

Hilltop Hallelujah

April 2018

Volume 6, Issue 10

From the Pastor's Desk

Getting to know an old friend.

While we were in California this past Christmas I went to worship with my parents, at their church. This is not the church that I grew up attending, so there are very few people in the church who I know, or even recognize. On that Sunday, however, I saw someone getting out of his car with a flower arrangement. He was about my age and looked somewhat familiar. So I asked my parents if they recognized the young man; they said that they did not. He made his way through the courtyard carrying his flower arrangement much quicker than we did, so I didn't have a chance to say anything to him.

We made our way to the elevator, because the entrance to their sanctuary is up a flight of stairs, and while we waited for the door to close the man from the parking lot entered the elevator. He had apparently delivered the flowers, because they were no longer in his hand. Getting a better look at him, I asked if his name was Brian. He said, "Yes." I told him my name, which led to about 10 minutes of visiting and reconnecting. Brian and I graduated high school together. We were on the same Cross Country and Track Team. We were in many of the same classes and had many of the same friends.

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Hilltop Preschool and Daycare

Thank you so much to everyone who supported us in our CHIC pasta fundraiser that was held here on March 2nd! After expenses, we raised \$417.00 to go into our CHIC fund to send 4 students to Tennessee this year for the conference.



Easter service will be Sunday, April 1st beginning at 9:30 am here at Hilltop. Before service there will be a delicious Easter breakfast being served. All are invited!



Important information for children entering kindergarten at Edna C. Stevens in the fall: April 25th and 26th is Kindergarten Registration. If you did not attend the March 20th parent intro night then you will have to call the school to set up an appointment.

April vacation for the school age children will be the week of April 9th. If your child will be attending Hilltop during that vacation week please sign up on the sign-up sheet. Even if your child will not be here that week please indicate so on the sheet so we can plan accordingly.

On Wednesday, April 25th the Cromwell Middle School will be hosting a basketball game between the Harlem Wizards VS. Cromwell All Stars featuring Cromwell's favorite teachers! You can purchase tickets in advance for \$12 for students and \$14.00 for general admission at www.harlemwizards.com. Tickets at the door will be \$15 There will also be pizza, popcorn, nachos and raffles at this event.



Ms. Laura

(Senior Pastor's Message, continued from page 1)

But, unlike me, Brian had kept in touch with them over the past 29 years. I learned a lot about an old friend in those brief ten minutes. Brian graduated from the Naval Academy, which I sort of remembered. He married a classmate of ours, which I think I had heard. He and Cheryl had four kids, which was news to me. His grandmother, a member of my parents' church, was celebrating her 95th birthday, so he had come to worship with and celebrate her. His family did not. His wife leads the children's ministry at their church and she was "off" that Sunday, (the Sunday after Christmas) and wanted to attend their church and worship without the responsibilities of a typical Sunday. I didn't realize that they were active in their faith and church life. Brian and I exchanged cell phone numbers, in the hopes that we would stay in touch (we haven't). It was quite a surprise to run into and get to know an old friend at worship at my parents' church that Sunday.

Each year as we celebrate Easter, it can be kind of like greeting an old friend again. We come with expectations about the sunrise service, the Easter breakfast, the worship service. We know what we want served at Easter dinner, and who should be sitting around the table. We have a clear idea of what the weather should be and what we would like to be able to wear. As we come to Easter with all of our expectations, hopes and traditions, we run the risk of not recognizing our old friend, Jesus.

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, in John 12, the Greeks told Philip, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus!" This Easter I pray that all of us would not miss the opportunity to see our old friend Jesus, so that we might get to know him in a new and life giving way. And be sure to keep in touch!

Pastor Scott

Best Friends are the people who make your problems their problems just so you don't have to go through them alone.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On Sunday, April 8th we will gather as a church family for a Congregational Business Meeting. We will meet after worship, following a brief time for coffee.

We gather as a family to discuss and consider how we want to support Jen Beck and her family during her ongoing, expensive treatment for E.P.P. We will also receive an update on the pastoral transition.



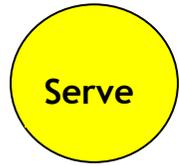
Easter Lilies

Lily bulb production came to the U.S. in the late 1800s, and was centered in both Japan and the southern U.S. after 1898. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Japanese source of bulbs was cut off. As a result, the value of lily bulbs greatly increased and many people who were growing lilies as a hobby went into business. The Easter lily bulbs at that time were called "White Gold," and growers everywhere attempted to cash in on the crop.

Lilies themselves can be found mentioned prominently in the Bible. When Eve left the Garden of Eden she shed real tears of repentance, and from those remorseful tears sprung up lilies. Often called the "white-robed apostles of hope" lilies were also found growing in the Garden of Gethsemane after Christ's crucifixion. White lilies are said to have sprung up where drops of Christ's sweat fell to the ground from the cross.

Traditionally, Easter Lilies are arranged in churches, to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

OPPORTUNITIES TO



Communion: April 1, 2018		Jim & Jenn Hite	READERS	COFFEE TIME
	GREETERS	USHERS		
Apr. 1	Lorrey Hamilton	Brian & Dale Chiffer	Vicki Brown	Easter breakfast
Apr. 8	Robin Jones	Brian & Joan Armet	Brian Chiffer	
Apr. 15	Dale Comstock	Barbara Damon, Sally Huggins	Candace Cunningham	
Apr. 22	Laura Winoski	Nicole & Jordyn Pekarovic	Jim Hite	
Apr. 29	Sally Huggins	Barbara Damon, Laura Winoski	Nicole Pekarovic	

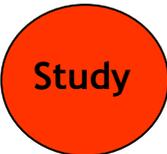
PICK OF THE LITTER

“Pick of the Litter”, POTL, is a community outreach program that was started several years ago. Once a month, May through October, on the third Saturday of the month, volunteers meet at Pierson Park to spruce it up! We provide all the tools for clean-up (but if you have a leaf blower that would be handy!) and refreshments too! POTL will resume in May, still a month away, but not too early to let the church know if you plan to help this year! This is very visible form of *Outreach* and greatly appreciated by the folks that frequent the park!



POTL is scheduled for at 9-11 AM but we often finish in no more than an hour. You know what they say about “many hands” making light the work?

OPPORTUNITIES TO



Sermons Are Online!

If you missed a Sunday sermon, you will be able to hear it on our website by the end of the day on Tuesday following the Sunday you missed; in other words, two days after the worship service.

www.hilltopcovenant.org



TEXT TALK

At Covenant Village on most Wednesday mornings, at 10:30 am, Pastor Scott leads “Text Talk”. People gather at the Stromberg apartment, #104, and spend some time reviewing the Scripture readings for the upcoming week.

In the Sunday bulletin the Scripture readings for the next week are listed so it is easy to read them ahead of time and come to “Text Talk” with your questions about the texts.



APRIL

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 6:15 AM Sunrise Service 8:00 AM Easter Breakfast 8:45 AM Celebration Ringers 9:00 AM Choir warmup 9:30 AM Worship & Holy Communion 12:30 PM CCCF	2	3 5:30 PM MOPS 7:00 PM Leadership Team	4 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 8:00 PM AA AA is non-smoking	5 Pastor Scott at Conference	6 Pastor Scott at Conference	7
8 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Coffee Time 11:00 AM Congregational Meeting 12:15 PM Lunch Bunch 12:30 PM CCCF	9	10	11 10:30 AM Text Talk 5:00 PM Confirmation 8:00 PM AA AA is non-smoking	12	13	14 9:00 AM -3:00 PM Women's Conference Springfield, MA
15 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Coffee Time 11:00 AM Adult Sunday School 12:15 PM Lunch Bunch 12:30 PM CCCF	16	17 5:30 PM MOPS	18 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 10:30 AM Text Talk 5:00 PM Confirmation 8:00 PM AA	19	20	21
22 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Coffee Time 11:00 AM Adult Sunday School 12:15 PM Lunch Bunch 12:30 PM CCCF	23	24	25 10:30 AM Text Talk 5:00 PM Confirmation 8:00 PM AA AA is non-smoking	26 Pastor Scott at Ministerial Meeting	27 East Coast Conference Annual Meeting	28 East Coast Conference Annual Meeting
29 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Coffee Time 11:00 AM Adult Sunday School 12:15 PM Lunch Bunch 12:30 PM CCCF	30	Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held in the Fellowship Room.		Text Talk is held at CVOC, apt. 104, at the Stromberg's		

BIRTHDAYS



ANNIVERSARIES

Tony Agnes	4/2	Lois Durivage	4/8	Barbara Damon & Joe Pessa	April 3
Dale Chiffer	4/3	Denise Bystrek	4/9		
Zoë Beck	4/7	Vicki Brown	4/15	Ray & Marian Kliewer	April 22
Natasha Brown	4/7	Madison White	4/15		

OPPORTUNITIES TO



Coffee Time



Coffee Time follows worship every Sunday and is typically very well attended. *Coffee Time* is always looking for additional hosts/hostesses. All you need to provide is the snack, juice and coffee creamer.

Sign up in the narthex to be a Coffee Time host!

She Wears Many Hats

That's Jennifer Beck - wife, mother of 4, social worker and advocate for people with disabilities and a faithful church member and many of you are aware of Jen's medical condition. It has a long name (abbreviated as E.P.P.), is very rare, is debilitating, and there is no cure. Basically, Jen is allergic to light. When her skin is exposed to the sun or to artificial light, she experiences a painful, burning sensation that escalates the longer she is exposed. Jen is forced to wear protective clothing and stay out of the light – indoors and outdoors. She can be outside for short periods with protective clothing and an umbrella. Artificial light creates more challenges as she is unable to do things the rest of us take for granted. She can't go to the grocery store, go to work, or to her young son's basketball games and in their home only candles are lit. The entire family lives in virtual darkness. As you can imagine, this creates feelings of anxiety, depression, fear and uncertainty for them all.

After worship on Sunday, March 8, a large group gathered to talk about tangible ways we can support the Becks (The group shared a number of ideas and agreed to the following next steps:

1. *We agreed that we want to raise the funds for at least the next treatment for Jen*
2. *The Leadership Team will discuss the many ideas shared, including a special time of prayer and healing for Jen, and convening a congregational meeting – possibly on April 9th to consider the use of church reserve funds to supplement what is raised by the congregation.*

Liturgical Colors

With Easter here our sanctuary colors have changed. The white banners and the white drape on the cross symbolize purity, holiness, respect and reverence. Traditionally the cross is only draped for Lent and Eastertide, the seasons during which our focus is on the cross!

Many of the colors associated with the seasons are closely linked with the experience of Christians in the Northern hemisphere. It is also helpful to realize that colors have different associations across the globe, just as they have had different associations over the course of the church's history. For example, white is the color North American and European Christians typically associate with Christmas and Easter, the color white signifying the purity of Christ, light or joy. In many Eastern cultures, however, white connotes mourning. White is also used for baptism, marriage, dedications and in some traditions for the ordination of ministers. It is also used for funerals and memorials as a symbol of the resurrection.

East Coast Conference Women’s Ministries

Spring Celebration

Saturday, April 14, 2018

9 am-3 pm

Evangelical Covenant Church
Springfield, MA



Registration forms are in the narthex.

- 3. Everyone is encouraged to contribute sacrificially and email their pledge/promise amount to Barbara who will tally them with the hope of reaching \$18,000 that can be announced to the Becks within 3 weeks – to give them time to make arrangements for the next treatment. Barbara Damon’s email address: bdamon3@aol.com; cell phone number: [860-836-8189](tel:860-836-8189)

We will get instructions from the Becks about how best to get the funds to them and details of the advocacy efforts needed.

This was a devotional that Pastor Scott received last August 2017- “. . .The true wonder is that God can be found inside the church, among quirky, flawed and broken people who may have little in common and yet are bound to one another. What an unlikely setting in which to encounter God. But the Christian God seems to like to surprise us by showing up in the most unpromising places, like a Jew from Nazareth and in a motley gathering of people known as church. God throws us together in the church and says, in essence, ‘Here is where you get a chance to learn how to live with other people, to forgive, and even come to see God in one another. After all, if you can find here, you can find God anywhere.’ The church, like the family, is the place where we learn to live with people we are stuck with. And when we stick with those we are stuck with, it is a living reminder of the God who is stuck with us all.”



Hilltop Preschool and Daycare
82 Hicksville Rd
Cromwell, CT 06416

