



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS
Those Who Dream

Psalm 126 says “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.” This *Advent* and *Christmas*, we’ll ask the question: What does it look like to live as those who dream? The stories of prophets, psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Simeon, Anna, the shepherds, and magi, tell of people who experienced and responded to God’s dreams for the world. We, like them, step into God’s dreams and pray that they share our lives and reality. We join these biblical witnesses to seek a deeper connection with God and dream for a better world as we wait and celebrate the birth of a savior with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Longest Night Worship Service
Wednesday, December 9

In a season when the nights are long, the church comes together in song, prayer, and lament to mourn the losses and grief we feel. Sometimes called a “Blue Christmas Service,” the service is a safe and sacred place to share our struggle and to ask God to remember us and bring wholeness in our lives as we face doubts, tears, and grief. At 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9, in the sanctuary, come to bring our hearts and hurts to God in worship.

PASTOR’S CORNER

Welcome Advent

Dear Church,

As I write this, the emotion that I feel most is gratitude. We are entering a season in the worship life of the church where grace and gratitude are at the heart of our prayers and practices. So I have been reflecting on the church’s life these past months for signs of God’s grace for which I can share gratitude. The signs are many. I have seen members of the church support one another. The church’s leaders on Session and the Board of Deacons have made difficult adjustments and decisions with compassion and grace. Where needs exist in the community and where they have grown more acute, people in the church have faithfully look to walk with our neighbors. Many places in the church’s life have been rooted in prayer and seeking to offer safe ways of being present to one another as we have distanced.

As we move into Advent in anticipation of Christmas, we move into a season where waiting is a significant theme. In some ways, life has felt like we’ve been living in Advent since March. I know the months apart have been frustrating and the church has had so many events,

plans, and ministries disrupted during this time. Advent is coming and guides us into remembering that God loves us and remains with us through all seasons of life, even the most difficult. It is a season where we look for God’s presence among us, even in the burdens and grief we carry.

Amy Jill-Levine writes that in Advent “salvation means that there is a respite from whatever oppresses in the community that hears, and live, this Gospel. All come together to say, in our midst we have a savior.” On Christmas we remember that Christ will not forget us, abandon us, or leave us to be alone. While it has been a difficult season in our lives and continues to, I still give thanks for many who have helped to keep us as connected as we have been and as vital as we have been in our ministries. I give thanks for you, you care for one another, your love shared with neighbors, and your generous spirit lived faithful through a very long Advent. Good news is on the horizon, Christmas draws near, and to us and to all humanity, a messiah, a savior is born.

Peace, Matt

Mission Possible: Serving Our Neighbors

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT — Twenty or more cartons of fresh produce have been going to area homes each Friday morning through one of the many outreach efforts of our Mission Committee. Beginning in July, JAPC has been picking up food distributed by Foodrescue.US and making it available to anyone who can walk or drive to the church parking lot.

“Many who come are asking for a box for themselves plus boxes for family and neighbors,” says Paul Booker, who chairs the committee. “We have no problem distributing our stock.”

Initially each box held about 20 pounds of fresh produce, but by October they were “upgraded” to include some meat and dairy products.

Mission for the past couple of years has been filling bags with non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food for Nichols School students who may not have access to meals on weekends. JAPC partners with JJ’s House of Detroit in this important Every Kid Eats program. Louis Asmus has been faithfully taking the weekend meals sacks to Nichols, where he noted some dangerously crumbling steps into the school building and had them repaired.

Sandra Nichols, Laura Boyle, and Pat Slone have shopped for and filled the bags for Every Kid Eats. They say late-October bags will include Halloween treats and greeting cards created by Edith Sweeney and Sandra Nichols. They have also filled the back door pantry which is available to parishioners who may need access to food items.



The loss of our dear friend, Bruce Maters, has saddened our Committee but strengthened our resolve to make food and food insecurity our focus as we move forward. Our Committee, along with Presbyterian Women, have made a donation to Alma College in Bruce’s name for the renovation of their campus chapel.

The Mission Committee is excited about several new projects that are in the works. Several projects await Session’s approval as this is written. Our prayer is that we are able to move forward to serve our community in this uncertain time. God has been opening other opportunities where we thought none may exist at this time. Continue to hold us in your prayers and watch for ways to volunteer and support JAPC’s efforts to move God’s love into our community.

DEACON MOMENT

by Rose Randall Warner, Deacon

“It is very hard to be brave,” said Piglet, sniffing slightly, “when you are only a Very Small animal.” Rabbit who had begun to write very busily, looked up and said: “It is because you are a very small animal that you will be useful in the adventure before us.” In *The Tale of Piglet*, Benjamin Hoff discusses the concept of the “Virtue of the Small”. 2020 has brought big problems, fear and widespread negativity spreading ideas that we can do nothing, that we are so small in comparison. Our beloved JAPC is the light in our world and if you chose to stand in its glow there can be many rewards. Being a Deacon, beyond membership, has brought me to a closer walk with my faith in a tangible way. Working to be ever mindful of the commitments we all carry, we are making a difference in our corner of the world. Deacons are



not simply the worker bees of the church but are part of the collective heart that helps to pump love into ideas for positive change. We are helping to grow food programs, sharing communion with our shut ins, building a program to embrace those that are grieving, creating opportunities for prayer and study and we welcome all who might be moved to be a part of this effort. The Deacons ask for your prayers and gladly pray collectively for you, for our church and for our world.

Tutoring T.R.E.E. & Outreach

It has been a difficult, and even heart-breaking time, since the end of in-person tutoring and summer camps. The pandemic magnifies all the challenges and hardships of our families, children and schools that already existed. Still, I am encouraged and inspired by what our members and tutors have done to continue supporting our mission.

Since March, our tutors continued to connect with their students through letters, cards, and sending books and resources. Our mission committee, spurred by Paul Booker and Pastor Matt and assisted by many, have provided weekly food boxes since August. We have much to be proud of, as well as much work ahead of us.

Tutoring T.R.E.E. is beginning a 6-week virtual program, as a way to continue our outreach efforts. We are also sending take home bags monthly with books and learning resources for each student. We will continue to listen, be flexible, creative, and responsive to the needs of our students and Nichol School.

Church School & Nursery

In July, we offered a *Virtual Bible Camp* which included daily videos from Anne Maters, Rose Randall Warner, Kathy Chateau and Matt Nickel. Each family received lessons and supplies at home to participate. We are beginning this fall with the same approach where families can pick up take home supplies monthly, as well as watch a video from Kathy, Meghan or guest teacher.

Please contact me if you would like to be added to the list of receiving these monthly materials; or if you have a neighbor or grandchild/family member that you would like to share these materials with, let me know, so I can get a bag for you. Kathy at kathy@japc.org or 313-822-3456.

Angel Tree

Many things have changed this year, but we will continue to work with the Angel Tree Prison Fellowship in providing gifts for children living in our area who have a parent incarcerated. Angel gift tags will be on the bulletin board November 15 and 22. Wrapped gifts will need to be returned by Sunday, December 6. If you are unable to come to church to get a tag and you want to participate, you will be able to contact the church office for information. Instead of an in-person party for families, the Mission Committee is working to provide a safe delivery event.

Contact Kathy Chateau for information, 313-822-3456 or kathy@japc.org.

Music Notes Fall 2020

by Stephen Warner, Director of Music

This season we have had the challenge of finding ways to worship while staying safe. Beyond the basic challenges of maintaining safe distances and avoiding public gathering to prevent the spread of the virus, singing itself was deemed a “super spreading activity” because of the deep breath involved. Not only are people exhaling harder (and likely with more moisture) when they sing, they are also deliberately taking breath more deeply, possibly drawing particles farther into their lungs. It is painfully ironic, because the whole phenomenon of deep breathing in groups has been one of the newer found health and spiritual benefits of group singing. In addition to the obvious loss of work for professionals, it has left vocalists of all levels feeling spiritually marooned.

At present, we are utilizing our staff singers to provide the congregational voice for our service. It has been a joy for them to utilize their craft and do what they all feel they were meant to do. I am grateful our church has given them the opportunity to exercise their skills and make beautiful music for all of us in worship.

We will also be working with other musicians to add a little different flavor now and then to our worship experience. We have already had the opportunity to host a clarinet soloist and a percussionist on steel drums. We will be hosting a violinist and a bagpiper in November. In addition, we will be inviting all interested chancel choir members to play hand bells on November 15.

In December, we will be hosting another ***Jazz Advent Service*** with Marion Hayden, currently scheduled for December 13. On the evening of Wednesday, December 16, we will be hosting a ***Christmas Concert*** with our vocal soloists and friends which will feature both sacred and secular holiday offerings.

I am grateful to all of you for being faithful to our ministry. I am grateful for Matt’s leadership, ingenuity and patience. I am also grateful for Jessica Christy’s beautiful work these past several months editing our worship and for Cameron Ramsey’s efforts to spearhead our live-streaming going forward! *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Jazz at JAPC is supported by gifts from members and friends of music at JAPC.

THE CALENDAR
Published by
**JEFFERSON AVENUE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
8625 East Jefferson Avenue
Detroit, MI 48214

Carillon joins Keller-Kocher Quintet

Rain and falling temperatures chased the Keller-Kocher Quintet and its audience into the sanctuary the evening of September 30, but great music ruled the night.

The Ann Arbor-based quintet, led by bass player Paul Keller and vibraphonist Cary Kocher, and featuring Duncan MacMillan at the piano, David Alvarez III on drums and Matt LoRusso on guitar, played new and familiar music with an energy that delighted visitors.

Adding a new twist to the world of jazz, the group included the carillon in a unique arrangement of Oscar Peterson's 1962 composition "Hymn to Freedom." Cary Kocher made an extra trip to Detroit to spend time with the carillon and carillonist Jenny King. Paul Keller wrote and re-wrote a part for the 23-bell instrument, whose sound was captured by microphones and cell phones in the sanctuary and tower.

Excerpts from the program can be viewed on Facebook.

The original plan was for an outdoor program on the front lawn of the church, where the carillon would have a better voice. While the weather interfered this year, the group hopes there will be opportunities in 2021 for more jazz quintet with carillon.



The September 30 group included Paul Keller, double bass; Cary Kocher, vibraphone; Duncan MacMillan, piano; David Alvarez III, drums, and Matt LoRusso, guitar. Hymn to Freedom by Oscar Peterson (1962), arranged by Paul Keller to include carillon.

Church Register

DEATHS

Joyce Myers (4764) on June 19, 2020
Richard Renfro (5134) on June 25, 2020
Bruce Maters (4494) on August 21, 2020
Margot Sterren (3529) on October 1, 2020

WEDDING

Katherine Schervish & Brian Tash (non-members)
on October 24, 2020