

2021 LENTEN JOURNEY: GOD HAS AN APP FOR THAT!

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God . . . and it will be given.”

(James 1:5)

In 2010, Apple trademarked the phrase “There’s an app for that” to promote the fact that they had 250,000 apps available. “Apps” is short for “applications,” programs that do something on a smartphone. By 2020, Apple had 3 million applications. The concept of receiving help “from above” did not begin with Apple however. Ancient people also looked “up” for help. They weren’t looking up to what computer geeks call “the cloud,” however, but the One whom they thought was seated above the clouds in heaven: God.

So, while their cosmology was wrong, they were right in the fact that we can look “up” to God for help. That is because God Himself has said that He is willing to help us. In Isaiah 41, for instance, God said *“Fear not . . . I will help you.”* For that reason, the Apostle James wrote that *“if any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God . . . and it will be given.”* That is because God has a solution for every problem we may face, for (as James says) *“every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. [For] He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created.”*

In the flyleaf of the book God Has An App For That, Dudley Rutherford builds on that belief, writing that *“like a fiery torch piercing the blackest of nights, God’s apps shed light on the most difficult dilemmas that confront us. When you are seeking truth, salvation, joy, peace, why search anywhere else? Our Father in heaven knows everything, even the depths of our hearts, and it is His desire that we come to Him alone when we need deliverance from a particular sin, problem or predicament.”*

Beginning on February 17, Ash Wednesday, we began looking at the spiritual apps Rutherford tells us can be found in the book of James. As we continue to move through Lent, we invite you to continue on that journey by reading the following scriptures:

For March 7, read James 2:14-26

For March 14, read James 3:1-12

For March 21, read James 3:13-18

For March 28, read James 4:1-12

For April 1, read James 4:13-17

For April 2, read James 5:1-10

For April 4, read the Easter stories

BLESSINGS MINISTRY

There are many people in need in our community. We are trying to help some of them through what we are now calling our BLESSINGS MINISTRY. This ministry has two components. First, on the first Saturday of each month (March 6 this month) we will distribute food donated to us from Wawa. We are calling this “Bags of Blessings.” Second, on the third Saturday of each month (March 20 this month), we will distribute food donated by our members. We are calling this “Boxes of Blessings.” [While we do have a few business partners who continue to offer us some help in this, most of this part of our blessings ministry now depends on the contributions of our members.

IN PARTICULAR, WE NEED CANNED AND NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS. WE ALSO NEED HELPERS TO PACK BAGS AND BOXES.

Call the church office if you can help us in this important ministry. NOTE: If you cannot donate canned goods because you are not out shopping, or can't make it to church or the church office, you can also add a designated gift to your regular giving; just label it as "Blessings Ministry." That will allow those who can shop to get the items we need to purchase the food items we need.

UPPER ROOM DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

Due to continuing issues with the mail, we have not received the regular size Upper Room booklets for March/April. Fortunately, since many churches are still not back into a fully open time, the Upper Room is continuing to provide access to its devotional book available in a virtual manner.

To download a pdf version, use the following link: <https://www.upperroom.org/standingorderchurches>

Since this publication is copyrighted, they do ask however that you do not republish it in any way (like on Facebook). You can, however, forward the pdf copy to someone by email if you wish to share it with a friend.

NEW SOUND & VIDEO MINISTRY

The electronic streaming equipment has been installed so we can provide a better video broadcast of the service as well as better sound for those calling in by phone. For the new equipment work, need a team to help us run it each Sunday. That work is not difficult. Anyone familiar with computers/electronics can do it. Even teenagers! But we need people to say “I will help! If you will help, contact Jim Glaser, Lynn Pennell, Pastor

Lloyd, or the church office today! We will be setting up a short training event on Saturday, March 6 for those interested. Please contact Lynn, Jim, Pastor Lloyd, or the office to find out the training time.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Daylight Savings Time begins March 14. Turn your clocks AHEAD the night before.

HOLY WEEK ACTIVITIES & SERVICES

Holy Week begins Palm Sunday, March 28. We will also have services Maundy Thursday April 1, Good Friday April 2, and Easter April 4. We typically also have had an Easter Egg Hunt, and a sunrise service on Easter morning. At the present time, however, we do not know what those events may look like because we do not know what health restrictions will still be in place. When we know those details, we announce them.

COMPASSION 2021

This time of the year we usually have our Compassion Sponsorship drive. Due to our present conditions it would be difficult (almost impossible) to get the forms to everyone and then the envelopes. If you have helped sponsor children in the past and would like to continue into the new year, you can. If you haven't contributed before but would like to help these children, you can. To do so, just send your donation in an envelope to Christ United Methodist Church, 501 Wistar Rd. Fairless Hill, PA 19030 marked Compassion (add your name and number) once a month or as often as you are able. Please help us with this new system for our sponsorship. We don't want to let the children down!

2021 GIVING ENVELOPES

We thank everyone who gave generously during 2020. Your gifts enabled us not to end the year with a deficit. As we move into 2021, many of the church's expenses continue (even though some are reduced since we are not in the building as much right now). So we need you to continue to give generously. To help you with that, 2021 offering envelopes are sitting in the lower lobby, just inside the double glass doors. You can pick them up each Sunday, and any time the office is open during the week.

THE GIVING GARDEN

Our church garden is named "The Giving Garden." For two years now, we have been able to produce a bountiful supply of vegetables for those in need. This year, the food will be going to our monthly "Blessing Box" ministry. But to do that, we need help throughout the spring and summer with watering, harvesting, and occasional weeding. It is not very hard work or overly time consuming, and the weeding is minimal, thanks to a thick layer of mulch. It would take you no more than 15 minutes to a half hour to weed, water or harvest. You do not have to be a passionate gardener, and we have gardening tools and gloves that you can use. Maybe you can plan to stop and help either before or after your errands, or on your way home from work? It is not hard to fit into your schedule, if possible. Please contact Karen MacLaren or Becky Teenie in the office if you would be interested in helping out this upcoming season.

SCRIP IS AVAILABLE

We are continuing to sell scrip for **Shoprite** and **Giant** food stores, as we receive 5% back from what you spend. We are also continuing to collect receipts from the 5 Brown owned Shoprite stores in the area (from receipts no older than 5 months), and from Redners as we get 1% back. ***To get credit from Redners, you must swipe your card.*** To buy scrip, contact the church office, or Judy Austin. Receipts can be dropped off on Wednesdays from 10 am to 12 pm.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

In the sacrament of baptism, God initiates a relationship with a child and makes them a member of the faith community. When the child is old enough, they "confirm" that relationship by taking on the commitments of Christian life for themselves. In the United Methodist Church, this process is called 'confirmation,' and can be entered into once a child reaches seventh grade. Confirmation classes typically begin in January, and run for several months, culminating on Pentecost Sunday. If you have a young person in your family who is interested in being confirmed in 2021, please call the church office to let us know. While we have not yet determined how we might run such a class, we do want to offer it if we have youth who are interested in being confirmed as members.

CHURCH WORK DAYS

In order to keep the building and property in good condition so we put our best foot forward for visitors, the Trustees have typically scheduled work days for members to come out and help us keep the building clean and repaired. Since the pandemic began to shut things down last March, we have not been able to safely gather people together to do this however. As we move into 2021, we have a suggestion to address this need, which has not gone away. If you are willing to come up to the church as some point each month, and work on a task that the trustees identify as needing done, contact Ken Evans. There are plenty of things you could do to help us not fall behind on our maintenance needs.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Our 9:00 am contemporary service is available on the church Facebook page. To join us, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/ChristUMCFairlessHills/>

Our 11:00 am traditional service is available by phone. To get the information you need to call in, contact the church office.

ALUMINUM CANS

Help maintain our church property by putting used aluminum cans in a secure bag or packaging, and placing them in the BROWN BOX at the parsonage end of the parking lot.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

If you know of someone in need of the assurance of God's love, please contact Suzanne Generose, Dot Gerhart, Mary Lou Reside, or the church office to get a prayer shawl. Each shawl has been blessed, and comes with the prayers of those who made them.

SAFE SANCTUARY REQUIREMENTS

While we don't know when activities with children and youth may resume, we need to be safe in every way. Our Safe Sanctuary policy requires everyone who works with children and youth to have up to date clearances. Please see if your reports have expired, go online to apply for new reports. The needed sites are:

Criminal Record Check: Pennsylvania State Police

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/TandCVolunteerAction.do>

Criminal Record Check: FBI (if you have lived in PA less than 10 years)

<https://uenroll.identogo.com/> (using code **1KG6ZJ** if you are a volunteer)

Child Abuse History Clearance

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Spring really isn't far away and Daylight Savings Time will be here before we know it!

Pretty soon the doors and windows will be open and the birds will be singing! Keep these pleasant thoughts for the next few weeks as we say goodbye to winter and hopefully, say farewell to Covid – 19. Call a friend from Women's Group just to say "hello". Life is much better when we stay in touch! Maybe we can gather again when the days get a little warmer. God bless us every one.

OUR MARCH BOOK LOOK

Smile. Sigh. Oh No! What? Smile again. My daughter was watching me read the book The Dog Who Was There by Ron Marasco. She said this is what my face was reflecting after only reading 15 pages. She wanted to know what was creating such emotions. Let me tell you a little about it. This book delivers a completely original impression and narration of the most familiar and greatest of all stories. It is told through the eyes of a dog named Barley. Barley remembers himself as a scruffy little pup that has seen his mother killed and he himself narrowly escapes death. His life is destined for something that he is not yet aware

For seven years. Barley lives a quiet life with an aging married couple in the time of Jesus. They are killed, and Barley falls in with a group of outcasts, and with them, he witnesses Jesus, aka "the Kind One," enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The Kind One changes the lives of some of the outcasts and his message of love spreads charity and hope among these outcasts.

I have watched just about every movie made of the Crucifixion. Reading this book was better than watching any of those movies! The details in this book are so vivid that I felt as if I were there with Barley watching the tragedy and horror of the Crucifixion unfold. The innocence and loving nature of a dog watching what happened to Jesus and what He taught is perfect. I could not put this book down. It embodies the love Jesus taught, the positive outlook of a true believer in good, and most of all undying faith in our Lord.

Sometimes you are lucky enough to come across a book that just moves you in special ways. This is one such story. There was a twist at the end that I didn't see coming. (and usually I'm not too surprised). If you love the Lord and also love dogs, don't miss this one. Of course, we have a copy of The Dog Who Was There by Ron Marasco in our CUMC library!