I remember the Potbelly Pig from a few years back when he came in a hand knit sweater and was held on the lap of his human companion . . . he is much bigger now!

All seemed to enjoy this gathering and we were able to collect \$100, which will be sent to the Kent Animal Shelter this year. Thank you to all who participated!

Prayers & Concerns:

Those in harm's way who serve our country including Christopher Mascia, Amanda Tinter, Ben Pileski, Rebecca Needham, Justin Kruehl, and William Gilmore, Jr.

At Home/Hospital:

Karen Fleischman
Hannah Galinski
Lauren Haeffner
Lucas Mascia
Wayne Meyenberg
Linda Mueller
Ward Spellman

Also please remember:

Gene Goodale
Estelle Evans
Gerry Hegner
Bo Goodale
Scotty Robertson
Betty ter Kuile



Please let us know of any additions or changes. Contact the church office at 631-722-3070; or e-mail oldsteeplecc@gmail.com. Include your name, and let that person know that those at Old Steeple will be praying for them. Also, unless you let us know to do otherwise, names will remain on our list for six weeks and then will be removed. Thank you.

Environmental Ministries of the United Church of Christ

Take the UCC Environmental Justice Quiz!

1. *Did you know that UCC ministers coined the phrase “environmental racism” and played a leading role in giving birth to the environmental justice movement in the 1980s?*

During a six week campaign of civil disobedience in 1982, a movement was born that made national headlines and introduced the world to the issue of environmental racism. [Learn more about this inspiring movement in which the UCC became the driving organizational force.](#)

2. *Did you know that the UCC has formed a special partnership with a leading climate organization called 350.org, so that church green teams are now becoming 350 affiliates?*

Members of the United Church of Christ have often worked with 350.org in the pursuit of justice and shared goals. This informal, longstanding relationship is now being deepened through a pilot endeavor that encourages and invites UCC green teams to affiliate with 350. [Read about this exciting undertaking.](#)

3. *Did you know that in places like Flint and Standing Rock the UCC has been actively involved in standing alongside those struggling for justice?*

Solidarity is one form that love takes in the ministry of environmental justice. The goal is to find ways that local churches and members can actively support others who are facing environmental injustices. [Read more about this important part of our work together.](#)

4. *Did you know that the UCC is building a powerful environmental network that stays connected through a blog and e-newsletter called **The Pollinator**?*

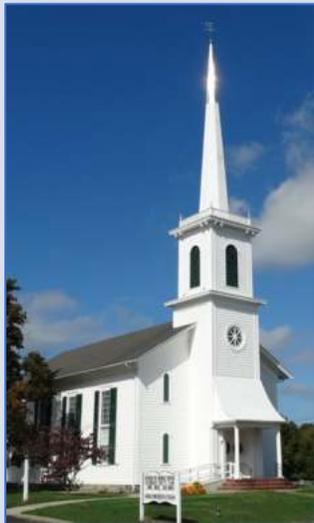
The Pollinator is a digital platform of the UCC for the sharing of ideas and inspiration, so that we might become more fruitful in the pursuit of environmental justice. Its focus is the building of a faith-filled and faith-rooted movement for the care of creation. [Read the Pollinator blog and sign-up for its newsletter.](#)

5. *Did you know that UCC churches are deepening and expanding their commitment to the environment by becoming Creation Justice Churches?*

Whether it is taking on climate change or addressing the lead poisoning of children, environmental justice ministries could not have a higher purpose or calling than they do now. Join the movement and become a Creation Justice Church.

Old Steeple Community Church

POB 154 / 656 Main Road
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Rev. Dr. Anton DeWet
antondewet@aol.com
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Moderator:

Jean Lapinski

Choir Director/Organist:

Guy M. L. Fein

Office Administrator:

Gail Evans

Office Hours:

Tu, W, Th 9-2

(photos by Gail Evans
unless otherwise noted)