

# THE CARILLON



## SCRIPTURE LESSONS

- April 6      Philippians 3: 4b-14  
"God's Prodigal Love Lives Through Death"
- April 13      Psalms 118: 25-26; Luke 19: 28-49  
"There's No Stopping God"
- April 20      Psalms 118: 1-2, 14-22, Acts 19: 34-43  
"Believe in New Life"
- April 27      Acts 5: 27-32  
"God's Truth Never Dies"

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CLARIDON

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440-635-1467

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

Reverend Julie Western 812-605-1816  
[jwestern001@gmail.com](mailto:jwestern001@gmail.com)

## APRIL 2025

- 6      Communion
- 9      Deacons meeting
- 12      11am Easter Egg Hunt
- 13      Sunday School
- 14      7:00pm Trustees meeting
- 15      5:00 pm Claridon Community Helps dinner
- 20      Easter
- 27      Sunday School

Each Sunday:      Worship 10:00 am  
Each Wednesday:      Choir Practice 5:30 pm  
                                 Bell Choir Practice 6:30 pm  
Each Thursday:      Bible Study 6:30 pm

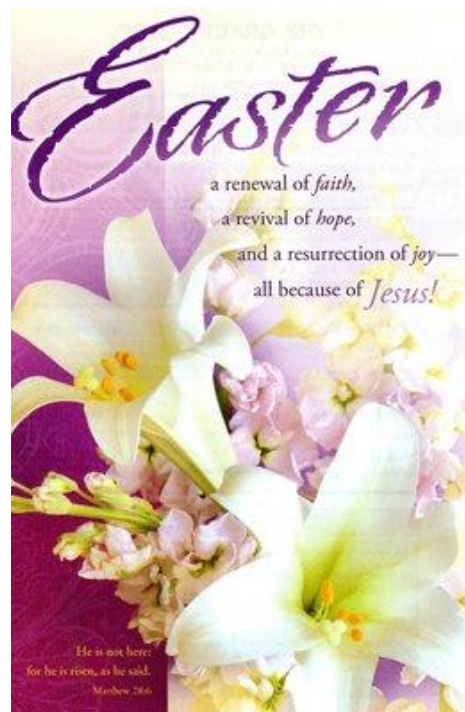


## PRAYER LIST

August Speziale  
Shawn  
Norm Zepp  
Sharon Hunter  
Beth Christian Sharp  
Gregg Kinson  
Kevin Playman  
Denny Bihary  
Thomas Woods  
Carrie Foster  
Bonnie Clemson  
Gary Branstein  
Cecil Stokesberry  
Jeffery Przybysz

Doris Wilson  
Bree Ellis Banks  
Clay Milliken  
Leo  
Dale Baptie  
Richard Germaine  
Rick Juhasz  
Connie & Wayne Streble  
Kelly Wagner  
Ed Ward  
Rheta Crowley  
Wayne Dawson  
Joe Berninger  
Kim Hinkle  
Polly Cole

**NOTE:** To those bringing Easter lilies to place on the altar, please write the name of who it is in honor of, so a list can be made up for Easter Sunday.



## “New Beginnings Easter”

*Psalm 118:24 “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

It is such an exciting time! This season in life where the birds begin to sing and the grass begins to come back to life. We begin to see the cutters come out of hiding from the winter's slumber. Pollen comes alive and flowers bloom. Trees bud and days grow longer. We love it! We embrace the warmth and sunlight. It reminds us that life is living and renewing. We enjoy the recreation cycle. And Easter comes. As Christian people, Easter brings new life meaning in more than just our yards. We find eternal new life meaning and we celebrate victory over death and the continuation of God's blessings as a Creator Sustainer and New Life Giver. As celebrative people we celebrate with rituals and icons.

Since it is Easter Season, as I wonder every Easter Season, how did bunnies get connected to laying eggs? How is it that the jelly bean became the symbol for the egg that the Easter bunny gives? I mean, why not an Easter chicken? Did his with the Easter story, the Cross and Jesus. The importance of new life is something we each need and we need to know where it comes from (not like some may think in this day and age that eggs actually are made from the grocery store). New life isn't that instantaneous and transferable. New life comes from the Good News message through the teachings of Jesus Christ and it happens when we live our lives following his teachings. Mixing bunnies with chickens and giving the bunnies easter baskets doesn't change the fact that bunnies don't lay eggs and cluck. This Easter Season, won't we become mindful and aware of the sacrifices Christ gave for us so that we too, may experience New Life and the joys of opportunities that will give us deeper meaning and enjoyment beyond our own capabilities? This is the meaning of God's gifts in our lives. May we live as blessed people who are grateful and respectful of the laws of nature which are here to serve us as we understand and respect them chicks, bunnies, jelly beans and all.

Happy Easter! May new life find us all and together may we explore and support each other in our new beginnings in our new days ahead. In Christ we can for God's Word is eternal and true.

*Psalm 118:24 “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

Blessings to all,  
Pastor Julie ☺☺

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**



This month we will hold Sunday school classes on April 13<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup>. We will be talking about Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday (all of Holy Week as well). Both our preschool and elementary classes will be meeting! We hope you can join us!



Please don't forget that we will hold our annual Easter egg hunt and celebration on April 12<sup>th</sup> at 11:00! We will hunt outside first (rain, snow or sunshine!), followed by lunch and craft activities in the fellowship hall. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Leslie Smetana at, 440.478.2320. Stop in and enjoy the celebration!



Last but certainly not least, we will have Children's Sunday on May 11<sup>th</sup>! This will mark the end of regular Sunday school classes and our Sunday school year. We will celebrate with our children during children's sermon and again at coffee hour! Can you believe summer is right around the corner?! We are very grateful to all of those who have volunteered their time and talents to the children of our congregation! Thank you all!

## **DEACONS**

Linda Angstrom is Deacon of the month in April.

## **MISSIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Our mission for April is One Great Hour of Sharing, one of the five UCC missions we support. This year's theme is "Be the Light" from Matthew 14: "Your light must shine before people." Our mission support makes it possible for people who are forced to flee from their homes to find a place of safety and support. We cooperate with other missions, ministries and governments to plant seeds of peace to replace despair and destruction. Our offering lets people know that they are not alone, that caring people they don't even know see their pain and want to respond. For over 75 years, Our OGHS offering has brought hope and healing to hurting people both in our country and around the world. This mission supports domestic and international development, fights poverty and brings aid and relief to areas torn by war or national disaster. Through our offering, we can be the light! Please write OGHS in the memo line on your check or use the mark the envelopes in the pews for OGHS.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

With the Trustees approval we gave technology money for improvements. If you use zoom, you will notice we have a new camera, so a new view and we have new microphones with much improved sound, not only for zoom, but for those present. Thank you to Nathaniel for taking on this task. We all appreciate it. And our choir sounds even more wonderful!

## **TRUSTEES**

The chronic leak of the SW window in the social hall has been repaired. We had a mason come in and repaired the lintel area above the window and now we are dry. (Just in time after this weeks rain!) Take a look outside at his brickwork.

Working on getting the cracked window in the Nursery repaired.

The new Sunday closet for materials is now finished and open for business!. Thanks to Samantha and Jamie and girls we got it done in one night! Thank you ladies! We really cleaned house! Now Judi's room is so much bigger and she is delighted. Expecting even more kids to feed this summer. Today the electrician came and put a new plug in the front pantry so the refrigerator in the nursery can go in that spot.

It is still unknown if the township will be able to redo the parking lot this summer. Hoping that the one bad part near our "steps" parking can be temporarily repaired.

The Award Event for the Cleveland Restoration Society was lovely. Brent E., Jim S., Fred D. my daughter Jennifer and myself attended on March 21, 2025. Greg Frost and John Williams and partner joined us at the table. The presentation was beautiful and very interesting to see and hear all the different projects described. The link to check it out is here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cN-93zs55vE&t=1s>

We now have another award to display. And without a doubt we had the best team!

## TREASURER

This Update for January through March 2025 shows financial results for the First Congregational Church of Claridon in the Operating Fund. Total Revenues are approximately \$15,000 more than budgeted for the first quarter of the year and include several annual gifts that will be used to cover Operating Expenses throughout the year. Total Operating Expenses are about \$4,300 less than budgeted for first quarter, leaving Net Operating Revenue approximately \$19,300 higher than budgeted through March 2025.

### Activity for January through March 2025:

#### Operations –

Pledges and Gifts	\$ 44,658
Fundraising and Other Revenues	93
Interest Income	707
Funds from Endowment for Operations	<u>9,436</u>
Total Revenues	54,894
Less Operating Expenses	<u>(29,703)</u>
<b>Net Operating Revenue 2025</b>	<b><u>\$ 25,191</u></b>

The Revenues include funds drawn down from the Endowment of \$9,436, for use in 2025 operations. The Endowment currently shows a balance of \$111,607 and is evaluated by the Endowment Committee each year to determine the amount to be spent. The Endowment Committee meets quarterly and will consider committee requests for upcoming special projects with funds to be drawn from the Endowment in 2026.

#### Other Funds –

Balances as of March 31, 2025 in other Funds are as follows:

- Memorial Funds \$ 40,859
- Scholarship Funds \$ 39,493
- Pass-Thru Contributions \$ 3,338
- Contingency Fund \$129,412
- Capital & Building Fund \$ 81,711

If you have any questions, please let me know and I will do my best to answer them.

Pam Plott, Treasurer

April 3, 2025

Dear Members and Friends of the First Congregational Church of Claridon,

We, the search Committee, want to express our appreciation for the patience and trust you have placed in us. We are pleased to recommend to you our candidate, Pastor Julie Western, for the called pastor position. What a welcome change it is to be able to hear several sermons and get to know a candidate before extending a call! A Congregational vote, for members will be held on April 27, 2025 following worship.

The association has provided two profiles for us to review. Both are well qualified. One, we interviewed via zoom call and were in the process of scheduling an in person interview when he received an invitation to discern elsewhere. In his own words he is originally an “Atlanta boy” and the thought of lake effect snow was quite intimidating. The other profile was received after we had extended the invitation of candidacy to Pastor Julie.

We are very grateful to Pam Plott acting as liaison to the Living Water Association and to Kellie Ramirez of the Association for all their assistance and support through this process.

To review our steps that led us to this point of confidence in the Spirit's leading:

1. Under the guidance of Rev. Nayiri Karjian, formerly the Association General Minister of the Living Water Association, all church attendees were invited to participate in an exercise to determine who we are, who we hope to become, and what is God's calling on our congregation. This formed the basis of our church profile. The information was compiled by Laura Christian, organized by Pam Plott, reviewed and edited by Brent Eysenbach, and then refined by all three in a final edit, and approved by cabinet.
2. Our vacancy was published on the Living Water Association's website under UCC Ministry Opportunities on June 17, 2024, where our profile could be viewed by potential candidates.
3. We were encouraged when the day after the voting result to call our first candidate was declined by the congregation; we received our first profile and letter of interest through the association. That same day, Pastor Julie Western was interviewed for the bridge pastor position and subsequently hired. What a blessing it has been to get to know her and her husband Dave. We have heard positive comments from many members of the congregation and they have both expressed gratitude for sharing ministry with us.

Please continue to hold Pastor Julie, Dave, and our congregation in prayer. May all that takes place be to the glory of God.

In His Service,

Laura Christian  
Search Committee Chair

April 3, 2025

Dear Claridon Church Family,

I am writing this letter to you all as a way to let you know how pleased and excited I am about the prospect of becoming your settled pastor. The search team and I interviewed and then the Cabinet accepted the search team's decision to call me as your settled pastor if I accepted the call. I happily accept the extended call to serve you as your settled pastor based upon the congregation accepting me through the congregational vote.

I have been prayerfully discerning my time here with you over the past 2 months (and counting). I am thankful for the way in which I entered your presence and the way in which you graciously received me. The warmth and general atmosphere of this Church body is a breath of fresh air and a source of spiritual fulfillment for myself and my husband. We pray you feel the acceptance and love from us to you as well. We enjoy being a part of your church family. The sense of groundedness and spiritual guidance thought about and lived within this community is a Godsend. I cherish our time we've had together and the time we have in ministry that lays ahead.

I am looking forward to more in-depth conversations and lovely worship services with you all. I really enjoy worshipping with you all in church and serving with you in the Lord throughout the week in ministries and opportunities of fellowship. I truly believe by the way time has worked things out that when we trust in God for the process and remain faithfully throughout all will come to show God's glory in the time, place and space we are in. May this be our new reality forming in, within, and throughout for the carrying on of God's work together in the name of Jesus who calls us.

Please don't hesitate to call me and visit with me anytime. I am very excited to know you all better in our path together in the Lord. Again, thank you for your wonderful hospitality and for all the ways you have made me (and David) feel comfortable with you. You all are wonderful people whom we have grown very fond of in such a short time. We relish the next chapter of our ministry together by God's blessings. See you Sunday (if not before)!

Blessings, to all,

Pastor Julie ☺