



Beginner's Mind

The first vehicle Sandy drove with a manual transmission was a 65 foot-long, 18-wheeler that weighed almost 20 tons when it was empty. The transmission had 10 speeds forward and two in reverse.

She was the only person in our truck-driving class with no previous experience with a manual shift. When the instructor heard this he said, "At least one of you will learn how to shift the right way." He went on to explain that the rest of us had a lot to un-learn before we could learn how to shift a truck. He was right. Double-clutching and matching road speed to gear selection is not the same as working your way through the gears on a modern synchro-mesh transmission.

In addition to the frustration of unlearning an ingrained practice, those of us who already "knew all about shifting gears" also had to deal with the embarrassment of grinding gears and feeling utterly incompetent. The transmission in our student truck took a beating and so did our pride. Sandy, on the other hand, was 'grabbing gears' like a pro in no time.

Sandy had the advantage of what Buddhists call "the beginner's mind." Beginners have openness to experience. They haven't made their minds up about everything in advance. They know that they don't know and so they are ready to learn. They don't resist instruction. They have a certain humility about their relative lack of competency.

Lent originated as a season in which adult converts to the Christian faith were prepared for baptism. They spent time in prayer. They were instructed in the basic outlines of scripture, the creeds, the prayers, the mystery of becoming one with the Body of Christ. Initially, these catechumens (learners) were the only ones who did anything special in the season before Easter.

Eventually though, all the members of the church were urged to use the Lenten season to also devote themselves to prayer and to contemplate anew the meaning of their faith. They were invited to approach the life of faith with a beginner's mind, to come to fresh awareness of God's grace and to make fresh commitments to following Christ.

Giving up sweets or wine or some other indulgence, doesn't really touch at the heart of the season. This Lent, strive to give up mindless familiarity with your faith. Take the time to hear the scriptures again as though for the first time. Let yourself experience the strangeness and wonder of the familiar prayers that we so casually offer.



Prayer: Holy One, let me hear the good news again so I can hear the "new" part. Amen.





Jamie, Adam & Ozzy Butcher; Jane Duewiger; Melvin & Ona Hamann;
John & Karen Kaitanowski; Jewell McFarland; Mike Meier; Frank
Norwood; Richard Platt and family; Helen & Marvin Wilson

If you would like to share prayer request to be posted here, please contact Michelle in the church office or Pastor Lynn. We also have a text prayer chain of dedicated volunteers ready to pray for you and loved ones at any time. Please text/call Michelle (245-1692) or Pastor Lynn (866-3085) to send out your prayer request.

Karen Cuddihy (3/5); Michelle Kemp (3/5); Janet Kromer (3/5);
Reta Rauker (3/5); Karen Kaitanowski (3/10); Donna Lee Melberg
(3/11); Tim Baker (3/17); Ryan Goetz (3/22)



Change of Address

Bill & Devon Asboth: 5290 Woodrich Court, Hamburg, NY 14075
Joe & Karen Schneider: 4505 Parker Road, Hamburg, NY 14075



Contact the office if you'd like a copy of the most recent church directory.

THANK YOU



To Pastor Lynn and St. Matthew's church members,
We appreciate all the cards, phone calls, and best wishes we received this past holiday season. We are well and doing fine. We pray that all our church friends are doing good too.

Thank you for your concerns. We miss seeing everyone.
Shirley & Ken Haberman

In-Person Worship Services resume March 7, 2021

St. Matthew's will re-open for worship with the safety protocols still in place as follows:

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| Sign-in required | Children may attend and be seated with families |
| Facemasks required at all times | No coffee hour |
| No congregational singing | No nursery |
| Seating area will be marked out; limited seating available | No Sunday School for children |
| Restrooms in the church building are available; | Disinfecting stations will be available |
| single occupancy only; each person must disinfect after use. | |

Pre-recorded worship services will continue via our Facebook page and YouTube channel. The online services will be available for viewing at any time after they premiere.

Office Hours: Michelle is in the office Monday-Friday 9am-2pm; 716-649-1532

St. Matthew's depends entirely upon the generosity of its members to maintain our day-to-day operations. We thank you for your continued support. You can send your donations in the mail, use your bank's bill paying utilities, or donate securely online at stmattsucc.org/donate.



SENIOR WISHES FUNDRAISER

Senior Wishes is planning a Virtual Sips, Suds and Sweets Fundraiser in April (our big fundraiser for the year). I am on the Senior Wishes Volunteer Committee and I am helping get some basket items for the fundraiser. I know at this time it is very difficult for everyone but if you have a business or know someone that has a business that would like to donate a basket item, I would be happy to follow up with them.

Thank you for your help,
LaDonna Painter (715-7310)

"The world is full of kind people, if you can't find one, Be One."

Author: Unknown



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable globally and locally.

Stay Updated with the latest in UCC Disaster, Refugee and Sustainable Development Ministries, read current stories on their website or visit their Facebook page: One Great Hour of Sharing UCC (global as well as local support including how we are helping people in Texas after the unprecedented winter storm).



If you'd like to give to this special offering, envelopes (and flyer) will be available on the table in the Narthex when we return to in-person worship, or mail your check to the church, put notation "OGHS" in the memo. The suggested offering collection date is March 14, 2021, but you may give anytime.

Just-Washed Freshness

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)

Our dog Roxie offends the olfactory senses. (She stinks!) I've never known a dog who needed more frequent bathing. Her 'fresh from the doggy spa' smell lasts about 2 days. Within 2 weeks, unless you have a really bad head cold, you could find her in the dark wearing a blindfold.

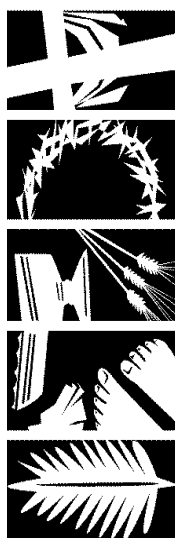
Of course, it's not just dogs who get dirty and smelly between cleanings; we all do. Hygiene is not a 'one and done' enterprise. There's always more cleaning to do. Bodies, houses, cars, offices – you name it – they all need regular cleaning. My dad had a commercial janitorial business and I used to work for him. One thing is for sure; janitors may not be well paid, but they have secure jobs. Things always need cleaning.

My earliest understanding of baptism was that it was a special kind of bath that washed away sin. That's not an uncommon view of baptism. But I used to wonder if baptism washes away sin, why do we only do it once? I get sinful faster than Roxie gets smelly. If baptism washes away sins, I need to turn our bathroom shower into a font.

The waters of baptism are not so much a ritual bathtub as a liturgical symbol of a watery grave. In baptism we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. An old life is left behind and a new life begins – one that is in union with Christ. In this way, the waters of baptism are like the water that breaks when a baby is born.

Even with a shiny new life, we still get dirty, we mess up, break things and hurt people. We need to regularly turn away from our sins, ask for forgiveness and make things right wherever we can, but our mistakes and our failings don't undo the new life God has given us. Martin Luther said that baptism only takes a moment to perform, but a lifetime to fulfill.

Prayer: Merciful Savior, you have raised me from death to new life. Forgive me when I turn back towards the ways of death. Today give me grace to live like someone risen from the dead. Amen.



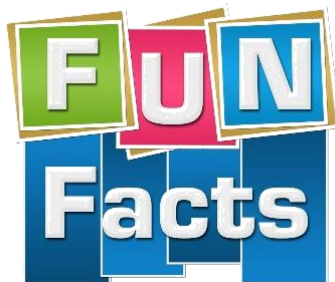
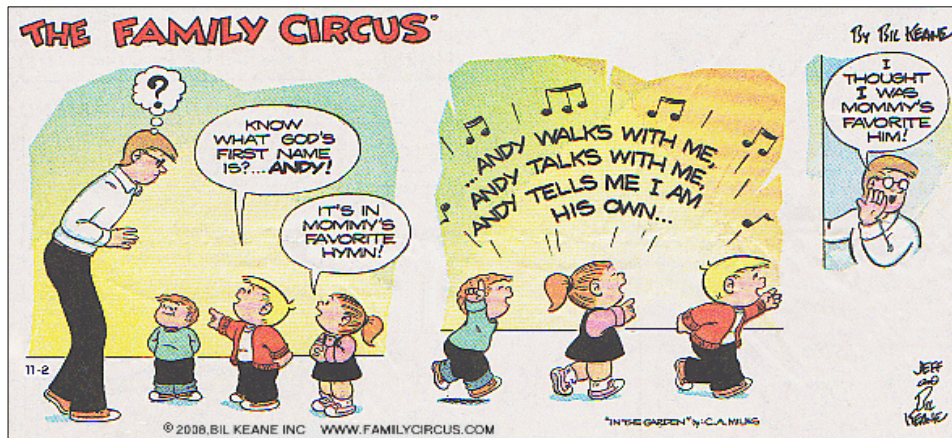
Refocus for LENT

- Give up complaining — focus on gratitude.
- Give up harsh judgments — think kind thoughts.
- Give up worry — trust God to provide.
- Give up discouragement — be full of hope.
- Give up bitterness — turn to forgiveness.
- Give up hatred — return good for evil.
- Give up anger — be more patient.
- Give up pettiness — become mature.
- Give up jealousy — pray for trust.
- Give up gossiping — control your tongue.
- Give up sin — turn to virtue.
- Give up giving up — persevere.

—Author unknown



Holy Week Schedule will be announced.



The "G" on the Green Bay Packers helmet actually stands for greatness not Green Bay.



If you store your sour cream and cottage cheese upside down, it'll last longer. This is because keeping them upside down creates a vacuum in the container, slowing the growth of the bacteria that causes them to spoil.



When Lewis and Clark ventured into the Northwest, they found that Native Americans would smoke their blueberries to preserve them for winter.

Polar Bears aren't white, they're just glowing. Polar bears may be known as being so white they can hide in snow but the truth is they aren't white at all. Their skin is black and the hairs in their fur are hollow and clear. So why do they look white? Light hits their fur and is trapped inside the hollow part of the hair, causing a reaction called "luminescence". In addition, salt particles stick to the bears' fur and act as light scattering particles.



St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

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Hamburg, NY 14075

www.stmattsucc.org



For everything there is a **season**, and a time **for every** matter under heaven.

-Ecclesiastes 3:1