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# FISHERS ISLAND UNION CHAPEL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

821 CRESCENT AVENUE, P.O. BOX 192

FISHERS ISLAND, NEW YORK 06390

[fichapel1@gmail.com](mailto:fichapel1@gmail.com)

[www.fiunionchapel.org](http://www.fiunionchapel.org)



*"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."*

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## CHAPEL HAPPENINGS SPRING AHEAD 2021

Dear Friends in faith,

In case you haven't noticed, the world can be a rough place. We often face personal challenges and grow discouraged over the many issues our world has yet to solve: persistent racism, damage to our environment, all manner of conflicts between nations. Add in the losses and loneliness of a pandemic, and we can understand this statement attributed to writer Barbara Johnson: "We are an Easter people living in a Good Friday world."

More than ever, this past year has shown us that we need to be an "Easter people" not just on April 4 but 365 days per year. Problems persist and hope is needed every day. It is easy to put our life on hold until the pandemic passes, or until some other event takes place. It is understandable to withdraw socially and emotionally as problems play out in our nation and world. But to be an Easter people is to have the assurance that we are empowered by God to be victors over the evil forces of the world. Reflecting on the meaning of the resurrection for the Christian, the apostle Paul writes cogently in Romans 8 that the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you (Romans 8:11). Imagine!

The cross of Christ we reflect upon this time of year represents the evil power of the world doing its worst. The first "Good Friday" when Jesus was crucified was a terrible thing to witness, but it is the gateway to seeing that brutality and injustice are no match for the power of God revealed in the resurrection and the invitation to eternal life.

Here at Union Chapel we have been journeying through this Good Friday world with you. We have been dealing with the harshness of this pandemic, but remaining in fellowship as we live out our faith. We gather for worship via Zoom every Sunday (stay tuned for the date in-person worship resumes!). Our congregation has rejoiced in new births, special birthdays, graduations, triumphs in hard times. As an Easter people we have praised the God of steadfast love and prayed for healing and hope in the individual and world issues before us. And lately we have used this time out of the building to envision some facility upgrades at Union Chapel that will help us stay the welcoming place for our community and visitors that we want to be. We remain a people of faith.

Weekly worship on Sundays is, in fact, intended to remind us of the first Easter when Christ rose from the grave, and the "immeasurable greatness of God's power for us who believe" (Ephesians 1:19). Worshipping with other Christians is a way to say "no" to Good Friday and "yes" to Easter hope. Our private devotions, our willing service to God are all ways we assert our identity when problems press in.

One of my favorite Easter hymns is by William M. James and it begins with the words *Easter people, raise your voices*. Is it possible for us to raise our voice today, this summer, next November, in confident praise to God? In a call to hope? In a cry of solidarity with the suffering? It comes to mind that perhaps the Easter hymn "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" is something Charles Wesley wrote not just for Easter Sunday but for any time Christians need a reminder that the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in us, 365 days a year. Christ the Lord is Risen *today. This moment, any month, any season.* This day, forever. Amen!

Yours in Christ, Candy

## UNION CHAPEL CONTACTS

Church office: (631) 788-7898

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[www.fiunionchapel.org](http://www.fiunionchapel.org)

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[candy@fiunionchapel.org](mailto:candy@fiunionchapel.org)

Trustee Chairperson: Louisa Evans

Administrative Assistant:

Diane Dexter

Candy's cell: 203-293-5470

## CHURCH BUSINESS HOURS

Monday, Thursday, Friday:

10 – 1 pm

Tuesday, 10-noon

Closed on Wednesday

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## Friends near....and far!

In December we said farewell to two beloved long-time members, Laura Edwards and Barb Hoch. Laura moved to a senior residence in North Carolina, and Dr. Barb is now living with her sister and her family in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Drop them a line; they would love to hear from you!

Swift Creek Health Center at

The Templeton

Laura Edwards, #1317

221 Brightmore Drive

Cary, NC 27518

Dr. Barbara Hoch

c/o Susanae Glovacki

7 Madison Circle

Greenfield, MA 01301

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## LIGHT THE STEEPLE MINISTRY

A soft light has been installed inside our “steeple” to be lit from sunset to midnight. The Trustees invite you to “Light the Steeple” in honor of or in memory of a loved one by donating \$25 to Union Chapel. Just submit the form below, and we will light the steeple on the appropriate week and print this remembrance in our newsletter.

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## LIGHT THE STEEPLE FORM

In Honor of    OR    In Memory of  
(circle one)

Given by

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For the week of

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Make check payable to and mail this form to: Fishers Island Union Chapel,  
P.O. Box 192, Fishers Island, NY 06390

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*See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not  
perceive it? I am making a way  
in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.*

- Isaiah 43:19

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# AVA THE AVOCADO

*If you're out of mustard seeds....*

If anyone knows me well, they have to be aware that I love plants. I have them all over the house taking in carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen. Can't help it, it is the scientist in me. Unfortunately, with the "aging thing", I can't maintain my outside gardens so I do my "gardening thing" indoors. I love the challenge of finding a broken leaf or carefully cutting one off and trying to root it. My favorite successes are growing African violets and avocado plants. I have way too many African violets – does anyone want a free one?

Several years ago, I rooted and planted an avocado pit. It was very happy sitting in the corner window in my kitchen behind the kitchen sink, loving the south east exposure to sun light and reminding me to water it. It kept growing so I was afraid I would either have to get rid of it or cut a hole in my kitchen ceiling. I elected the former. I could always buy some new avocados, make some guacamole dip and start to root a new one. At that time my friend Mary Pankiewicz was packing up to head for Florida and stopped by to say goodbye. I asked her in jest if she wanted the avocado plant to take south because I was ready to toss it up in the woods to get rid of it. Mary and I sometimes do silly things so we joked about her trying to fit it in the car, yet she decided to take it. In the end, we decided to give her a name, Ava. So began her journey.

After a two-day trip with Ava and Peanut, they arrived and Mary and Dave Denison planted Ava in their back yard. Avocados love the warm, sunny, moist climate plus she received water from an automatic watering system all summer long when Mary and Dave were back on the Island. The photo is a recent snapshot, (Dave holding their cat Peanut) in front of Ava today. We are trying to

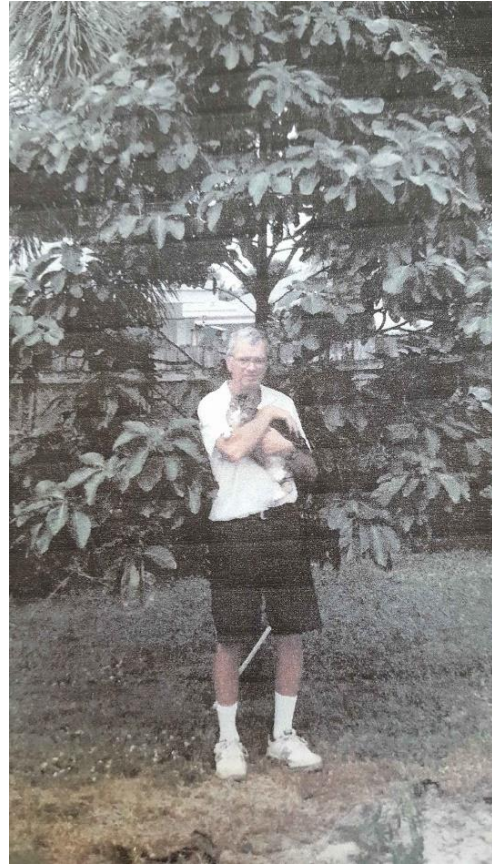


figure out how tall she is today – probably about 25' tall. No avocados yet, but that is to be expected. At least she provides a little shade during the heat of the day.

I can't help but think of a recent Scripture reading I read in Upper Room. It is 1 Corinthians 3:6 – "I planted, Apollo watered but God gave the growth." To change that around a bit, Mary, Dave and I planted, we watered but God gave the growth. I guess the life lesson we can take from this is if we have patience and provide a little love and care in all we do, God will take over.

- Diane Dawson Dexter

P.S. Ava may be getting a relative – I just started a new avocado and it already is about a foot tall.

## **GET READY FOR THE SEASON!**

### **GOOD USED GOLF BALLS**

We will continue to sell gently used golf balls in the church office. Call (631-788-7898) or email Union Chapel at [fichapel1@gmail.com](mailto:fichapel1@gmail.com) to set up a time to look them over and pick them up. Please have cash or a check made payable to **FI Union Chapel Thrift Shop**. Thank you!



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## ***Fishers Island Union Chapel mourns the loss of***

### ***Canio Antonio Toglia***

***(July 8, 1928 – January 14, 2021)***

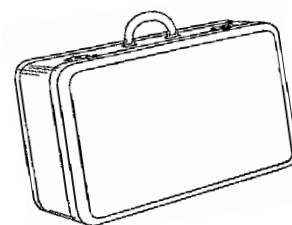
*We are grateful for Canio's life, his faithfulness, and all our friend brought to our community. He will be missed.*

In lieu of flowers the family suggests donations in Canio's honor be made to Union Chapel. Checks may be made out to Fishers Island Union Chapel with "Canio Toglia" in the memo line, and mailed to PO Box 192, Fishers Island, NY 06390.

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## **Candy's Sabbatical Report**

Last year at this time I was scurrying back from sabbatical to be with the church as we entered lockdown due to the pandemic. The priorities on Island at the time prevented me from sharing about my sabbatical, and so for those interested -- and haven't heard - I am happy to report that I had an excellent time of refreshment while away. From January to mid-March in 2020, I served in the Long Island office of Congressman Lee Zeldin. My role was non-partisan, designed to enhance communication between houses of worship in the district and the Congressman, and establish relationships for Mr. Zeldin to build upon as he wished. My role included building a network of clergy across religions (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim), and learning of their views on social issues. I then compiled their comments anonymously into reports submitted to the District Director and Chief of Staff.



Along the way I attended other events run by the Congressman or attended as his representative, sometimes offering an opening prayer. I am so grateful to the church for this wonderful opportunity. They graciously agreed to support me in later completing the two weeks I missed due to COVID-19 by attending some seminary classes on line this past fall. Happy to share more upon request!



## A Prayer for Easter

God of glory,  
Fill your church with the power  
That flows from Christ's resurrection,  
That, in the midst of the sinful world,  
It may signal the beginning of a renewed  
humanity,  
Risen to new life with Christ,  
Who lives and reigns with you and the  
Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever. Amen.

-From the Presbyterian (PCUSA)  
Book of Common Worship



*Our courtyard in spring 2020.*

## Easter Sunday (April 4) Services at Fishers Island Union Chapel

Plans are underway for an in-person sunrise service at Dock Beach as well as our 10 am traditional service on Zoom. All are welcome as we joyfully celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the invitation to new life in him.

Masks will be required at the sunrise service, and social distancing outside your cohort. Exact time will be announced on [www.fishersisland.net](http://www.fishersisland.net) and [www.fiunionchapel.org](http://www.fiunionchapel.org).

**Stay tuned for information on our return to in-person worship at Union Chapel.**

# Janelle's Garden

## *Growing fruits and vegetables is a spiritual practice*



Just a couple of years ago, Janelle Senator, who lives on West Harbor near Dock Beach, created in her front sun-drenched yard an organic garden where she grows a variety of fruits and vegetables to share with family, friends, and her community. “I’ll leave some at your door,” I hear her call to a passer by, referring to some freshly picked herbs or cucumbers.

Janelle’s community-mindedness is wonderful enough. But what you might not know is that Janelle finds gardening a spiritual practice, one that she has fallen in love with and has become more than a hobby for her. Growing plants has put her in touch with the marvels of God’s creation through the beauty, diversity, and resilience of the plants in her garden. “I love learning about all the different varieties and what they need,” Janelle says. “I am always looking up stuff on the internet and talking with other gardeners.”

Janelle considers her time spent planting and tending plants an opportunity for meditation. If one could see the garden from an aerial view, you would notice that the plants are arranged in the shape of a woman kneeling in prayer. In addition, as Janelle kneels at the base of plants to weed and trim, she plays audio of scripture readings in her earbuds.



My many conversations with her have helped me rediscover the deep meaning of Jesus use of metaphors from nature in his teachings. The ways of nature surely have things to teach us. Janelle’s tender care demonstrates the joy of stewardship, the assignment God gives us in Genesis when it comes to taking care of the earth. Stewardship, as Janelle so beautifully understands, is not just a task, but a spiritual practice which offers joy once we embrace it.



# Our Beautiful Bulb Garden-to-be

When the pandemic made an in-person Easter service impossible last year, we had to rethink how we could maintain our tradition of donations for Easter flowers in the sanctuary. Thanks to David Burnham and Race Rock, we decided to accept donations for daffodil bulbs and create a new swath of bulbs at the church.

Here is Ryan about a month ago getting the bulbs in the ground. The new bed will wrap around the property at the intersection of Montauk and Crescent, complementing the daffs that spring up so joyfully near our parking lot every spring.



Thank you to all who have contributed to our new spring garden! Here's hoping that the view of dancing heads of daffodils will provide a moment of "sanctuary" for drivers rounding our corner!



**Nancy Mulford Murphy**

*We join our Island community in honoring the life of Nancy Murphy  
who died peacefully on January 28, 2021.*



## THRIFT SHOP NEWS

Hopefully we will be able to have a grand opening soon. In the meantime, please drop off gently used merchandise, leaving it in the bin (no electronics, please). We also welcome your egg cartons for our golf ball project.



## Our Weekly Welcome to Day Workers has Become an Interchurch Outreach

At the ferry around 7:30 am on Tuesday mornings (Wednesdays also, depending on Tuesday's weather) you will find a group of people armed with baskets of freshly baked muffins and a hot thermos of coffee in the ferry waiting room. This is our outreach to our day workers, the people who come and go each day but are an important part of Island life. We offer each a muffin as they come off the boat, and coffee is also available, although most of the workers have their own with them. The ferrymen who have a minute after loading cars, however, dart in and pour a cup. "We look forward to Tuesdays now," they say. So do we!

When school is in session, students also pour off the boat and they too are offered a muffin and sometimes go for a granola bar.

There are many "thank you's" but what keeps us going is the joy of offering a welcome as Christ would have us do, bridging divides, offering a moment of care. It's amazing to us how muffins also bring a smile to the faces of those who enjoy the leftovers: drivers in line, Post Office frequenters, and more.

Our servers and bakers are from Our Lady of Grace, St. John's, and Union Chapel., but one needn't attend church to join in. Thank you to all who make this happen faithfully each week --- even in the windy, cold winter mornings. We wish to make true the welcome we offer as a UCC church every Sunday: "Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

- Rev. Candace Whitman

