

Walnut Hill Church

NEWS to USE



Volume XII — Issue I

Thoughts from the Study

The season of Lent is soon upon us, beginning with Ash Wednesday (Feb 14) and continuing forty days (excluding Sundays) through the Easter Vigil (Sat, Mar 31). For many people Lent is a season for taking on special spiritual disciplines such as fasting, prayer, Bible study, and other practices intended to help us reflect upon our life with God, others, and our selves. Allow me to suggest a few variations on some traditional lenten practices...

Prayer - What could be a more traditional practice than prayer? This lenten season consider gathering a "prayer list" of persons (individuals/groups) that might not normally be included in your prayers, persons other than your loved ones and friends, perhaps even persons whom you might reckon to be enemies, or vice versa. Simply hold these persons in your thoughtful awareness, asking that they might receive the same divine blessings that you might ask for your loved ones or your self. Thus you will fulfill Jesus' command to love and pray for your enemies.

Study - Study has long been a practice of the people of God, particularly study of the Bible. This lenten season consider also "studying" some facet of God's world, whether that be the natural world (the earth, its elements, systems, and creatures) or perhaps some community of people who share this world with you (persons of another religion, ethnicity, or nation). Focus on study to help you understand and relate to that facet of God's world in a way more deeply than you previously have or could. Thus you will more fully appreciate the psalmist's words, "How many are your works, O Lord; In wisdom you have made them all..."

Good News - Sharing the good news of God's love ("evangelism") has long been reckoned an activity central to our calling as Christians. The church exists to spread the good news of God's love. This lenten season consider broadening your evangelistic message to include not only "spiritual" good news to bless those souls burdened by grief, guilt, doubt, etc., but also "societal" good news to bless those persons, families, and communities who struggle because of poverty, racism, sexism, and the like. Such good news will need to be spoken not only to those who struggle, but also to those whose decisions and actions affect their lives. Thus you will follow the example of Jesus who described his ministry as bringing good news to the poor.

Encounter - One purpose behind many Christian practices is the possibility of "meeting God". Lent is a season for opening one's self to God in new ways. This lenten season consider how you might "meet God" not only by prayer, scripture, or study, but also by meeting persons around you. Look for opportunities to see God in those near you (family, friends, etc.), as well as, and perhaps even more, in those at a distance, though not necessarily miles away. Persons of different race, socio-economic circumstance, religion, etc., may reveal something about God, even something about yourself, that you might never have seen before. Thus you will discover "the image of God" in your neighbor, and in doing so, discover that image, and God, in yourself.

A blessed Lent to all.

Mike Ward

A Prayer for Lent

Gracious God, as we enter the season of Lent, we turn our minds, our hearts, and our hands toward you. Through practices old and new, may we pray as your servant Jesus taught us; may we study to learn about you and your world, including those who share the world with us; may we share the good news of your love that transforms the lives of individuals and communities; may we meet you in the faces of our neighbors. May the end of our lenten journey find us ready to bear the cross of Jesus and share in his resurrected life. In Christ's name and spirit we pray.
Amen.

"Soup"er Bowl Sunday February 4, 2018

Join us after worship for a bowl of delicious soup and make a donation to support God's Pantry Food Bank. Thanks, in advance, to our many soup chefs!



Children & Youth News

from Lauren Fouts

A busy and challenging new year awaits our Children & Teens! I find myself asking the same question time and again: where did the time go?!

Our annual **Souper Bowl Fellowship** will be celebrated the first Sunday in February (2/4). All volunteer soup chefs are invited to participate & soup contributions will be eagerly welcomed. This is the 16th year we have participated in a Church and nation-wide food drive for local food banks such as God's Pantry. Even more important than the annual "Soup Tasting" Fellowship Hour following worship February 4th is the money raised for our local food bank, providing much needed food support for those Lexingtonians who are unable to feed their families without help...lost jobs, sudden medical issues, unexpected automobile problems, and many other situations lead to food instability. One in five people in the Lexington area are bordering on nutritional deficiencies, at least 2 of those 5 in our community are children and senior citizens. God's Pantry helps provide food staples for those who are in need. Amounts as small as a dollar can make a difference. Come, eat, enjoy time with others in our Church community, and give generously!

At least once a month, 6th graders through Senior High young people are invited to participate in a variety of Mission projects, beginning with the **Sandwich Ministry & Church World Services Hygiene and School kit** inventory on January 28th, the Souper Bowl food drive February 4th, and Bowling for Kids as a scholarship fund raiser for summer camp February 25th. Watch for additional details & additional events in the weekly news email as well as direct communication so your teen will participate in the mission and ministry of Walnut Hill Church!

The **Confirmation Class** for all young people 9th grade and older will begin Sunday, March 4th. We will meet each Sunday morning at 10:00 in Mike's office. With the exception of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, our requirements include attending each week. Building on their experiences through their regular faith journey at Church and home, each class will touch on a different subject every week, including The Bible: Who Says?, The Beginning: Church History, Ritual and Function: the Sacraments, Forgiveness and Purpose, Who: Me?, and more! The participants will be eligible for Confirmation on Sunday, May 20th as part of our celebration of Pentecost, also known as the Birth of the Church.

The tireless leader of the Conversations with Youth on Sunday mornings, **Derek Vaughan**, will be out of town for the next several months. A great debt of gratitude is due **Lynn Rushing** and **Brian Gillispie** for immediately and enthusiastically volunteering to lead our teens on Sunday mornings. The Church is a volunteer dependent entity, without whose leadership leaves us a lesser ministry. As we tell our younger kids on Sunday mornings, SOMEONE makes the coffee and refreshments, SOMEONE turns the lights on and opens the doors, SOMEONE sings in the choir, SOMEONE teaches...you get the idea! These and many other volunteers are essential for our ministry and mission...THANK YOU!

Beginning April 8th, the Sunday AFTER Easter, will mark the formation of a new class for older Elementary and Middle School young people (rising 5th through 8th graders). This will allow us to bridge the gap between younger Elementary and High School students, leading this middle group in a manner that encourages their unique skills focused on their developmental level. We will maintain the Preschool and Kindergarten class, the Early elementary (1st through 4th grade) class and the High School Conversations, adding this new group of 5th through 8th graders to further meet the developmental needs of our young people. We will need volunteers to help once a month to lead either the Early Elementary children (1st through 4th graders) or the Older elementary & Middle School kids (5th through 8th graders). It ALWAYS helps to have an extra pair of hands!

Don't forget, as we move ever closer to February, the time will soon come to consider **Summer Camps at Burnamwood and Cathedral Domain**. Schedules for all Summer Camps are already available. Every Child and Teen from Walnut Hill Church will be financially sponsored to participate, paying for half the cost! Make sure to contact the Church Office or me (502-603-2485). It can be one of the most transformative experiences of a lifetime!

One Great Hour of Sharing

The **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering** is upcoming during Lent. The OGHS works like this: Place a collection box on your household dining table. Each day during Lent, at whatever meal you are at the table together, each member of your household places a coin in the collection box. Bring your collected coins to Walnut Hill on Easter Sunday (April 1), and they will be sent to support disaster relief and refugee resettlement around the world. Some households enhance their OGHS practice by including a different place/nation in their mealtime prayer each day and/or including information about that place/nation in their table conversation. For more information visit www.onegreathourofsharing.org .

Treasurer's Notes 2017 & 2018

Thanks to all who through their faithful giving and/or end-of-year gifts made it possible for Walnut Hill to finish 2017 in a strong fashion. At the time of this writing, we are still counting the dollars and cents in and out, but our end-of-year observations suggest that 2017 was a strong year. Special thanks to the Livesay Group, which provides the church's bookkeeping services.

2017 Contribution Statements are in process and in fact should be received by the time you read this newsletter. Please contact the church office if you have not yet received your 2017 Contribution Statement.

Looking ahead to 2018, don't forget that if for any reason you cannot be with us on Sunday mornings, you can always send your regular contribution by mail. In fact, some of our members/friends use their bank bill-pay service to be sure that Walnut Hill receives their support on a regular and timely basis. We can even offer online payment for persons who would like to take checks out of the process altogether. Contact our Treasurer, Forrest Cook, if you have questions regarding your support of Walnut Hill Church. Whether by cash/coin, check, bill payment service, or online, we are grateful for all those who support Walnut Hill's life and ministry.

Walnut Hill has been Reaching Out

...during the Christmas season to neighbors via the **Giving Tree**, providing gifts to children and families recommended to us by the Nathaniel Mission. **Walnut Hill Youth** collected winter warmth items (caps, scarves, gloves) that were shared with our neighbors at the Catholic Action Center. We also reached out via the **Innkeeper's Offering** on Christmas Eve and forwarded \$1,000 to the Salvation Army (Lexington Unit) to support their ministry with homeless women, children, and families.

...via the **Sandwich Ministry** providing sandwiches for guests at the Lexington Community Inn. Thanks to our recent Sandwich Ministers including the Cornett family (on Christmas Eve) and the Walnut Hill youth (January).

...through **Hygiene and School Kits**. Thanks to numerous members and friends who donated items for Personal Hygiene Kits and School Kits that are distributed by Church World Service to communities after natural or human-caused disasters. At the time of this writing, those donated items are being inventoried, supplemented, and gathered into kits for shipment to CWS.

...to **pediatric cancer patients and families**. Walnut Hill Church will be a sponsor (\$500) of the upcoming 9th Annual Indian Summer Camp Tennis Tournament, February 23, 6:30pm, at the Lexington Tennis Club. Indian Summer Camp is a program of the Kids Cancer Alliance providing camp experiences (free of charge) for pediatric cancer patients and their families. For information on how you can participate and/or support this event, visit bidpal.net/tennis2018.

Faith Formation for Adults

GNOSTICISM GOES TO THE MOVIES: Ancient Spirituality in Modern Cinema

In 1945, an Egyptian peasant uncovered a large earthen jar containing manuscripts from early Christianity. They were writings from early gnostic Christian communities, likely hidden when these communities and their writings were repressed and persecuted by church leaders as they struggled to define orthodox Christianity.

"Gnosticism" was a relatively new kind of spirituality, emerging only in the first century C.E. It first appeared in pagan and Jewish expressions. Following the life of Jesus, gnostic Christian communities appeared. While none of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were included in the official collection of the Christian scriptures (a.k.a. the New Testament), some biblical scholars believe that the Gospel of John and the writings of Paul were heavily influenced by gnostic spirituality.

The gnostic Christian sects were eventually persecuted out of existence. Why, then, do so many gnostic story lines show up in modern America movies (e.g. *The Matrix*, *Star Trek V*, *Pleasantville*, and others)? What, if any, gnostic elements can be found in today's culture and religious beliefs? These and other questions will be explored during our Sunday Morning Conversations in Lent (beginning **Sunday, February 11, 10am**). We hope you can join us.

Ecumenical News

- ◆ **The Episcopal Diocese of Lexington** will hold its **122nd Annual Convention** on Saturday, February 24, at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Winchester. The Annual Convention, which is attended by diocese clergy and parish delegates, is the annual business meeting of the diocese. In conjunction with the Annual Convention will be a **Diocesan Formation Day** open for general attendance on Friday, February 23, 2:30pm - 7:00pm, also at Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The theme of the Formation Day will focus on the ministry of "reconciliation" and will include workshops, worship and a keynote address by Dr. Alan Boesak. Registration for the Formation Day is \$20/person. For more information visit www.diolex.org.
- ◆ **The Presbyterian Women organization of Transylvania Presbytery** is offering scholarships to attend the Annual Gathering of Presbyterian Women to be held at the Galt House in Louisville, August 2-5, 2018. The theme of this year's annual gathering is "Arise, Shine, Your Light Has Come." Contact the Walnut Hill Church office (263-5304) for more information about the gathering and possible scholarship support.
- ◆ **The Kentucky Council of Churches** is in the midst of its "Prayer in Action Days" each Tuesday at 9:30am, in the Capitol Annex Building, during the current session of the Kentucky General Assembly. Each Prayer in Action Day includes information regarding an issue before the General Assembly as well as suggestions for advocacy regarding that issue. Upcoming issues include worker rights/wages, health care, death penalty, and environment/energy. Visit www.kycouncilofchurches.org for more information.
- ◆ **Church World Service** is acting on its long time ministry with and to refugees through its #Greateras1 campaign. Visit www.greateras1.org for information on how you can learn about and support global refugee ministry.

News of the Congregation

- ◆ **Reese Shelby McCord Hanna**, son of **Brent Hanna** and **Kristen Napier**, received the sacrament of Christian Baptism on Sunday, December 24, 2017. **Mary Diane and Lyle Hanna** are Reese's paternal grandparents.
- ◆ **Ben Horman**, son of **Nell and Mark Horman**, recently achieved the Eagle Scout rank through his long participation with the Boy Scouts of America. A significant part of this achievement was Ben's Eagle Scout project, namely the construction of a fire ring gathering site on the Walnut Hill Church property (near the Children's Chapel). An Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony and reception is scheduled to be held at Walnut Hill Church on Saturday, February 3.
- ◆ **The 2018 Vestry** officially began its service on January 1, 2018. This year's Vestry includes **Robert Watt** (Senior Warden), **Carthel Smith** (Vice Warden), **Cory Sharrard** (Clerk), **Forrest Cook** (Treasurer), **Linda Barnes**, **Lyle Hanna**, **Nell Horman**, and **Whitney Miller**. You are always welcome to share ideas, questions, and concerns regarding Walnut Hill's life and ministry with any member of the Vestry. You are particularly invited to do so with our Senior Warden, Bob Watt (phone - 231-3043 or email - Robert.Watt@skofirm.com).
- ◆ **Kroger Community Rewards** - Walnut Hill lately received a check in the amount of \$288 from the Kroger Company, quarterly proceeds of participation by 31 Walnut Hill households in the Kroger Community Rewards program. Walnut Hill received over \$1,000 in Community Rewards proceeds in 2017. Contact the church office for information on how you can participate. Thanks to all!



Cemetery/Church Grounds Project Update

After some lengthy and careful attention to planning details, it looks like we are ready to begin the work of implementing initial portions of the long range grounds site plan, including: general clean-up of the church and cemetery grounds (e.g. tree pruning/removal, fence lines, etc.), planting some initial replacement trees in the cemetery, and work around the cemetery bell tower. Watch for activity in the coming weeks.

As communicated earlier, all project work is proceeding on a funds-available basis as made possible by special gifts toward this project. No general church funds are being used. So far over \$150,000 in special gifts toward this project have been received. Thanks to our several generous donors! For detailed information regarding the project and how you might support it, please contact **Lyle Hanna**, **Gip Downing**, or **Linda Barnes**.

2017 Memorials

Walnut Hill Church gratefully acknowledges the following memorial/honorary gifts received in 2017

Irene C. Bloomfield

Mark & Wendy Trimble

Ed & Mary Czerwinski

Ruth and David Sharrard

Jane Dillon

Elaine & Michael Pilecki

Carl & Wilma Friesen

Melinda Friesen

Glenna Ritchie Graves

Jacob H. Graves III

James B & Nancy M Graves

Linda Talbott Barnes

Calvin Pinkerton Greenup

Ruth and David Sharrard

Lynn & Bob Tucker

W. James & Patricia Host

Farmers National Company

Betty Witt

Katten Muchin Rosenman Foundation, Inc .

Elizabeth Wharton "Libby" Herron

Ruth and David Sharrard

Tom and Martha Moore

Ruth and David Sharrard

Bonnie Ruschell Nally

Carolyn and John Rasnick

Sherry Warden

Phil Bloomfield

Beverly R. Whitaker

Charles and Julia Snow

(also in Luke Bubenzer's memory)

Delano L "Dee" Proctor III

Ruth and David Sharrard

Bill and Shirley Riley

Ruth and David Sharrard

Martha Lee Tucker

Ruth and David Sharrard

(also in Jim Tucker's honor)



2017 Foundation & Estate Gifts

Walnut Hill Church gratefully acknowledges the following foundation and estate gifts received in 2017

The Besse Barker Trust
The Hilary Boone Foundation
The Celeste M. Neuman Foundation
The Estate of Zoya Bokoff Ronvaux Lennon

Mission Experience 2018

We are currently exploring the possibility of a Walnut Hill Mission Experience later this year to follow-up our 2017 Mission Experience. As with last year's experience, we are considering a Friday - Sunday "hands-on" work opportunity for youth and adults, along with the opportunity to live "in community" with others for the weekend. Contact **Mike Ward** if you would like to part of this exploration.

Walnut Hill Church
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Lexington, KY 40515

Mark Your Calendar

SUNDAYS

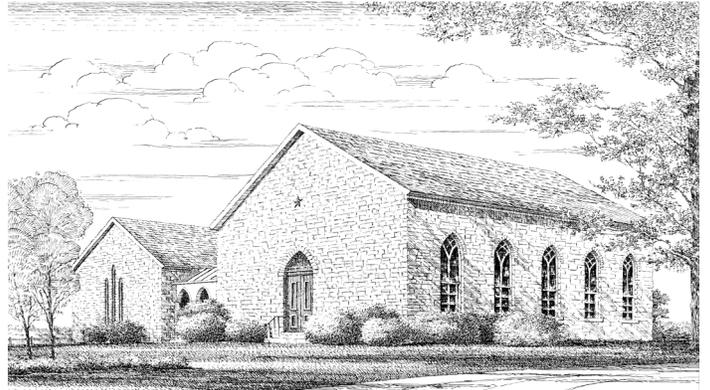
Sunday Conversations - 10am - Trinity Hall

Morning Worship - 11am - Sanctuary (Holy Communion on 1st Sundays)

Nursery Care and Sunday School - 11am - Trinity Hall

After Worship Gathering - Noon - Trinity Hall

Youth Gatherings - watch for scheduling



Do you have news to share?

If you have news or photos for the *Walnut Hill News to Use*, submit them to Mike Ward at mward@walnuthillchurchky.org or to Lisa Smith at matchpt@twc.com.