

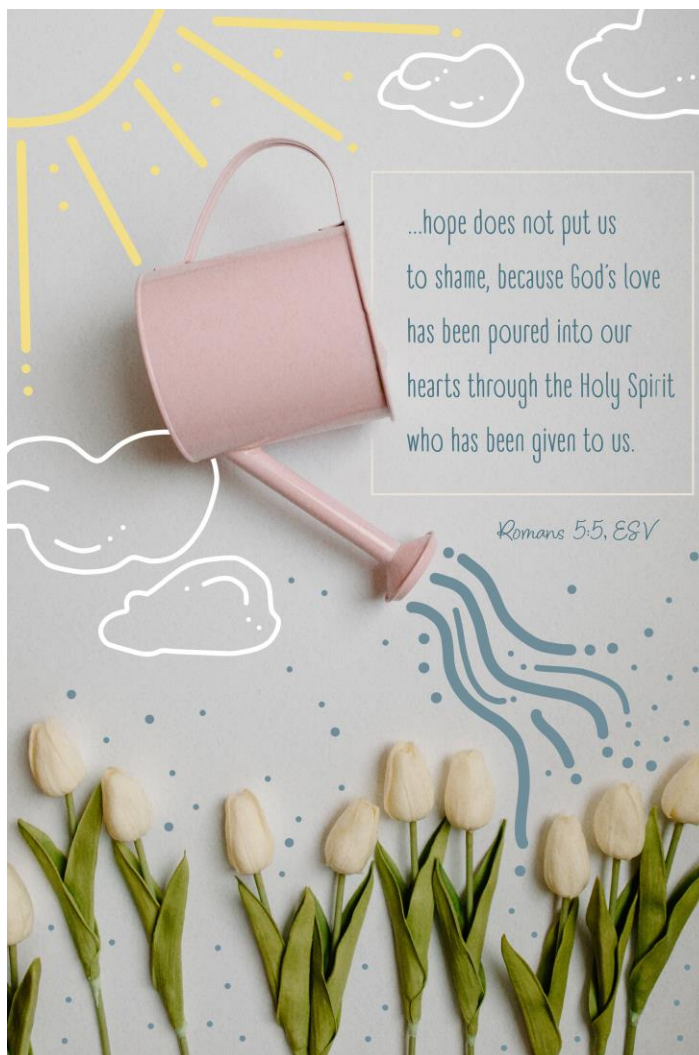
Opus Christi Works of Christ

St. James United Methodist Church
646 Daniel Webster Highway
Merrimack, NH 03054
Rev. Annie Baker-Streevy, Pastor
Robin House, Office Administrator

Contact Us:

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Building Christian Community Within and Beyond the Church



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Pastor's Message



We have been following the wandering heart of Peter, one of Jesus's disciples, throughout this season of Lent. In Peter's story we see that his path of faith and following Christ is not a direct, straight, and/or narrow path, but one that winds, has ups and downs, and is filled with many obstacles. The same is true for our own walks of faith. There are moments where we feel close to God, and others where God feels very distant. There are moments when we have been very involved in the life of the church, and others when we have just wanted to be an anonymous worship-attender.

Even as a Pastor, my own faith journey has been, is, and will be a wandering path. I go through times where my heart is on fire with the Holy Spirit, and times where I am just going through the motions both as a Pastor and as a Christian. And yet, what I have learned (and continue to need reminding) is that God is *always* faithful no matter how far off I wander. One tool that has helped me when I'm not "feeling it" is to create a life timeline. I simply draw a straight, horizontal line on a piece of paper and put the significant events of my life along the line. Then, I draw another line over the straight line of events to represent when I felt God's presence and when I did not. It usually looks like a very curvy and bumpy line, but what I have noticed every time that I did this practice is that God always comes back to me; or rather I always come back to God.

I invite you to draw your own wandering heart timeline of your life. Mark the important moments (good or bad or even in between), and then draw a curvy line over it that shows your relationship with God. Then look at the big picture rather than just the isolated events. Is there a pattern you notice? What tends to draw you closer to God when you feel further away? Try your best to do this without judgment, but instead simply notice the reality of the path you are on. How might you "bind your wandering heart to God" as the song Come Thou Fount suggests? How can the church support you in this?

As always my "office door" is open for conversation surrounding your faith journey and I would love to chat with you about what you discover in person or virtually. You can typically find me in the Pastor's Office at St. James on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9 and 12. Make sure to check in with me to ensure I will be there as I sometimes have meetings that come up. I can also meet on other days and times by appointment. You can reach me at 978-364-2245 (text or call) or Rev.AnnieBS@gmail.com. I pray your Lenten journey continues to lead you toward Christ.

Pastor Annie

WORSHIP



Jim Winger

Please pray for comfort to Terry Winger, Marge Galvin and their family. Marge's son-in-law, Terry's husband, Jim Winger lost his battle with stomach cancer in early February.

Harriet Neptune

Also send prayers to the Lovejoy family. Pastor Sharon's mother, Harriet Neptune passed away February 5. Her celebration of life was held at Green Street UMC in Augusta, ME on Saturday, February 10. Pastor Sharon expressed how Harriet had fond memories of the friends she had here at St. James.

Rosemary Audette

We share Dave Audette's sorrow in the loss of his beloved wife Rosemary who passed away on February 26 in Vero Beach, FL after a courageous 4-year battle with cancer. A celebration of life will be announced at a later date.



Daylight Savings Time begins March 10.
Set your clocks ahead one hour.

Easter Flowers

The Merrimack Flower Shop will have their final price list for Easter flowers during the first week of March. Please watch your email for details.





Holy Week Schedule

Wednesdays Mar 6- 27	6:30 pm	Taizé meditative/contemplative worship service. In-person and online.
Sunday, March 24	9:30 am	Palm Sunday worship and Sunday school
Thursday, March 28	6:00 pm	Maundy Thursday "Dinner Church" worship in Fellowship Hall with a pot luck meal and Communion. Sign up for pot-luck on bulletin board.
Friday, March 29	11am- 1pm & 6 – 8 pm	Good Friday self-guided worship through prayer stations in Sanctuary
Sunday, March 31	6:00 am 9:30 am	Sunrise Easter Service at Watson Park with Merrimack Faith Communities Easter Sunday church service




Friendship Iftar

TURKISH CULTURAL CENTER NEW HAMPSHIRE

**INTERFAITH
DIALOGUE
&
FRIENDSHIP
GATHERING**

RSVP

"The heart is cooking a pot of food for you. Be patient until it is cooked."
"Rumi"

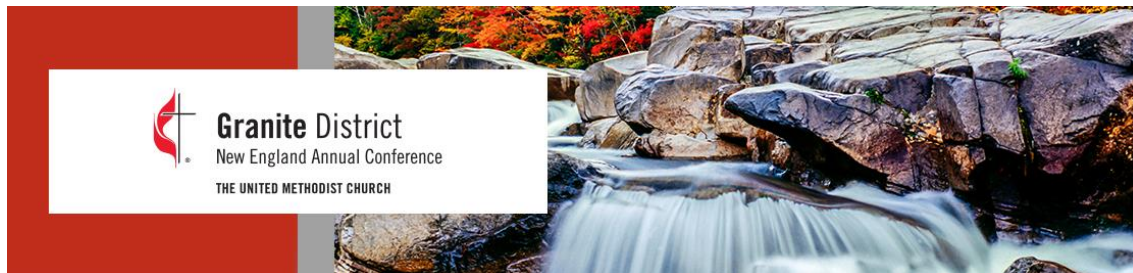
 March 23, 2024

 6.30 PM

 Bedford Presbyterian Church
4 Church Rd. Bedford, NH 03110

info@teenh.org

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Bishop Peggy A. Johnson and members of the General/Jurisdictional Conference Delegations will visit each district to share information as we begin this important year in the life of the New England Conference and The UMC.


Lay and clergy are urged to attend one of these events to learn about proposed plans for the New England Conference and for the denomination. The General/Jurisdictional Conference delegation will offer its report.

The Granite District event will be held at 1 pm on Saturday March 2 at First UMC, 18 Wesley Way, Gilford, NH 03249 and will be followed by a light reception. All events will be in person, but there will be virtual options. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held exclusively online via Zoom. Information about such plans will be disseminated closer to the time.

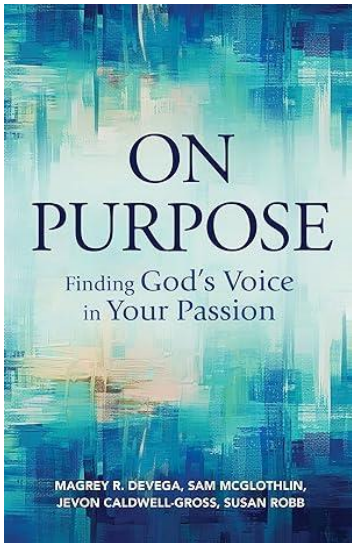
?? ? Bible Quiz ? ?

The "Christ hymn" in Philippians 2 proclaims that after Jesus humbled himself even to the point of death, God exalted him, and that eventually all will worship him. What two body parts are named as part of that worship?

A. knee; tongue
B. hands; feet
C. arms; lips
D. heart; mouth



Answer: A (See Philippians 2:10-11.)



Spring Book Study- On Purpose: Finding God's Voice in Your Passion

Discussion on five Wednesdays April 10, 17, 24, May 1 and 8 at 7 pm via Zoom

Be part of something more. We are hungry for a sense of purpose, direction, and calling in our lives. That's as basic an ingredient to the human experience as they come. We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We want to participate in something that has eternal merit and lasting impact. We do not want to live a shallow, hollow existence. We yearn for deeper meaning, for deeper purpose within our lives. We want to be more than we are.

In *On Purpose: Finding God's Voice in Your Passion*, authors Magrey deVega, Sam McGlothlin, Jevon Caldwell-Gross, and Susan Robb help us see God's purpose for our lives, how to open ourselves to God's voice, and how to take the first or next step to follow God's call. Reading this book and exploring life choices alongside

others, individuals will learn how to channel their passions, hear God's voice, and live the life they were meant to live.

Pre-order books for \$14. Contact the church office or sign up on the bulletin board in the office hallway so we can send you the Zoom invitation for the discussion.

Looking Ahead to VBS 2024 July 19 and 20, 2024

This year's VBS theme is Camp Firelight: A Summer Camp Adventure with God.

Camp Firelight invites children on an exciting summer adventure where they learn to trust God no matter what situation life brings, know God is always with them, and feel confident in sharing the good news of God's love through Jesus Christ. As campers experience Bible stories through music, storytelling, games, arts & crafts, science,

and snacks, they learn ways to connect with and trust God as well as connect with others at VBS, church, home and every area of their lives.



Volunteers needed. Help kids put their trust in God. See Robin House if you can help.

NEWS FROM COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

Church Work Day - Saturday March 2

Submitted by Lesley Fallu

Join the Trustees as we gather from 9:00 – 12:00 to get the church ready for Easter. We have projects for everyone, no experience needed. We will be doing paint touch-ups around the building, cleaning common areas, replacing ceiling tiles, and organizing storage areas. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the church office, or email Dick Wallace (dickwallace22@comcast.net) if you are able to join us.

Church Council Highlights

Submitted by Rev. Annie Baker-Streevy

- Church Council had a Leadership Retreat on February 10th held at Parker Village community clubhouse and hosted by Pastor Annie. We spent time building our spiritual relationship with God and each other guided by Psalm 51: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.”
- During the Leadership Retreat we discerned and voted on three ministry goals for 2024:
 - Better Understand the Needs of our Community
 - Increase Accessibility in the Church
 - Strengthen our Online Presence.
- At our February Church Council meeting we split into sub-committees based on the three ministry goals in order to make action plans and task lists for each goal. Each sub-committee will solidify their tasks, delegate tasks to others in the congregation, and remain accountable to the Church Council to ensure tasks are being done for each goal.
- Church Council will host Quarterly All-Church Meetings to keep the congregation updated on these goals as well as other important updates. The first meeting will be Sunday April 14th after worship and will also be livestreamed.

FELLOWSHIP

Monthly Breakfast

The St. James United Methodist Men (UMM) would love to have you join them for breakfast on the first Saturday of every month. RSVP to George Fisher at fishergf@comcast.net so he knows how many people to expect.

Date: Saturday, March 2

Time: 8:00 am

Place: Mary Ann’s Diner, 1 Craftsman Lane, Amherst

Corned Beef and Cabbage Supper

Saturday March 16 from 5:00 – 6:30 pm.

Volunteers needed for setting up, kitchen prep, serving and clean-up. See Eric Carlson if you are available to help.

Tickets cost \$15.00 for adults and \$10 for children under 12. Tickets are available during coffee hour after church or call the church office at 603-424-7459 to make reservations.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Red Cross Blood Drive



Here at St. James Church Friday, March 29, 2024 from 1:30 to 6:30 pm.

Maximize your blood donation. Help more patients. If you are an eligible type O, B- or A- donor, consider making a Power Red donation. Red blood cells are the most commonly transfused blood component.

Call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: SAINTJAMES to schedule an appointment

Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter Run & Walk for Food & Shelter Sunday, April 7, 2024

Registration is now open.

There will be a USATF Certified 10K course, a USATF Certified 5K course, a 3K Walk and a fun Kids Sprint for children age 7 and younger.

TIMES of EVENTS: Kid's Sprint: 12:30PM
 Race Chair Duo 10K & 5K: 1:00PM
 10K and 5K Races: 1:03PM
 3K Walkers: 1:05PM

LOCATION: Outside the Muldoon Fitness Center on the campus of Rivier University, 420 South Main Street, Nashua

Register at <https://nsks.org/run-and-walk-for-food-and-shelter/>.



LIVE UNITED



United Way
of Greater Nashua

United Way Coffee and Causes

United Way's next "Coffee and Causes" talk for older adults will take place from 10:30 am to noon on Friday, March 1 at Wadleigh Memorial Library in Milford. The topic will be "Exploring Transit in Greater Nashua".

The Mobility Manager for Greater Nashua Regional Planning Commission will speak about how to get around without a car and you'll also hear about Souhegan Valley

Rides, which offers transportation to low-income individuals in that community. Even if you don't need help with transportation yourself, you may know or meet someone who does. Word-of-mouth is one of the biggest ways people find out about services in our area. We'd love your help spreading the word!

You can register for the event at the link below or contact United Way at info@unitedwaynashua.org or (603)882-4011. Register here: <http://tinyurl.com/Mar-Coffee>



How You Can Help Young People in NH Experiencing Homelessness

Youth homelessness is a rapidly growing concern in New Hampshire. It is estimated that approximately 15,000 young people in the Granite State will experience some form of homelessness this year. At least 70 percent of these people will not have the option to return to a safe and stable home.

SleepOut is a night spent outside each March to expand our collective consciousness about youth homelessness in New Hampshire and to raise funds to address critical needs that will help transform lives. SleepOut is Waypoint's premiere event that directly supports the state's only overnight youth shelter in Manchester and youth drop-in centers in Concord and Rochester.

March 29 will mark the 10th anniversary of SleepOut. In-person SleepOuts will take place in Manchester, Concord, and Rochester and individuals can virtually sleep out at other locations of their choice.

Help us bring youth closer to home. Here is how you can help:

- Become a corporate sponsor
- Volunteer to be a "sleeper"
- Organize a team of sleepers
- Donate to support a sleeper or SleepOut

Visit www.waypointnh.org/happenings/sleepout for more information



Wanakee Summer Camp Registration is Open

Summer at Wanakee includes dozens of overnight summer programs for children of all grades and ages over 7 weeks. There is truly something for every camper at Wanakee. Wanakee's camper fees operate on a tiered "pay what's right for you" plan. A week at Wanakee starts at 50% less than the national average and

scholarships are always available. They are again offering #CountdownToCamp and multi-week discounts. Visit the Wanakee website www.wanakee.org to view their summer schedule and online registration form.

Meet Wanakee's New Executive Director

November 26, 2023

Hello, everyone! I am Evan McElreath, and I am beyond thrilled to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of Wanakee. Let me tell you a little bit about myself and why I am so excited to be joining this incredible community.

First and foremost, I am a Provisional Elder in the New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. I am looking forward to expanding the connection of our church through Camp and Retreat Ministries. My journey in faith and my love for serving others have led me to this amazing opportunity at Wanakee.



I had the privilege of attending Appalachian State University where I pursued my Bachelor of Arts in religious studies, with a minor in non-profit management. It was during my time there that I truly discovered my passion for making a positive impact on the lives of others. Continuing my education, I attended the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where I earned my Master of Divinity. This experience deepened my understanding of spirituality and further ignited my desire to create meaningful connections within communities.

My involvement with Camp and Retreat Ministries has had a profound impact on my life. I am proud to hold a camp director's certification from the American Camp Association, and I have had the privilege of working for, and attending camps, in North Carolina, New Hampshire, and Virginia. These experiences have shaped me into the person I am today, and I carry the transformative power of these environments with me wherever I go.

Currently, I am serving as the Pastor of Faith UMC in South Burlington, Vermont, and I have previously served in Connecticut and Massachusetts. These diverse communities have taught me invaluable lessons about leadership, compassion, and the importance of building inclusive and welcoming spaces.

Before relocating to New England, while living in Georgia, I had the honor of serving as the Director of Youth and Mission for Rome First UMC. Additionally, I had the privilege of serving as the Chaplain to the Atlanta Beltline. Through these roles, I have developed a deep commitment to adolescent development while creating communities that offer radical hospitality and acceptance.

On a more personal note, my wife Katie and I are originally from North Carolina. We come to camp with our adorable cat, June. Katie, having worked at a summer camp herself, is excited for this new adventure, while June is excited for us to have more boxes to explore as we pack.

Joining Wanakee as the Executive Director is a dream come true for me. I am bursting with enthusiasm and passion for the transformative experiences that await us! Together, we will embrace growth, foster connection, and create a future filled with unforgettable memories.

I cannot express how excited I am to embark on this journey with all of you at Wanakee! Let's create something truly extraordinary together!

March 2024



New England Conference
The United Methodist Church

Connected is a publication of the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church. This monthly insert is designed put Conference news directly into the hands of our local church members.

Find more at www.neumc.org.



Annual Conference 2024 Registration opens this month

Registration for the 2024 New England Annual Conference session, June 20-22, will open in early March.

The hybrid session will be via Zoom and at the DoubleTree Boston North Shore in Danvers, MA. The session will be live streamed.

Visit our AC webpage at www.neumc.org/acsessions or scan the QR code for all the latest news and info.



Bishop Johnson urges us to speak out to end visa backlog

Throughout the United States, many religious workers, including some clergy in the New England Conference, and migrant children are having to live in limbo due to a visa backlog.

This has and is creating great harm to the security of those subject to the backlog.



Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

In a [Nov. 16, 2023, message to the Conference](#), Bishop Peggy Johnson urged United Methodists in New England to support for the *Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act*, which would exempt special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS youth) from EB-4 visa caps and release visas for religious workers supporting vital work in our community.

We encourage you to write to your representatives and ask them to support this much-needed legislation. Without measures to address this

backlog, some of our own pastors may lose their path to citizenship and may even be forced to leave the United States.

Let's raise our voices and be heard on this vital issue of justice.

You can join the effort to support of religious workers and migrant

children by writing your representatives asking them to vote for this legislation.

You can write your own letter or use one of the templates posted on our website.

Use the QR code to access the templates and a link to find contact information for your federal representative.



GET ALL THE NEAC NEWS AND INFO ON OUR WEBSITE:
www.neumc.org

Northeastern Jurisdictional events come to NE

Two jurisdictional events will be coming to New England over the next couple of months. Registration for both events is open now.

NEJ United Women in Faith

In April, the Northeastern Jurisdiction (NEJ) United Women in Faith will gather in Providence, RI, for their quadrennial event.

Come feel the energy and joy as hundreds of faith-filled sisters GET TOGETHER! in person to worship, to renew, to celebrate, and to make an impact!

Join us April 18-21, 2024 as we convene the Northeastern Jurisdiction United Women in Faith! Keynote speaker will be Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She is President/General Secretary of the National Council of Churches. Find more on both events at www.neumc.org/events



NEJ Commission on Archives & History

From May 13-16, 2024, the NEJ Commission on Archives and History will meet at Rolling Ridge, the NEAC retreat and conference center in N. Andover, MA.

The New England Conference Commission on Archives and History looks forward to welcoming you to this meeting of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History.

Come join with siblings in Christ for three days to learn more about New England Methodist pioneers and their innovations (preview below). This will be a time of connecting, not only with our Methodist roots, but with one another, as together with draw strength from the Communion of Saints and are refreshed and inspired to minister to our present world.



'Ableism' topic of Pre-Lenten Gathering

In case you missed it

Bishop Peggy Johnson's Pre-Lenten Gathering focused on ableism with special guests Dr. Lisa and Rev. Justin Hancock. Like racism and sexism, ableism is a bias — in this case against people with disabilities. There is much we in the church can do to improve our outreach and inclusion of people with disabilities.

The webinar, which was sponsored by the Conference Commission on Religion and Race and Conference Disabilities Committee, includes a short devotional by Bishop Johnson followed by the presentation by Rev. and Dr. Hancock, who took questions from participants.

The Hancocks are co-founders of The Julian Way, an organization focused on empowerment and discipleship with, for, and by persons with disabilities.

Justin is the Lead Instigator of The Julian Way and spends his days engaging with the members of The Julian Way through one-on-one discipleship and advocating with the church and the wider community for the integration and participation of disabled persons.

Lisa is the Director of Worship Arts for Discipleship Ministries, an agency of The United Methodist Church where she writes liturgy and creates resources to help local churches engage in and make disciples through worship.

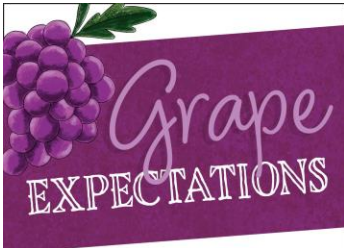
Find the recording and more at www.neumc.org/news



Native American Ministries Sunday is April 14, 2024, but you are encouraged to celebrate on a day that works best for your church. For more info and worship resources visit resourceumc.org, click the churchwide tab and go to UMGiving then click Special Sundays.

Let's Connect

Do you have a story to share? A feature idea? A question to ask? Contact Beth DiCocco, Conference Director of Communications, at communicate@neumc.org or (978) 682-8055 ext. 150



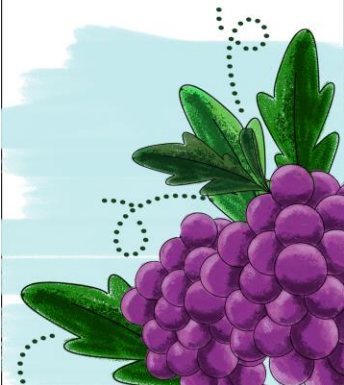
Try this chilly new
take on a healthy snack.

What you need:

- 30 grapes, washed and dried
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 4 graham crackers, crushed
- Toothpicks
- Parchment paper

What you do:

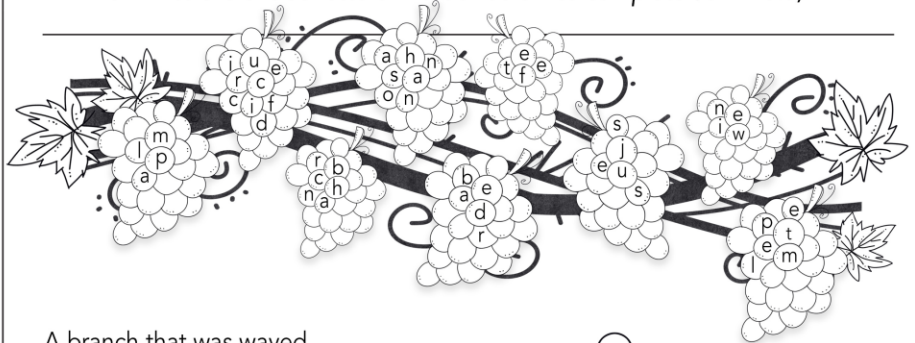
1. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, arrange grapes in a single layer. Freeze for two hours.
2. Insert a toothpick into each grape.
3. Dip each grape into the yogurt, coating half of it.
4. Roll each dipped grape in the crushed crackers. Place back on the parchment.
5. Freeze for two more hours. Enjoy!



A LASTING LESSON

Before dying on the cross, Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson.

Directions: Use the clues to unscramble the letters in each grape cluster. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete John 15:5, NIV.



A branch that was waved

___○___

How Jesus was put to death

___○___

A stick attached to the vine

___○___

People shouted this to Jesus

___○___

Jesus washed these



___○___

This was broken and eaten

___○___

The Messiah

___○___



A drink from grapes

___○___

Jesus drove the money changers from here

___○___

"I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear _____;
apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5, NIV

Answer: palm, crucified, branch, hosanna, feet, wine, temple; much fruit



MARCH 2024

Thank you to the Finance Committee for providing refreshments following worship during the month of March.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 9:30am Worship 5:30pm NH Table Tennis Club	26	27 8:00am Fit & Strong 9:00am Clothes Closet 9:30am Food Pantry 6:30pm Trustees Meeting	28 6:30pm Taize Service	29 8:00am Fit & Strong	1 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	2 8:00am Monthly Breakfast 9:00am Church Work Day 1:00pm Bishop's Day on the District
3 9:30am Worship 5:30pm NH Table Tennis Club	4	5 8:00am Fit & Strong 9:00am Clothes Closet 9:30am Food Pantry 7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting	6 6:30pm Taize Service	7 8:00am Fit & Strong	8 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	9
10 Daylight-Saving Time Begins 9:30am Worship 5:30pm NH Table Tennis Club	11	12 8:00am Fit & Strong 9:00am Clothes Closet 9:30am Food Pantry 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	13 6:30pm Taize Service	14 8:00am Fit & Strong	15 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	16 5:00pm Corned Beef and Cabbage Supper
17 9:30am Worship 5:30pm NH Table Tennis Club	18	19 8:00am Fit & Strong 9:00am Clothes Closet 9:30am Food Pantry 6:30pm SPRC Meeting	20 6:30pm Taize Service	21 8:00am Fit & Strong 1:00pm Dress sewing group	22 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	23
24 Palm Sunday 9:30am Worship 5:30pm NH Table Tennis Club	25	26 8:00am Fit & Strong 9:00am Clothes Closet 9:30am Food Pantry 6:30pm Trustees Meeting	27 6:30pm Taize Service	28 Maundy Thursday 8:00am Fit & Strong 6:00pm Maundy Thursday Worship	29 Good Friday 11:00am Good Friday Stations 1:30pm Blood Drive 6:00pm Good Friday Stations	30
31 Easter Sunday 6:00am Sunrise Easter Service 9:30am Worship 5:30pm NH Table Tennis Club	1	2 8:00am Fit & Strong 9:00am Clothes Closet 9:30am Food Pantry 7:00pm Finance Committee Meeting	3	4 8:00am Fit & Strong	5 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	6 8:00am Monthly Breakfast