

Contact

North Bethesda United Methodist Church

Pentecost and Summer 2023

Volume 52 Issue 3

Why Rest?

Three months of sabbatical! What a gift. What a challenge to encapsulate in a few words or short stories. I will be sharing photos and vignettes for weeks to come (sabbatical experiences may show up in every sermon illustration for the rest of 2023!), but I thought that this snippet of a journal entry I wrote while on an Ash Wednesday retreat on February 18th might give you a glimpse into what I was thinking and writing as I tried to live into an understanding of Holy Rest:

I started C.S. Lewis' Lenten devotional this morning, and the Matthew scripture was, "Come to me, all you with heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Rest for your souls." Two weeks into my sabbatical, I haven't quite figured out how to accept the gift of rest. So I'm trying to work it out here.

Rest, to me, is when my shoulders go down, when my ribs expand with each breath, and I am present enough to notice it. Rest is taking a nap on a tiny couch in the middle of an Ash Wednesday retreat, rather than doing whatever was assigned. Rest is not having a lineup of things to do or people to follow up with. Rest is doing a puzzle, being able to watch a movie on the plane instead of taking full advantage of the time to catch up on work. Rest is walking in a slow and wandery and delighted-at-what-I-notice kind of way. Rest is letting the things I don't have to address right now, things that aren't my job right now, move past me. Rest is a rocking chair, getting caught up in a good book and losing track of time, playing piano, wearing cozy clothes, walking barefoot. It is making my yeses and my nos with intention, with freedom. This is the vision of rest I can claim. This is the gift I think Christ offers in the words from Matthew today: "You will find rest for your souls."

Why does God want this for us? At first I was thinking that it makes us more capable, energetic servants; when we've filled up and gotten sleep, we can do our jobs better. But what if God didn't make us to be workhorses? What if God made us to be friends with us, to delight in us? Those things I listed when describing what rest is to me, those are parts of abundant life. They are how I allow the Spirit to fill me, instead of glazing over while I scroll on screens, or frantically run from thing to thing, person to person. Yes, I think God comes to us when we're overworking, boxed in, or torn down by illness, grief, or pain. God is definitely there. But God invites us, longs to free us, to bring us to an open space; a green-pastures, still-waters, cup-runneth-over kind of space. A space where we can experience the fullness of God.

We are made for love, and we can only know in our bones the whole truth of love when we have surrendered everything to God's invitation to rest. We are dared to believe that we are adored when we are not producing or fixing or saving anything. And in order to get there, I think we have to do that surrender thing regularly. And if it doesn't feel like a discipline—if instead it feels like something the Puritans would look down their noses at; if it feels like having double dessert, or sleeping in a king-sized bed, or having someone massage your feet—well then, even better. We can only love with God's love if we are basking in it regularly, if we are filled with it. I want this kind of rest for myself, and I want it for everyone. Not the kind of rest that you have to earn, and can only take if and when the work gets done, but the extravagant gift of a God who made us purely for love.

What a witness we can give to the world when we pause to rest and delight in God: we proclaim with our lives that no one's belovedness—including our own!—is dependent on their productivity. Thank you for allowing me to explore this practice in an extended way. May you rest well this summer, and beyond!

Just a Sabbath-related reminder that Rev. Kara's "weekends" are Friday-Saturday, with Friday as an intentional Sabbath day. She will respond to calls, texts, or emails that are not pastoral emergencies from Sunday-Thursday. Thank you for your understanding!

Peace,
Rev. Kara

Thank You!

I want to thank our NBUMC Family for all the prayers, the beautiful flowers, lovely cards, email messages, phone calls and other expressions of sympathy on the death of my brother Vernon Louis Hunt. Jesse and I were truly comforted and appreciative of your support. As his twin sister, I will always have fond memories of him and his love for life.

Sincerely, Vera Hunt Jennings



Hugs, thanks and gratefulness to everyone who assisted in helping make this Maundy Thursday soup supper a success. We had well over 50 people! The soups were delicious. Thank you to our wonderful soup makers. Thank you to all who provided the fresh and delicious bread and the wonderful healthy salads and fruit. And, as always, thanks to the people who help set up and clean up. Finally, a big shout out to all of you who came to enjoy this Fellowship Dinner as a church family. We are truly blessed with a wonderful church family. Hugs and love to you all!

Blessings, Rose Aehle



Thank you so much to everyone who helped to make my retirement ceremony from the United States Public Health Service a truly memorable occasion! Especially:

- Ed Swanson and Mark Aehle for breaking down the stage that was used for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- Mark Aehle and Ken Ow for moving the pianos from Johnson Hall to Benedict Parlor
- Mark Aehle for making sure that the chairs and tables set up for the reception met the fire code regulations, and for helping to set up and decorate
- Ken Ow and Ardoth Hassler for making the ceremony accessible via Zoom to family and friends who were not able to attend in person
- Simon Charette for allowing the USPHS Choral Ensemble to use the piano and choir loft for the ceremony
- Ardoth Hassler and the MSP Quilting Angels for the beautiful Quilt of Valor and the moving presentation
- All who contributed to the diaper drive for the Greentree Shelter for women and children

Most importantly, thank you NBUMC for being a true church home for me over the past 20 years, and for both me and my husband, Peter Edelman, since we were married in the pumpkin patch almost 15 years ago. Y'all are my family and I love y'all!

Love, CAPT (RET) Kathleen (Kat) M. Edelman MPH, RD

North Bethesda United Methodist Church

10100 Old Georgetown Road

Bethesda MD 20814

Phone: (301) 530-4342

Office Hours: Monday -Thursday

8:30AM- 3:00PM

E-mail: office at northbethesdaumc.com

Website: www.NorthBethesdaUMC.org

Pastor: Rev. Kara Scroggins cell: 202-618-1078

Office Manager: Gwendolyn Daniels

Minister of Visitation: Linda Thompson

Music Director: Simon Charette

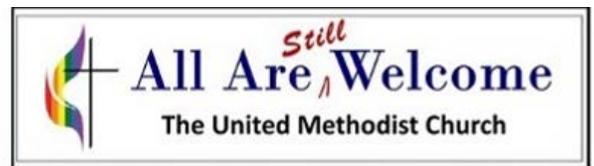
Christian Educator: Grace Thompson

Church Board: board at northbethesdaumc.org

Contact Newsletter Editors and Principal Writers:

Ardoth Hassler-Short, Carol Malmi

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Bethesda Help

The Bethesda Help Board of Directors needs a replacement for Diane Walsh-Barberesi, whose term has ended. The board meets about three times per year, usually by Zoom. Please consider being a part of this long-standing collaboration in our community. If you are interested, talk to Janet Replogle or Diane.

**Deadline for the
Fall Issue:
August 1, 2023**



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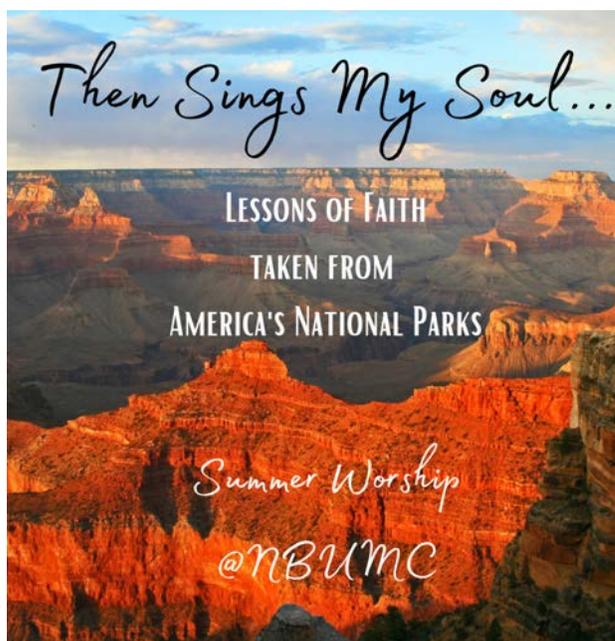
WORSHIP THEMES: A NOTE FROM REV. KARA

Our worship series in June is called **Almost Sacraments: Everyday Ways We Encounter God's Grace**. In the Methodist Church, we officially have two sacraments--Baptism and Communion, but our Wesleyan tradition acknowledges that God's grace is not limited to these two means. The Holy Spirit is at work constantly, often through what seem like mundane parts of our daily lives. For four weeks in June, we'll be exploring these everyday means of grace. On June 4th, we'll talk about how God shows up in food and table fellowship, and we'll have a very different kind of worship service to experience this firsthand. The second week, we'll look at how friendship is a way to encounter God's grace, and the third week, the focus will be service. The last Sunday of June, the 25th, many of us will be at the all-church retreat at Bon Secours, and we'll experience nature as an everyday means of grace. Those of you who cannot make it to the retreat but want to come to worship at NBUMC will find (via an informal hymn sing that Simon leads) that music is a particularly wonderful way the Holy Spirit moves in us.



For July and August, we are taking a **Summer Road Trip to the National Parks**! Every week, we will "visit" a different park and read a Scripture passage that connects to a theme brought out by that park. Gwendolyn is putting together passports for everyone in the congregation to get a different stamp each Sunday in the series. We're also looking for submissions of any National Park photos you may have from recent (or long-ago) trips! Email them to [Church Office](#). *Rev. Kara*

Worship Themes/Scriptures



June: Almost Sacraments:

Everyday Ways We Encounter God's Grace:

June 4: **Food/Table Fellowship**

June 11: **Friendship**

June 18: **Service** (Graduate Sunday)

June 25 **Music** - Lead by Simon. *Informal Hymn Sing while the rest of us are at retreat*

July & August: Lessons of Faith from the National Parks

July 2: **Yellowstone: Faithfulness**

July 9: **Everglades: Diversity and Gifts** Romans 12:3-8

July 16: **Death Valley: God's Presence in Low Places**
Psalm 23

July 23: **Big Bend: God Along the Border** Luke 10:25-37

July 30: **Crater Lake: Curiosity** Acts 8:26-40

August 6: **Acadia: Refuge** Psalm 91

August 13: **Petrified Forest: Possibility** Ezekiel 37:1-14

August 20 **Shenandoah: Transformation** Isaiah 43:19-21

August 27: **End of Summer Road Trip: Campfire Stories**

Church News

Board Report

The NBUMC Board met on May 16th, and we happily welcomed Rev. Kara back from her renewal sabbatical. We were inspired to see some of the images from Rev. Kara's trip and to hear the happy news of her engagement.

The Board was sad to receive an email from Mary Lou Griffin resigning her positions as chair of Membership & Evangelism and Membership Secretary for personal reasons. We thanked her for her years of dedicated service to NBUMC. Rev. Kara will work with the Lay Leadership Committee to nominate a replacement.

We reviewed the treasurer's report. Despite some reduced expenses, the month of April still resulted in a deficit of \$1,300. While on a year-to-date basis we are "ahead" due to receiving some advance payments, on a month-to-month basis our expenses exceed our donations and revenue. (See Treasurer's Report, Page XX). Elvira Williams is leading a small group to brainstorm some alternate sources of revenue. Your creative suggestions are welcome! We also formed a task force led by Nathaniel Clarke to review our building use to ensure we have proper policies and procedures in place as well as to confirm that our rates are reasonable.

The Board has endorsed the sponsorship of a community concert series using funds from a legacy from our own Valerie Blane. Valerie grew up in NBUMC, was a music enthusiast and long-time member of the NBUMC choir who passed away from cancer in 2017. A planning committee including Rev. Kara and Simon Charette will meet to start laying the groundwork for our goals and exciting possibilities for welcoming artists and audiences from the community to our sanctuary.

Finally, we need volunteers who can help us look after our building and grounds. Diane Walsh-Barberesi, Ken Ow, and others have served faithfully for many years, and we need to seek out those who are willing to learn about our property and help carry the load. Remember that many hands make light work! Please see me or any board member if you can help take up some of this work.

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 13th at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom. All are invited and encouraged to attend. May God bless all of us as we lift up the ministries of our Lord and be the hands, arms, legs and body of Christ.

- Janet Replogle, Board Chair (email: boardchair)

Financial Update

At the end of April 2023, NBUMC's YTD 2023 budget has a surplus of \$10,496. Revenue for the January - April was \$137,196 and expenditures for this period were \$126,700. We've paid 100% of our Mission Shares to the BWC Conference. NBUMC's planned budget for 2023 is \$419,043.

- Jesse Jennings, Assistant Treasurer



[Online Giving](#)

All-Church Retreat at Bon Secours Retreat Center Marriottsville, MD June 24-25

We are having an overnight church retreat that many of you have already signed up for. We'll be at Bon Secours, which is less than an hour away and a lovely, comfortable retreat center. I spent time there for an Ash Wednesday retreat during my sabbatical and am excited to return. [Sign up here if you haven't already.](#) You may also choose to just come for the day and not stay overnight, or to come up on Sunday morning for worship together. For those not coming on the retreat, there will be an informal hymn sing in the Sanctuary at the regular worship time on June 25.

- Rev. Kara



Our People



Gail Hazelrigg visits Jenny Bartholomot



Thank you, Diana Garcia, for your beautiful music.



CONGRATULATIONS!
Isabelle Nogues earned her PhD in Biostatistics at Harvard University. Her dissertation is entitled “Novel Analytic Methods for Electronic Health Record and Clinical Trial Data”. Isabelle "grew up" at NBUMC. We are all so proud.



Joanna Voight (l) and Linda Thompson (r) present Tripta Verma with an Easter Lily. Tripta took care of many children in our nursery over the years. She has recently been on our prayer list.

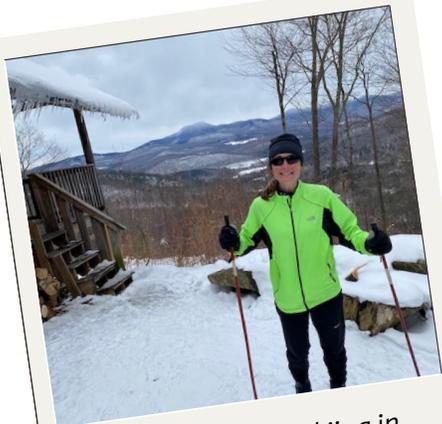


A retirement ceremony was held at NBUMC March 25, 2023, in honor of CAPT Kathleen Manning Edelman. She retired from the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service with 25 years of service including seven years as an officer in the US Navy. Kat was surrounded by her family, friends, colleagues and fellow USPHS officers. During the moving ceremony with many tributes, she was awarded a Quilt of Valor in recognition of her service. In lieu of gifts, she requested donations of diapers for the Greentree Womens and Childrens Shelter. Congratulations, Kathleen! We wish you fair winds and following seas.



Our People

Rev. Kara's Photo Journal



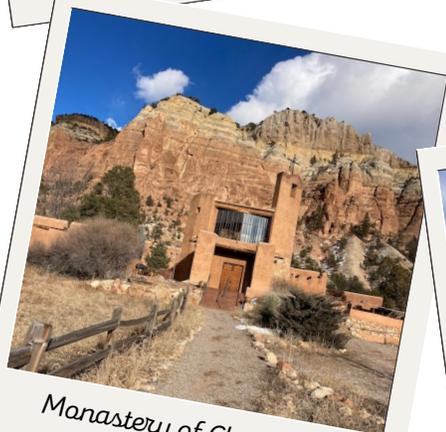
Cross country skiing in Vermont



Taizé, France



La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona



Monastery of Christ in the Desert, New Mexico



Walking along the Camino in León, Spain



Rainy Day, on the Camino in Navarra, Spain



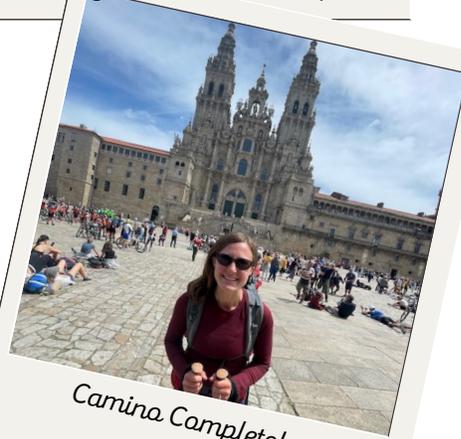
Giant, very old chestnut tree in Galicia, Spain



Getting engaged to Matt Wibbenmeyer, on Mount Jay!



Easter Drumline Santiago de la Calzada, Spain



Camino Complete!

Our People

Bible Study Breakfast Bunch



Clockwise from Left: Dennis Boiter, Sterling Scroggins, Steve & Pat McSpadden



Clockwise from Left: Paula Dean, Sue Ernst, Bob Dean, Linda Thompson, Joanna Voight



Ken Ow was recognized for 15 years of Extra-Ordinary Service by CERT - the Community Emergency Response Team.



June is Pride Month!

Pride Stoles



Starting Sunday, June 4th, in honor of Pride Month we'll be wearing rainbow stoles in worship to identify us as a congregation who welcomes all. We've been offering these stoles to worshipers since 2017. They are the brainchild of Rose Aehle. Over the years, she has purchased the fabric and Ardoth Hassler has hemmed them. Together, they've provided more than 100 stoles.

Where are the stoles?!? We have 10 in the back of the sanctuary; the choir and a few others have theirs. Where are the rest? Please look at home and wear them to worship.

Can't find yours? No worries. Ardoth has made 45 new ones. This time, if you want to take a stole with you, we'll have a box for donations that we'll use to support Pride-related activities at NBUMC. Thank you.

Capital Pride



Capital Pride
Parade
June 10th
3pm

On Saturday, June 10, we will join with United Methodists from DC, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia to march in the **Capital Pride Parade** in the Logan and Dupont Circle areas of Washington, DC. The pride parade is a great opportunity to provide witness to God's love for all people. NBUMC will have an "official" sign, and you may make or bring other signs as well. Times for link-up and information on the parade route will be shared as soon as they are available. We have also been invited to help host a Pride Festival table the next day (Sunday, June 11), so stay tuned for details about that as well! Email Rev. Kara for details.

Our Journey: Holy Week and Easter to Pentecost

Palm Sunday



The children create a pathway of palms.



Special Music from Elizabeth Adams and Simon Charette

Maundy Thursday Soup Supper



Soup makers and friends. Left: Rose Aehle, Susan Susan Caceres, Nana Appiah-Korang and Joye Jones (l-r). Right: Jenna Love, Janet Replogle and Karina Mobley (l-r). Below: those who came to partake.



Service with Liturgical Drama and Communion



Brandon Kesselly



Susan Ernst



The Arts Committee presented a Liturgical Drama of the Last Supper written by Flora Milans. Natalie McManus (Art's Chair) served as narrator; Mary Lou Griffin portrayed Peter; Susan Ernst, Judas; and, Brandon Kesselly, Jesus. The choir symbolized the disciples and led the music. The service closed with Rev. Bonnie celebrating communion.

Our Journey: Holy Week and Easter to Pentecost

Christ is Risen!



We are Easter People!



Thank you, Rev. Bonnie, for wonderful Easter services, for leading worship and your service to NBUMC during Rev. Kara's sabbatical.



Penny Clarke in her Easter finest.



Thanks to Susan Ernst and JoAnne Wong for a lovely coffee hour.

Pentecost

Rev. Kara invited the Congregation to write their prayers on Pentecost Flames and hang them in the Narthex.



Members and friends send their prayers aloft.



Rev. Joye and Rev. Kara greet folks after worship.

Upcoming Events




**Baltimore-Washington
Annual
Conference**
May 31 - June 3,
Baltimore

Graduate Sunday
Sunday, June 18th, we plan to recognize, bless, and send off all who are graduating from high school, college, or graduate school this year. If that is you or someone in your family, please let Rev. Kara know!

**NBUMC TO PROVIDE MEALS FOR THE WOMEN'S SHELTER
JUNE 18 THROUGH 24**



Thank you to all those who have volunteered to serve dinners to the 37 residents of Interfaith Works Women's Homeless Shelter at 2 Taft Court, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20850 during the week of June 18th to 24th. Detailed guidelines will be provided to all volunteers closer to the time. Dinners will be provided and served on 4 nights: Monday and Tuesday, June 19th and 20th, and Thursday and Friday, June 22nd and 23rd.

After a "pandemic hiatus", we will be serving the meals again ourselves (maximum of five servers). Teams should arrive at the shelter by 6 pm, and be ready to start serving by 6:30, continuing to serve until 7:30.

Your help and compassion is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

- Gordon and Jacqui Cragg



Wear Orange on National Gun Violence Awareness Day, June 2, 2023, and share your #wearorange photo on social media.

wearorange.org



Bastille Day July 14th



COMING SOON!

In August, we'll be gathering school supplies so children can start the school year with new, full backpacks!

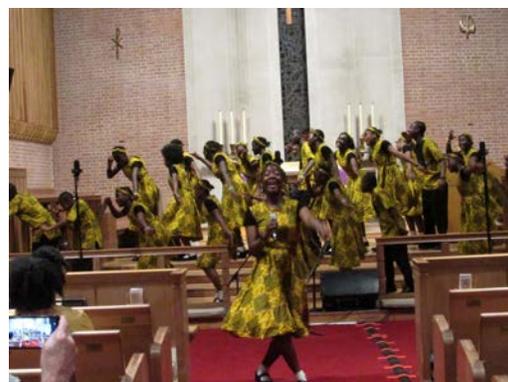
Save the Date for Labor Day Cookout after worship on September 3!



Our Active Church



NBUMC was privileged to host the **Matsiko World Orphan Choir**. We provided housing and food for two nights while they had performances in our area. On April 4th, they treated us to a lively concert in our Sanctuary.



Joy in Motion!



Music Fills Our Sanctuary

NBUMC was host to *Un Printemps Enchante* - an "enchanted musical evening" featuring The French Choir of Washington, The Choir of the Embassy of France, and our own choir on May 19, 2023. Under the direction of Simon Charette, the choirs performed contemporary, folk, operatic and classical music in multiple languages--not just French and English--to a very welcoming audience. Elizabeth Adams added her beautiful violin to several pieces, even stepping in to conduct the NBUMC choir as Simon played the organ.



The NBUMC Choir reprises the music from "Lessons and Psalms"



The combined French choirs.



A 5-year old piano prodigy wowed the audience with his musical abilities.



Elizabeth and Simon in their self-described "rare" opportunity to perform together.



A standing ovation for the maestro!

Welcoming the Stranger into Our Midst

Sunday, May 7, 2023

NBUMC celebrated the Fifth Sunday of Easter on May 7, 2023 with a Worship service dedicated to Immigrants and Immigration. Prior to her sabbatical, Rev. Kara planned a special Liturgy that included readings from the Bible and music designed to remind us of what a faithful response to immigrants and refugees should look like. Our choir performed a beautiful rendition of Handel's "Hallelujah Amen" (from Judas Maccabaeus). A powerful and inspiring Message, "Welcoming the Stranger into our Midst" was given by guest speakers, Merwyn and Kristin De Mello. The De Mellos are social justice and peace activists who reside in a lay Franciscan community in Washington DC. They have witnessed alongside refugees and immigrants in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and the United States.



Kirstin and Merwyn De Mello

After the Service, we welcomed representatives and friends from the New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance (NNIA), including Mr. Bob Cooke, one of the NNIA founders and leaders. NNIA is a local nonprofit interfaith organization that assists refugees. NBUMC, through our SOC Committee, is a partner organization. The highlight of the event was welcoming and hearing from the Naim Family—father Massih, mother Aerzo, daughter Scerat (age 9), and son Sibohn (age 6). Massih and Aerzo shared their harrowing story of fleeing persecution in Afghanistan, traveling through Pakistan and Brazil, and then a 55 day journey to their new home in the United States, where they are seeking asylum status. This charming and resilient family expressed gratitude for the welcome and support they have received from NNIA.



The Naim Family

- Rich McManus on behalf of SOC

Aerzo brought delicious homemade Afghan pastries to share.



Sunday, May 14, 2023



Eli Johnson

The theme of the May 14th service was "welcoming the stranger," in particular, newly arrived immigrants and refugees with a focus on what God expects of us as Christians. Our guest speaker was Elias (Eli) Johnson, Executive Director of the [Congregation Action Network \(CAN\)](#), which he described as "a network of over 70 faith communities in Maryland, Washington, DC and Virginia that organizes and mobilizes to stop unjust acts like detention and deportation, builds the leadership and political power of migrants in our region, and pushes for policies that benefit all of us, no matter where we were born." He recalled the trauma of his upbringing in his Guatemalan home, "...affected by alcoholism and mental illness..." and its influence on his decision to become a lifelong activist. He described his involvement in protests in Guatemala "...alongside communities fighting for their land and their lives..." and how frustrated he got with how little say Guatemalans had in the US policies that so deeply affected them. After moving to the US, experiences with organizations of people "...who had dedicated their lives to various causes, who wore their activism as an identity, and made a life of it..." strengthened his resolve to "use his position as a US citizen to advocate in the US, to push our government to adopt policies that supported human rights instead of human misery." At the start of his message, Eli quoted an excerpt from United Methodist Church Book of Resolutions that he strongly favors, and which illustrates his goals and those of CAN: "The United Methodist Church believes God's love for the world is an active and engaged love, a love seeking justice and liberty. We cannot just be observers. So we care enough about people's lives to risk interpreting God's love, to take a stand, to call each of us into a response, no matter how controversial or complex." In further discussions at coffee hour Eli expressed the hope that NBUMC would consider becoming involved in supporting the goals of CAN.

- Gordon Cragg, Lay Leader

Ed. Note: Find Eli's excellent sermon [Buttering the Cat](#) on our YouTube Channel.

Introduction: Lessons and Psalms

On April 23, 2023, we celebrated the Book of Psalms with words and music – exactly what the Psalms are made of. The Psalms are very old. They were written and composed, one by one, by poets and musicians over more than a thousand years. The rabbis of Israel recognized their unique nature as they arose and included them in liturgy and ritual. The Psalms are the jewel in the crown of the Old Testament. They are a unique form, a powerful channel for intense emotion.

Who wrote the Psalms? About 1,500 years before Christ, Moses wrote the first psalm, a cry to God for compassion for the suffering Jews. Moses speaks for the whole nation of Israel.

Ps. 90 We are consumed by your anger/ and terrified by your indignation. / 8 You have set our iniquities before you, / our secret sins in the light of your presence. / 9 All our days pass away under your wrath;/ we finish our years with a moan.

Five hundred years later, King David, once a shepherd boy who sang to his sheep in the fields, wrote 73 Psalms. In Psalm 3 he speaks from deep personal fear and anxiety.

Ps. 3 Lord, how my enemies have increased! / Many are rising up against me. / Many are saying of my soul/ "There is no salvation for him in God." Selah / But You, Lord, are a shield around me, / My glory, and the One who lifts my head.

The names of a few other Psalmists are known, but most of the remaining Psalms were written by Anonymous. Around 500 years after King David, the Jews had returned to Israel from the Babylonian Captivity and were rebuilding Jerusalem brick by brick, and their temple worship and rituals book by book. Scholars say Psalm 114 likens the release from Babylon into the flight from Egypt in Moses' time:

When Israel went out from Egypt, / the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, / Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion. /The sea looked and fled to Jordan turned back./ The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs".

Clearly, a Psalm of joy. The scattered Psalms had been saved over the centuries. In 350 BC they were brought together as the Book of Psalms and placed in what we know as the Old Testament. They were there waiting for the early Christians who formed the new Christian church. They are quoted in the New Testament more than any other book of the Old Testament. They are alive and at work today in private devotions and public worship.

What makes the Psalms different from other scripture? Other books of the bible are histories of the nation in war and peace, genealogical records (the Begats), rules and laws, instructions for living and worshiping, favorite stories about God's interaction with individuals. God speaks to the prophets. The prophets pass on the words of God to the people. The Psalms are different. They are the words of individual persons speaking directly to God. They are intimate, emotional, dramatic. Here is King David:

Ps 22 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? / Why are you so far from saving me, / from the words of my groaning? / O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer/ and by night, but I find no rest.

The Psalms are cries from the heart. Although written in an ancient culture and wrapped in religious practice, they speak of universal human experience. Listen to the words of the hymns related to the Psalms, and you will find that the Psalms are living -- in our hymnal. As these few examples show, reading the Book of Psalms is like hopping on an emotional rollercoaster. The psalmists pull out all the stops. Our Psalms Concert followed an arc of feeling: Songs of Praise (150), of Supplication, asking for help (121), of Complaint, lamentation, distress (10), of Confession and contrition (51), of Restored Relationship, blessed assurance (23), of Thanksgiving (65).

- Continued page 14



Our Choir

Introduction to Each Psalm

• **Psalms of Praise–Psalm 150.** Psalm 150 is pure joy. It does not have a lesson or an argument. It is a universal, benevolent benediction for the whole Book of Psalms. It might hint at the peace and joy that awaits the faithful reader of Psalms. As a song accompanied by music, the verses that invoke musical instruments might have suggested ideas to the composer. The choir sang: *Praise Ye The Lord* by Cesar Franck.

• **Psalms of Longing for God’s Provision–Psalm 121.** Psalm 121 is one of “the songs of ascent,” known as a traveler’s blessing. It relates to the idea of a journey or a pilgrimage, as to Jerusalem. A physical journey like this would be dangerous. People on the main roads and trails were easy marks for thieves and marauders. The Psalm also has a metaphorical, universal meaning. The journey could be emotional or mental, a struggle to solve a problem, work out a damaged relationship, choose among competing options, or gather courage in the face of unknowns. Anyone in transit, or in transition, can find comfort in this psalm. Ardoth Hassler, Paula Chipman and Janet Replogle (photo right) sang Felix Mendelssohn's *Lift Thine Eyes*.



• **Psalms of Complaint–Psalm 10.** We often hear people wondering the timeless complaint, Why doesn’t God prevent evil and suffering? But the Psalmist isn’t wondering. He wants an answer, and he addresses God directly. He might even be shaking his fist. The case he makes against the wicked is very clear. Martin Luther said of Psalm 10, “There is not, in my judgment, a Psalm which describes the mind, the manners, the works, the words, the feelings, and the fate of the ungodly with so much propriety, fullness, and light, as this Psalm.” Having thoroughly vented, the Psalmist calms down by the end and turns from complaint to persuasion. The choir and congregation sang *Why Stand so Far Away, My God?* TFWS 2180

• **Psalms of Confession–Psalm 51.** This psalm is titled “To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the Prophet went to him, after he had gone into Bathsheba.” You can find the sinful details in Second Samuel. And you can imagine how the Chief Musician might have adjusted his score. King David is the speaker. His confession is harrowing, It goes far beyond the incident that outraged Nathan the Prophet. David catalogues his sins, his moral failings, his vices and shortcomings vividly. And he slips in a graceful complimentary appeal to God after every third breath. It is a very persuasive appeal for mercy. The choir and congregation sang *Forgive Us, Lord* TFWS 2134

• **Psalms of Relationship. Blessed Assurance–Psalm 23.** Psalm 23 has been called the Pearl of the Psalms. Metaphorically, it goes far beyond the image of a shepherd caring for his sheep. It expresses absolute trust and faith in God as an ever present and powerful companion through every life experience. Most of King David’s psalms are complaints, but this one is like a calm pool of cool water, still and deep. It speaks of a personal relationship with God – he is MY shepherd – and confidence in God’s ever-presence “all the days of my life.” God is with him every step of the way, supplying physical needs and providing daily comfort for the spirit. Even when anticipating future danger and suffering, the psalmist knows God will protect him against physical harm and grant his soul the grace to remain strong. Even Death holds no fear for David. At the end of his days, his soul will be safe in the dwelling of God. The choir sang John Rutter's *The Lord is My Shepherd*.

• **Psalms of Thanksgiving–Psalm 65.** Psalm 65 is a song of thanksgiving, probably sung at harvest time. The psalmist speaks for the people to thank God for his answers to prayers, his forgiveness of transgressions, his welcome into the goodness of his house and temple. God’s awesome deeds save and deliver his people. The psalmist then praises the scope of God’s dominion over nature (the mountains, the sea) and human tumult “at earth’s farthest bounds” and even the rising and setting of the sun. Surely this powerful, caring God is due this thanksgiving tribute. The choir sang *Thanks Be to God Forever* by Joseph Haydn.

Shared with deep thanks and appreciation to Carol Malmi for researching and writing the narrative for the service.

Miscellany

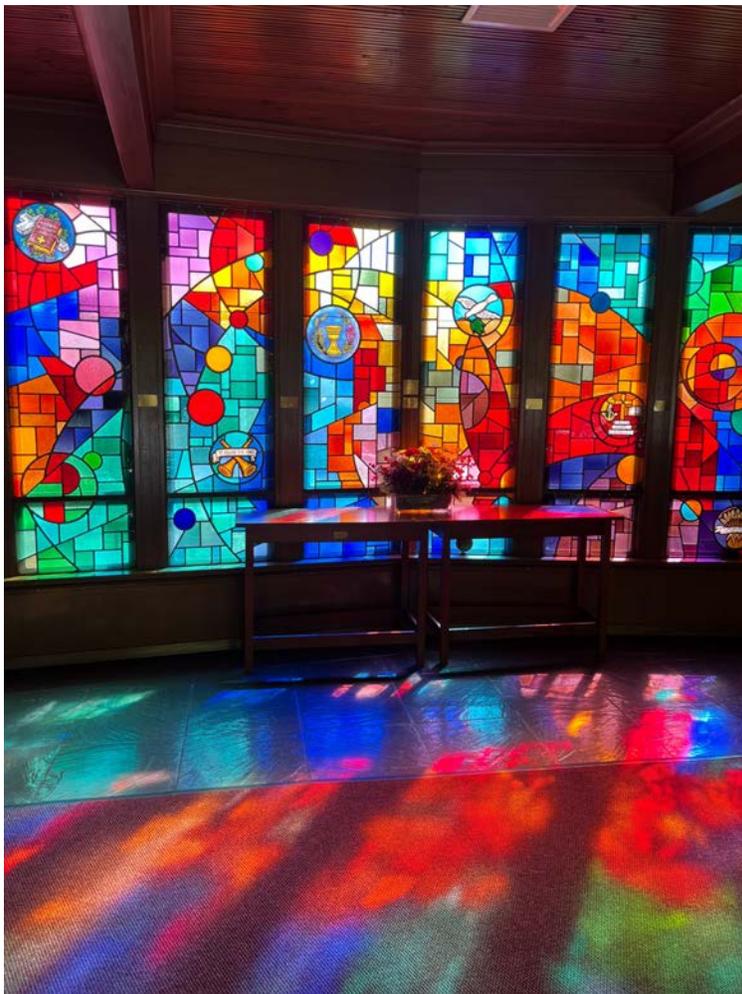
On April 18, 2023, Nancy Kane and I went to Annapolis to visit Rev. Jeanne Klauda, a former NBUMC pastor. We were carrying precious cargo. Nancy gave her a CD of songs sung by former member Owen Nichols (baritone), accompanied by Nancy on the flute, and former choir director Henry Benedict on the organ. In addition, we presented her with a wooden cross necklace and box to put it in that was made by Ed Swanson.

Ed made the cross pendant from a cedar tree that fell on church property during a storm. The top of the box is mahogany and came from an old NBUMC pew; the body of the box is walnut. The top is engraved with, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13

Ed relayed this information in a note to Pastor Jeanne, reminding her that she performed Dawn's and his wedding, and has always been a special part of their lives. - Flora Milans



Rev. Jeanne with the cross and box



Our Narthex all dressed up for Pride Month. Sue Ernst campured this photo early one morning in May.



The Rev. Dr. Gerard Green, our District Superintendent, will retire effective July 1, 2023. He has served as superintendent of the Greater Washington District since 2016.



Happy 88th Birthday to Helen Welton!



Looking for Zoomers! Will train!

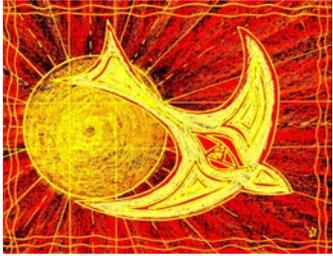
We are looking to build a team of people able to run the worship livestream to Zoom from the Sanctuary on Sundays, especially during these next weeks when our regular tech people are away. The set up is documented and should be pretty easy for someone with a minimal experience with Zoom. We need you to be in church by about 9:20 to get set up. Are you willing? Let us know! - Ken and Ardoth

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Pentecost and Summer 2023

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