



The Valley Voice

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
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COFFEE AND A STORY

At the March 15th meeting of Valley's Official Board, I recommended to them that Valley resume in-person worship services on Pentecost Sunday, May 23—two months from today.

This news, I hope, will be met with genuine excitement, and I myself am very eager to experience in-person worship at Valley for the very first time since I arrived here last summer to become your minister. But I must also caution that this recommendation is exactly that—a recommendation. It is not a final date, which could be pushed back if public health circumstances so dictate.

May 23 was also not a date chosen out of a hat. In addition to its obvious theological significance to us as the day of Pentecost, I am also confident that based on Valley's vaccination rates so far that we will have at least a supermajority of our active participants fully vaccinated against covid-19 by this time two months from now. I give thanks to God for both the vaccine and our readiness to take it as our best tool of putting down this pandemic that has exacted a terrible price from all of us.

However, I know that not all of us will be vaccinated by then, and I hope that there will be no pressure put on any member of our faith family to return to in-person activities that they are not 100% comfortable with resuming. For this reason, we have every intention of continuing to stream worship live on Zoom for anyone not able, for any reason at all, to attend in-person. We have already tested the technology to do so once and it went extremely well for a trial run.

Additionally, I want everyone to be prepared for our in-person worship to look different than it did a year ago, with significant changes being instituted to our practices of holy communion and the offertory, and all in-person worshipers will be expected to wear masks for the foreseeable future.

In the meanwhile, we have special worship services coming up next week for Holy Week! I am thrilled to be co-convening a Maundy Thursday worship service with my colleague Pastor Kenneth Hill of our sister congregation, Macedonia Christian Church, who will be graciously hosting us on the conference call channel they have been using this past year for their own Sunday worship. If you have been phoning into our Zoom worship services on your own phone, this should be a very similar experience. The details to call in to the worship service are as follows:

Joint Macedonia-Valley Maundy Thursday worship service

6:00 pm Thursday, April 1
Phone number: 978.990.5000
Passcode: 347524

Christ's and yours, Pastor Eric



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

And they cut down branches of palms and waved them at him. Crying, saying, Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Mark 11:9

This being the beginning of the end of the journey to the cross. Dana Stuckenschneider and Peggy Zinser

EASTER OFFERING 2021

April 4 and April 11

The Easter offering reaches 'Deep and Wide' with the limitless power of the risen Christ. This special offering is for the General Units of our church. It works for peace, justice, reconciliation, volunteers who help in the aftermath of disasters, new congregations, leadership development, serving God's people in need, and much, much more. Imagine what God can do when we share our gifts.

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EASTER "SUNRISE" WORSHIP SERVICE

Valley will host our traditional "sunrise" (not quite, it's at 8:00 am!) worship service for Easter 2021 at 8:00 the morning of Easter Sunday, April 4! We will gather, masked and distanced, on the roundabout lawn around the cross for a simple but meaningful worship service before adjourning to the walking trail for an Easter egg hunt for children! Festivities will be complete with plenty of time for everyone to return home for our usual 10:30 am Zoom worship, and all are welcome. Owing to the ongoing covid-19 circumstances, we regret that we will not host the traditional breakfast that usually follows our early morning Easter worship service. We hope to bring that tradition back in 2022!

SAVE THE DATE for VALLEY'S 2021 EARTH DAY EVENT

Saturday, April 24, 1 PM

The Evangelism Committee is hosting an Outdoor Event to highlight God's Creation and to mingle with our neighbors. There will be a talk on Our Local Birds, by Dr. Richard Ryel, a bird expert. We will have refreshments and more. Seating will be available. We hope to see all of you, and please invite your friends and neighbors.

BUILDING VALLEY MACEDONIA PART THREE – CONCLUSION

In 1995, to enhance our shared experiences, Reverend Carl Flock led a worship entitled, "The Dream Lives On", inviting us to evaluate our current activities and dream for the future of BVM. In connection with the 1995 Week of Reconciliation, Reverend Robert Montgomery from Greater Birmingham Ministries and Reverend James Meyers from the United Church of Christ led us in a workshop designed to look at some of the implications and history of being black and of being white. In 1997, Robert Montgomery and Mary Jones, both of Greater Birmingham Ministries, led a workshop entitled, "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow", where we were, where we are, and where we hope to be. On one occasion, we viewed the movie, "Four Little Girls" followed by a discussion of our reactions to it.

We have shared many meaningful events: picnics, parties, holiday meals, Christmas book wrapping at a local bookstore, bake sales, tee-shirt sales, Christmas Caroling at various hospitals. And the list goes on!

We hope you will join us when the pandemic is over and we can be together again. Our Mission Statement, approved by both Macedonia and Valley Christian Churches says it all.

BUILDING VALLEY MACEDONIA MISSION STATEMENT
We, Building Valley Macedonia, are a Christian voice, based on the Gospel of Christ's Love, seeking to dispel fear and misunderstanding by embracing diversity and building trust.

Together, we encourage freedom of participation and promote open communication.

Together we challenge people to go beyond race, culture, and congregation, and to nurture one another in peace, harmony and love, the way Christ relates with us.

A ministry of:

Macedonia Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Valley Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- Lola Kiser

LIFE IN THE VALLEY

- Please pray for our faithful member Carol Speed as she recovers from her first surgery and awaits her second surgery for heart problems.
- Please pray for our faithful member Peggi Zinser as she recovers from a fall and must remain immobilized for five more weeks. She said she is a better, though still can't do much for herself.
- Margaret Cox's precious friend Sherry O'Kelly has passed away from cancer. Please pray for her husband Tim and all her family and friends including Margaret. Along with her sorrow, Margaret is joyful that Sherry is face to face with her Savior.
- Peggy Hiller's son, George Hiller, III, had a stent put in his heart in St. Vincent's. He is at home and recovering well. Thank you for your prayers.
- We ask you all to pray for all the people who were affected by the storms and tornados that came through last week, especially those that lost their homes.
- Please pray for Virginia Spidle, friend of Jamie Ligon who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer.
- Pastor Eric is grateful and joyful for Pie Day because that was the anniversary of his first date with Carrie.
- John and Cindy Nevile are joyful that they visited with Daniel recently and also that they received their COVID vaccines. John had a laser procedure in his left eye to repair a retinal tear and he is doing well.
- Ed Guindon wants to thank everyone who attended the March Valley workday, especially John Gregory's grandson, Charlie. He and Ginny are grateful that Brad and Rebecca recently visited and enjoyed their company. Ed also wanted prayers for his daughter Jessica and her husband in Colorado during the terrible snowstorms. It was the worst one since they have been there in six years.
- Linda Reeves said her sister in Ethiopia, Eden, had her baby at 42 weeks and 2 days. It's a boy and he is absolutely beautiful and the family is thrilled.
- Ted Stuckenschneider had a joy when listening to an interview of Lynda Bird Johnson on the Today Show. She was talking about when her mother, Lady Bird Johnson was asked why she liked to plant windflowers. Her mother said, because it brings so much joy and joy is a component of life.
- Please call or email the office with your prayer concerns, joys or reports to include in "Life In The Valley".