

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

# THE East Church

## HERALD

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2020

***"Empowering God's community to grow in faith through worship, service, and learning at every age."***

***Vision Statement,  
adopted May, 2015***

"For everything there is a season," and the Season of Lent is no different. We ask ourselves as people of faith to make this time especially spiritual by adding religious disciplines to our days. Some folks give something up that they otherwise savor. Often daily prayer and reading of scripture becomes a priority. Acts of service and charity likewise bring one closer to God in Christ. This seasonal approach is important, not because of its tradition, but because it works. Take the seasonal approach to Lent, for the sake of your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

In sermons during Lent I will be focusing directly on Ecclesiastes seasonal approach. The most famous words in the book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible are, "For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven." Many of the contrasts this sage raised, however, bother me. Must there be a time for war, for hate, a time to kill? Approaching Ecclesiastes through the lens of Jesus Christ will bring another dimension to this inscrutable work. Inside the Herald is a list of the upcoming sermons relating the two. But first this thought:

I've heard it said that no philosopher can endure a toothache. Perhaps that was so for Qoheleth who was the king's advisor and author of Ecclesiastes. He saw life as an existential dilemma, one he could not solve but kept struggling and suffering with. As we can see Jesus as visible evidence of the unseen God, healing, hope, and purpose fill the painful void with possibility, promise and redemption.

That gospel is always in season. Blessings, Rev. David



## **YOUTH MINISTRIES**

**Bren Elliott, M.A.**

*Youth Ministries Director*

Upon reflecting on the presence of ECCYG in the church and discussing it with the youthies, we pondered if there were ways we could be more present. East's youth group serves in many ways as well as in many different settings. Although ECCYG presents our year in review at a special presentation every fall, we wondered as a group if this might not be enough. It is important that East Church interacts with their youth, because as adults we know THEY are the future of the church. As a group we got together and brainstormed ways East could see their youth group participation on a more regular basis. Our list of some of what we do include the offertory, visits with home

bounders, working with members who need help around their homes, coffee counter, bells, etc. We would like to step it up and start making our presence more noticeable around East. Some of our ideas include the scripture reading and liturgist duties, sound and light responsibilities, mentoring the Sunday schoolers. If anyone of you have any ideas as to how to make East Church ECCYG a bigger part of the church, please seek us out and let us know your thoughts and ideas. We would truly welcome them!

ECCYG

## **MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRIES**

**Jameson Thompson**

*Music & Arts Ministries Director*

As the hours of sunlight grow longer, and the temperatures rise (if only by a degree or two), that can only mean one thing: spring is on the way. With spring comes two of my favorite church seasons: Lent and Easter. The way the two contrast each other is very close to how the winter contrasts the spring. It's beautiful to see a nature reflection of the liturgical seasons.

This spring, the children will be joining the Chancel Choir on Palm Sunday to sing an anthem in combination. I'm also hoping to include some contrasting ensembles for the Lenten season (stay tuned!) As always, this will all come to a terrific finale on Easter Sunday!

Soli Deo Gloria

Jameson Thompson

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Becca Johnson**

*Christian Education Director*

Welcome to the new year! 2019 ended beautifully and 2020 has welcomed us with new love and light. The year started out with the Sunday Schoolers being welcomed and joining Communion on Communion Sundays. They have loved coming down for Communion and being a part of this precious sacrament. We also started a new theme with the new year; *Encountering Scripture*. During this theme of *Encountering Scripture*, the Sunday Schoolers and I have been reading and exploring the Bible thoroughly every single week. We have looked at different books of the

Bible and enjoyed learning what each one has to offer us in our daily lives today; 'God is still speaking.' The opportunity for you to connect to the Sunday School theme and learn is coming up. On **March 29<sup>th</sup>**, I will be hosting another Workshop Rotation on the *Encountering Scripture* theme after the Youth Group Pizza Lunch. This is not just a learning opportunity for young people, but one for people of **all ages** to come and experience the learning that the Sunday Schoolers do every single week. I hope to see you there!

# Scriptures and Sermons: Lent 2020

Reflections of Christ Jesus' gospel in response to Ecclesiastes.

March 1: *a time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together*

1 Peter 2:4-8 The Stone the Builders Rejected

March 8: *a time to seek and a time to lose*

Matthew 18:10-14 Lost and Found Department

March 15: *a time to keep silence and a time to speak*

Mark 14:53-72 Confessions

March 22: *Rev. Cheryl Burke of the Michigan Conference, UCC will be our Pulpit Guest.*

March 29: *a time for war and a time for peace*

Matthew 5:21-26 The Third Way

April 5: *a time to mourn and a time to dance*

Matthew 11:2-19 Lord of the Dance

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup>

On Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> we join with Christians from many denominations in an offering that goes around the world to help people in need. Disaster relief, world hunger relief and people's economic self-development have been long term features of OGHS. Offering materials will be shared during worship and church school. An OGHS Sharing Calendar is also available at church. It highlights various situations and suggests a donation of coins or bills. A video can be found on the UCC website: [UCC.org](http://UCC.org)

## OUR SEARCH COMMITTEE — UPDATE —

The search committee has completed the profile of the church that is shared with candidates. It is 25 pages! The Rev. Cheryl Burke of the Michigan Conference, UCC will meet with the committee on March 22<sup>nd</sup> for a final review — and be our guest preacher! In April our vacancy will be listed and we can begin reviewing candidates.

## East Council Meeting Highlights — February 2020

East Church Council met on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>. Minutes from both meetings were approved and can be obtained from the church office. Here are highlights from those meetings (please note—minutes from the February meeting are not approved until our next meeting, which will be Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. All are welcome to attend!)

- We've begun including the Sunday School class in our monthly communion. They spend the first part of the service upstairs and join us towards the end. Kids, parents, and community have all benefited from coming to the table of communion together!
- We enter 2020 with a balanced budget. This is reason to celebrate! Council and the congregation voted to decrease our benevolence contribution from 10% to 6.5%. Supporting local and at large missions has been a point of focus at East. As the church receives monetary gifts throughout the year, money can be added to the Benevolence fund if there is excess so let's make sure there's excess!
- Lots of events coming up at East UCC! Eastminster will join us for a joint Good Friday service on April 10<sup>th</sup> at East with a potluck dinner prior at 6 pm. There will be an Easter breakfast at 9 am in the Fellowship Hall. Our annual Talent Show will take place at 7 pm on May 13<sup>th</sup> with a potluck dinner before.

**Financial Report for January 2020**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Income</b>	\$ 26,364.24	\$ 18,846.61
<b>Expense</b>	\$ 30,537.83	\$ 38,740.93
<b>Income - Expense</b>	\$ (4,173.59)	\$ (19,894.32)
<b>Year to Date Inc- Exp</b>	\$ (4,173.59)	\$ (19,894.32)

**Financial Report for February 2020**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Income</b>	\$ 26,364.16	\$ 27,159.11
<b>Expense</b>	\$ 25,987.77	\$ 23,980.00
<b>Income - Expense</b>	\$ 376.39	\$ 3,179.11
<b>Year to Date Inc- Exp</b>	\$ (3,797.20)	\$ (16,715.21)



ECC COUNCIL  
For program year  
2018-19

#### OFFICERS

Moderator—Jim Notter  
Vice Moderator—Mark Johnson  
Treasurer—Jane Farnsworth  
Clerk—Stephanie Rodriguez

#### MEMBERS

Laura Johnson  
Kim Slupe  
Jeff Cornetet  
Kathy Siegenthaler  
Arnie Smith-Alexander  
Jerry Ambrose  
Penny Notter  
Stephanie Gingerich  
Kristen Haas

Want to receive an email version of  
The East Church Herald every month?  
Please email the office at  
[eastchurchgr@gmail.com](mailto:eastchurchgr@gmail.com) and ask to  
be added to the Herald e-list.

Worship with us!  
Sundays at 10:30am

East Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
1005 Giddings Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
(616) 245-0578  
[eastchurchgr@gmail.com](mailto:eastchurchgr@gmail.com)  
[www.eastchurchgr.org](http://www.eastchurchgr.org)

#### PRAYER CONCERNS

*These members and friends need our  
prayers.....*

The Matteson Family  
The Lamm Family  
The Krebs Family

*Please don't assume that the office is  
aware of those who are in need of a  
pastoral call or recognition in the  
bulletin or Herald, even if the  
information is shared during the  
Sunday service. Also, information will  
not be shared unless family members  
approve. Thank you!*

#### PRAYERS ASCENDING

\*Each month the congregations of the  
Grand West Association, United Church  
of Christ will hold each other in prayer.  
During January and February, we pray  
for and on behalf of Lowell UCC and  
Muskegon UCC. May God bless these  
congregations and their leadership in  
ministry.

#### ***HELPING HANDS***

Need a ride to the doctor? Need a ride to  
church on Sunday? Need meals while  
recovering from surgery or illness?  
“Helping Hands” may be able to help  
you!

Call Joy or Pat Murray at 455-0353.