



The Masthead

The Newsletter of Mayflower United Church of Christ

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Office Hours: 9:00-1:00 Monday-Friday

May 2025



THURSDAY, MAY 1
The Worship Center will be open from
10:00 am to 12:00 pm for personal
prayer and meditation.

“He ascended into heaven...”



During his earthly ministry, Jesus could be physically present in only one place at any given time. “Only those could speak to him who came to where he was,” explained Archbishop William

Temple. “If he was in Galilee, people could not find him in Jerusalem; if he was in Jerusalem, they could not find him in Galilee” (from *Readings in St. John’s Gospel*).

Spiritually speaking, Christ’s Ascension means he is with us wherever we find ourselves. Christ desires to be present with us everywhere we go. His presence is universal. He is here now. “Believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16, NRSV) — that is what the Ascension affirms.

Reflecting on resurrection

In *Rest Your Dreams on a Little Twig*, poet Joyce Rupp finds in spring flowers the proclamation of the gospel: “we who have died / are alive today.” In another poem in the same volume, she writes: “A green shoot grows / out of an old tree stump, / announcing to the world / that power lies within death.”

As you move about outdoors these springtime days in the northern hemisphere, where do you see nature testifying to resurrection? Where is evidence that what seemed dead — bare branches, dry grass, inactive seeds — was not in fact the final word? What encourages you to believe in renewal, second chances, life that blossoms from death? In what ways are you, who had

died, alive today? Part of your life that felt like an old stump might be sprouting green shoots after all!

Special dates

National Day of Prayer, *May 1, 2025*

Mother's Day, *May 11, 2025*

Armed Forces Day, *May 17, 2025*

Victoria Day (Canada), *May 19, 2025*

Memorial Day, *May 26, 2025*

Ascension Day, *May 29, 2025*

A prayer for Mother's Day



Dear Lord, thank you for the blessings of children and families. Help us rely on you for guidance, patience and even-temperedness throughout our days.

We pray that our children will love you, worship you and serve you with their God-given gifts. Grant us the wisdom to know how to influence them to live godly lives. Prevent us from provoking our children to anger and from manipulating or nagging them.

Fill our households with abiding love and respect. And help us all be united in

purpose to do your will. In the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

Death is not the end

Loren Eiseley, an anthropologist who died in 1977, requested this epitaph for his wife and himself: "We loved the earth but could not stay." No one can stay, of course. We're all moving toward that final day when "the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed and the fever of life is over, and our work is done" (The Book of Common Prayer).

On Memorial Day, we remember people who have perished in war, making the ultimate sacrifice to protect others. May God hasten the day when humans can solve disputes peacefully. We also remember loved ones whose stay on earth is over.

A memorial stone at Ohio's College of Wooster, placed by a class years ago, reads: "United in time / Divided in time / To be reunited / When time shall be no more." Christians believe that death does not end all. When our earthly life is over, we have the promise of eternal life — and joyful reunions — in heaven.

Powered by God

God made us: invented us as a [person] invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else.

Now God designed the human machine to run on himself. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a

happiness and peace apart from himself, because it is not there.
—C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Puzzle!

Unscramble the names of these biblical mothers. Look up the verse if you need help. Then use the letters on the numbered blanks to complete the message below.

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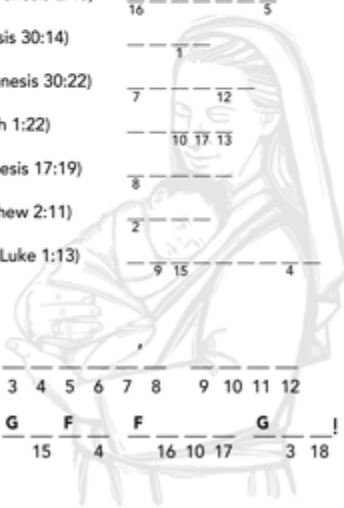
VEE (Genesis 3:20)	6 11
NNAHAH (1 Samuel 1:20)	14
RBAHEOD (Judges 5:7)	18 3
KREEHAB (Genesis 27:5)	16 5
EHLA (Genesis 30:14)	1
CLEHRA (Genesis 30:22)	7 12
MOIAN (Ruth 1:22)	10 17 13
RAAHS (Genesis 17:19)	8
AMYR (Matthew 2:11)	2
ZEBLEHATI (Luke 1:13)	9 15 4

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

13 8 14 15 4 16 10 17 3 18

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Answers: Eve, Hannah, Deborah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Naomi, Sarah, Mary, Elizabeth.
A mother's love is a gift from God.

Loving my “enemies”

In polarized times, when people view huge concepts such as justice, government policy and care for neighbors differently, how do we follow Jesus’ command to love our enemies? I prefer the word opponents, but our Lord’s instructions still stand.

In the Bible, “love” doesn’t mean liking someone; it means caring for them, treating them kindly. I find The Message paraphrase of Luke 6:27-36 helpful: “Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst,” Jesus says about one’s enemies. So, when I contact

government leaders to express my opinions, I address them with respect, whether I agree with them or not. When I encounter a neighbor whose views oppose mine, I ask myself what I would want them to do for me, whether help with an errand or be friendly. Then, as The Message puts it, I “grab the initiative and do it for them.”

And this, which might be the hardest: Amid tough times, Jesus says, “Respond with the supple moves of prayer.” It’s human nature to pray that God change our enemies’ or opponents’ minds. But it’s more Christlike to pray for their health, their families and whatever God desires for them, not what I want. Can I do this? With God’s help, yes.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

Seizing holy opportunities

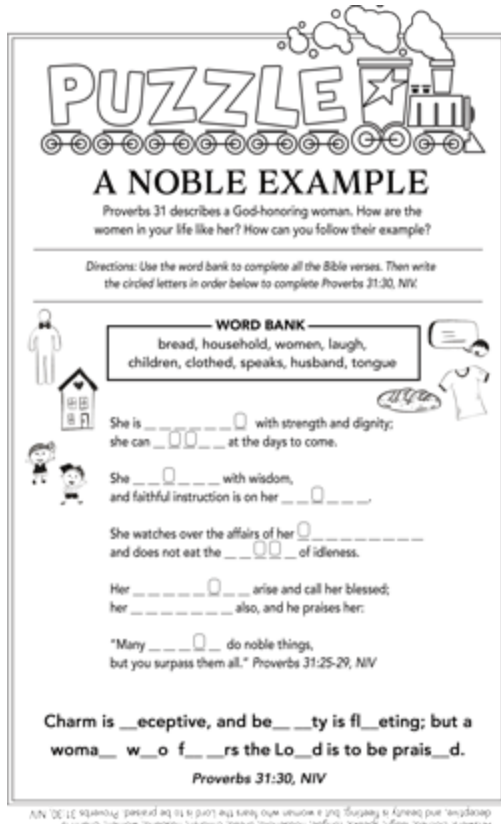
In Holy Moments, Matthew Kelly discusses the world's need for more small (but sometimes large) instances of people caring for others, cultivating joy, encouragement and love instead of anger, envy, fear. Kelly defines a Holy Moment as "a single moment in which you open yourself to God. ... You set aside personal preference and self-interest, and for one moment you do what you prayerfully believe God is telling you to do."

This may mean mowing the lawn for a neighbor with a broken leg, praising a child on his artwork, buying a surprise snack for someone having a bad day, working extra shifts for a coworker with cancer so she can receive her full salary while out sick, paying for the next car's drive-thru order. Anyone can create a Holy Moment, because you don't need special skills, position or wealth. "If you want to see miracles, make yourself available to God," Kelly suggests. He adds that God has a track record of collaborating with "the most unlikely people to make amazing things happen, and now He wants to collaborate with you." When we're open to God's leading, holy opportunities abound. And we will experience as much joy as the ones to whom we show care.

Christian symbol



ALPHA MU OMEGA — The Greek letters that begin the words *yesterday*, *today* and *forever* remind us of Jesus' constant presence with us personally and his eternal nature that transcends time as we know it. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8, NIV). Dozens of psalms and other Bible passages also proclaim that the Lord's "steadfast love endures forever" (for example, Psalm 100:5, NRSV). What reassurance when life seems tough and fleeting!



Rushing past the warning signs

Being in a hurry rarely ends well. Case in point: Up against a deadline to pay for my son's youth trip, I once paid hundreds of dollars to the wrong church! I went online, typed in our church's name and clicked on the first search result. The website colors were different, and I didn't recognize any faces. "That's odd," I thought. "They must have redesigned the website." Yet, I continued.

I clicked on the giving page and noticed the church accepted credit cards. This was different too, but I welcomed the change. After the large sum was processed, I received an emailed receipt. Only then did I realize the church had a similar name but was in another state. My heart sank. I was concerned about the hundreds of dollars but also troubled with my own

foolishness. I had ignored and rushed past clear warning signs.

I immediately emailed the church office, alerting them about my mistake. When I called the next business day, the bookkeeper graciously refunded my payment.

The next time you're in a rush, remember this wisdom from Proverbs 19:2. "If you want to do something but you do not how know to do it, that is dangerous! If you hurry to do it, you will get into trouble" (*EasyEnglish Bible*).

—Janna Firestone

You're going places!

Commencement marks the beginning of a new stage of life, with graduates heading off to discover opportunities and face challenges. *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* — a Dr. Seuss book that's now a popular graduation gift — whimsically explores life's ups and downs, twists and turns.

Young adults will face excitement and slumps, fun and loneliness. They'll feel a sense of purpose as well as confusion and even fear. "There are some [things], down the road between hither and yon, that can scare you so much you won't want to go on," writes Dr. Seuss.

In the storybook, the life-traveler's sheer determination propels him beyond difficulties. But God's children don't need to journey alone. Our heavenly Father walks beside us on every winding path and around every corner. Life cannot take us anywhere God hasn't been first. Graduates — and all Christians — can trust in the promise of Joshua 1:9 (NRSV): "Be strong and courageous ... for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."



**Calling all moms,
grandmas, great-grandmas,
aunts, mentors, and
nurturers!**

Mayflower will be honoring you on
Sunday, May 11 during our
refreshment time with a special
brunch, made even more special with
our men serving!

Join us for our service at 9:30 and
plan on staying for brunch.

Teatime treat

Make these sweet sandwiches
for a Mother's Day tea party.

What you need:

- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 Tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 6-10 strawberries, washed and sliced
- 6 slices of white bread
- Cellophane
- Adult help

What you do:

1. With an electric mixer, whip the cream cheese in a bowl until fluffy.
2. Add cream, powdered sugar, and lemon juice. Continue whipping on high speed until mixture is stiff.
3. On each slice of bread, spread a layer of the mixture. Then arrange some sliced strawberries on top.
4. Place the sandwiches together, with filling on the inside.
5. Wrap tightly in cellophane. Chill for two hours so the filling sets.
6. Trim off crusts with a serrated knife. Cut sandwiches in squares or triangles. Serve and enjoy!

The long-awaited ride home

In September 2024, NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams headed to space for what was supposed to be an eight-day mission. Due to technical problems, that expedition exceeded nine months. Despite the unexpected delay, Williams said the astronauts didn't feel stuck or abandoned. Instead, they viewed the extended voyage as an opportunity to do more research.

Almost 30 years ago, another astronaut also faced setbacks with her return trip to earth. Shannon Lucid had to stay at the Russian Mir space station six months because of hurricanes and various mechanical problems. Before catching a ride back home on the space shuttle *Atlantis*, Lucid said, "You can rest assured I am not going to be on the wrong side of the hatch when they close it."

Followers of Jesus need not worry about being on the "wrong side of the hatch" someday. Although the gate to heaven is narrow, Jesus himself is the way and leads us safely home.

—adapted from an illustration by Craig Brian Larson



We recently received a heartfelt thank you from the Shelter residents & staff showing their appreciation for the wonderful welcome baskets we continue to create for each of the women & families entering the Shelter.

Thank you to everyone that have been a part of this important outreach. 💜

Thank you for your recent in-kind donation to The Shelter. Your gift impacts the lives of the survivors, providing them with essential items and services during their time of need. Whether it's clothing, furniture, household supplies, or children's toys, your generosity ensures our participants have access to the basic necessities that many of us often take for granted.

Beyond the tangible goods themselves, your donation sends a powerful message of support and solidarity to survivors of domestic violence. It lets them know that they are not alone, and that there are caring individuals like you who are standing with them on their journey to healing and empowerment.

A new fun activity is being planned for making “Home-Made Baskets” that will be filled with bathroom hand towels and kitchen towels for each woman at the Shelter. These will be thoughtful gifts for each resident to receive as they make their plans to transition to their new safe home as they leave the Shelter. The basket will be a home made gift filled with loving support that is a special start in their new safe place.

How can you help to be part of this activity?

A basket class is taking place on May 6 from 1pm-3pm in our fellowship hall.

Basket kits are being prepared for each person who signs up.

Cost is \$10 to help cover the basket materials.

2. Sponsor a basket: if you are unable to make the basket class date or prefer not to weave a basket yourself, you can sponsor someone to make it for you 😊 by donating \$10.

3. Help fill a basket: once the basket weaving is completed we will have at



Just a reminder for helping Grace Place: Calling all members to please help with donations for the Food

least 20 “Bread Baskets” to fill up with our theme of bathroom hand towels, washcloths, kitchen towels, and a variety of items to compliment the theme. Some suggestions: pot holders, kitchen utensils like whisk, tongs, baster, spices, scented candles, foam soap dispensers, etc., helpful items for kitchen and bathroom.

If you are able to join us May 6th please confirm with Janice by signing up, or email, text or give me a call ASAP so we can make sure to have enough basket kits prepared. 484-894-3006

scojan@earthlink.net

What to bring on May 6:

Scissors
pencil
straight edge screwdriver
small towel
\$10

Thank you for all your love and support of this important mission activity that benefits the Shelter for Abused Women and Children ❤️

Pantry. Especially friends leaving soon to go north, cleaning out their pantries, cabinets and refrigerators, “Think Grace Place and the many families needing help to put food on the table” ❤️ 🙏 Thank you for your generous and loving support ❤️

THE SUNSHINE COLLECTION 4-24-25



From Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Transitional Conference Minister, Florida Conference UCC | April 24, 2025

It has been a chaotic few of months to say the least. Not only has our political context changed, we have also experienced numerous natural disasters and human made ones. Our global world seems to be volatile and in constant turmoil.

It was in 1987 when the acronym VUCA was used to describe the world by the U.S. Army War College. VUCA is an acronym that stands for **Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity**. I believe those four words still describe our world as our lives are increasingly more complex and complicated, uncertain and unpredictable, hence, anxiety producing.

How do we live in such a world with meaning and confidence? How do we respond to volatility and ambiguity, rage and anger, complexity of relationships and life issues, to uncertainty that wobbles our faith and confidence?

This weekend as we celebrated Easter Resurrection Sunday, as we witnessed the shooting at the University in Tallahassee, as we walked through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, remembering the unjust capital punishment of Jesus, I remembered, again, that according to the liturgical calendar, Easter is not only a day but a season. On the church liturgical calendar Easter is 50 days long. In Biblical times the number 50 represented wholeness, and in the biblical story the 50th year was a year of Jubilee. While 40 was about suffering and pain, 50 was about liberation and new beginning. The year of Jubilee was a year of rest and celebration, a season when debts are forgiven, slaves were freed, and lands were returned to their original owners, in order to bring equity and offer a fresh start.

Easter Resurrection is an experience of life and liberation, of new beginnings and second chances, of the faith that Jesus is Risen so we can rise also.

Traditional Christianity embraced resurrection as something that happened after death, an afterlife experience. I believe that Easter Resurrection happens here on earth as we live and experience it. In fact, many of us have known and experienced Easter and Resurrection in one form or another. If you have lived through the loss of a loved one and made it, you have known Easter and a new beginning. If you have had your heart broken, lived through hurricanes and destruction, walked through depression and addiction, and you thought the pain will never subside and you will never recover, and have made it, you have known Easter and a new beginning. Resurrection is an experience, a living journey.

The miracle, the gift of Easter is not in Resurrection after death, it is in the ability to rise above it all, to be raised, right here on earth – the ability to deal with the pain, to heal the broken heart, to recover, to overcome, to begin over and again, in this life, here today. Christ is risen so we can rise also.

Can we rise above our VUCA world, above the status quo that harms us and above the mundane, hectic lifestyle that's exhausting us? Can we rise above the bickering and the squabble, above the injustice and the oppression, above the hate and the belittling, the fear and the despair? Can we rise and walk the path of Easter Resurrection toward a world of love and care, compassion and justice, a new lifestyle toward healing and wholeness, and a new world of Peace, Confidence, Simplicity and Clarity? Christ is risen and we can rise also!



**With Summer quickly approaching
learn about**

Thrivent Membership and Benefits.

**You can help make a positive impact
in your community!**

MAY 2025 | ANYTIME ON
DEMAND

Thrivent 101

Join the Thrivent Member Network - Southeast Region for an educational webinar to learn about your member benefits and how you can make an impact in the communities where you live, work and worship. We'll cover it all, from Thrivent Action Teams, to Thrivent Choice. We will also include educational resources, free and discounted services and so much more. Whether you're a new member or just need a refresher, you won't want to miss this!

RSVP: bit.ly/ThriventMember101

We help Christians find financial clarity, enabling lives full of meaning and gratitude. All are welcome to attend our free virtual events. Feel free to share these events with your friends and family.

Want to know more about Thrivent? Call Thrivent Financial Associate David Contessa at

(239) 300-513

MAY 2025 | ANYTIME ON
DEMAND

Have You Used Your Action Team?

We all want to give back, but sometimes it's hard to know where to begin.

Thrivent Action Teams are a great way to make a positive impact in your community. Simply gather a team of neighbors or friends for a fundraiser, educational event or service activity. Thrivent offers all the resources you need to get started, including up to \$250 in seed money.

Watch this 12-minute on-demand video to learn more about this member benefit and take you step by step on how to apply for your Thrivent Action Team!

RSVP: bit.ly/3T7XEI5

*No products will be sold at our events.
For additional disclosures,
see [Thrivent.com/social](https://thrivent.com/social).*



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 National Day of Prayer Pam Rose - Birthday	2 Jean Dick - Birthday	3
4 Audrey Cooper - Birthday	5	6 Book Club 7 pm	7 Potluck Dinner 5 pm	8	9	10 Ladies Lunch at Lely Palms 12 pm
11 Mother's Day Brunch	12	13	14	15 Ginger Ribinski - Birthday	16	17 Armed Forces Day
18	19 Church Office Closed	20	21	22	23 Jeff Stephenson - Birthday Masthead Deadline	24
25	26 Memorial Day 	27	28 Council Meeting 10 am	29 Sharon Beham - Birthday Ascension Day	30	31