



The *SPIRIT*

of the season of

Lent and Easter

Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church
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March / April 2019

Digging Deep for Love

“Moses came down from Mount Sinai.... Moses did not realize that the skin of his face shone brightly because he had been talking to God.” Exodus 34:29

“This is what happens when we engage in an intimate relationship with the Holy One. It is a relationship that forever changes us. The change is so real that everyone around us can tell something is different, and it is there for all to see.” from “Body Language” by Aram Bae.

“an intimate relationship with the Holy One” ... “change is so real” “it is there for all to see.” Are those not stirring, inspirational words? Is it not the goal of every believer to be transformed by God’s power and grace?

The theme for our Lenten journey this year, in worship, study and mission will be “Digging Deep for Love:”

- ◆ Digging Deep into how God loves us.
- ◆ Digging Deep into how Jesus’ actions, words and sacrifice are all about love.
- ◆ Digging Deep into how love can change us and the world.
- ◆ Digging Deep into how love was shown and demonstrated by people named in scripture.
- ◆ Digging Deeper into the truth, joy and freedom which only God’s love can bring.

Dig Deep with us and experience the transforming power of the journey towards the Passion of Holy Week and the Glory of Easter.

Season’s Blessings be with each and every one of you,
Pastor John.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 6
7:00 pm

a cappella Sunday

Sunday, March 10
9:00 and 11:00 am

Jazz Sunday

Sunday, March 17
9:00 and 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 18
Dinner & Worship at 6:30 pm

Good Friday Jazz Tenebrae

Friday, April 19 at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday Services

Sunday, April 21
8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 am

Easter Cantata

Sunday, April 28
9:00 and 11:00 am



Reminder...
**Daylight Saving Time
 Begins Sunday, March 10**

Special Music Opportunities During Lent and Easter

March 10 - a cappella Sunday

We begin Lent by peeling away the layers of our typical Sunday morning music making and lift our collective voices in worship. That's correct, just our voices, no instrumental accompaniment.

While looking at music resources for Lent planning, I came across the website "Sing! The Center for Congregational Song." They are part of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. Their mission is "to encourage, promote, and enliven congregational song, believing the holy act of singing together shapes faith, heals brokenness, transforms lives, and renews peace."

Each year on the first Sunday of Lent, they invite worshipping communities world-wide to commit to singing a cappella (without instrumental accompaniment) during Sunday morning worship services. RCLPC will be among the churches participating this year.

"WHY WOULD WE WANT TO SING WITHOUT INSTRUMENTS, WHEN WE HAVE SUCH GREAT INSTRUMENTALISTS LEADING WORSHIP?" you ask.

Well... check out the reasons shared by the hymn society (see next page).

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Palm Sunday Coat Drive

Spring is right around the corner and it is time to clean your closets. On Palm Sunday bring your gently used and clean coats to worship. We will use the coats as part of our worship experience and then the coats will be donated to a local organization(s). Let's put our love into action with the donation of a coat and shouts of "Hosanna".



How Deep is Your Love?

(Yes, the Bee Gees swirl in my head as I ask you that question.)

Do you truly love those around you? Even those that are difficult to love?

Do you put your love of God before everything else, or are you like Peter who denies (or at least keeps quiet) in times of struggle?

What does it mean to have a deep love and to reciprocate that love?

Over the Lent season, we will be exploring love and the greatest love event of all of humanity:

- ◆ Children in grades K-5+ will explore what it means to love in all of its forms as well as the love Jesus showed us by walking through the passion of Christ.
- ◆ Faith Formation will explore love in four of its forms: eros, philia, storge and agape through the eyes of the Easter characters and ourselves.

On **April 7th**, the K-5 children will participate in an Easter Egg Hunt and make baskets for Home of the Sparrow while 6-12 grades help them out.

On **April 14th (Palm Sunday)**, we will have an intergenerational hour and walk through Holy Week together.

In order to encourage participation and to fully give yourself to Lent, we are inviting you to participate in our whole church passport program. How much time will you devote to Christ? Will you walk through the 40 days with Him or let Him walk alone? How deep is your love?

Special Music Opportunities During Lent and Easter

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It connects us to the history of the church. For thousands of years, a cappella singing was the mainstay of the church's song. By recognizing this and exploring this way of music-making, we are acknowledging and honoring the saints of the past.

It connects us to many Christian denominations, traditions, and regions of the world that continue to use a cappella music as their primary mode of music-making in corporate worship. Those include but are not limited to many Mennonite denominations, the Church of Christ, many Orthodox traditions, the Church of God in Christ, and South African Methodists.

It offers to God something that is, for many congregations in the United States and Canada, a gift that is different from our usual music-making. Psalm 96:1 tells us to "Sing a new song to the Lord," which can be achieved for some of us by singing a cappella.

It encourages the congregation's song by building up confidence in their own voices. Many in our congregations believe that they can't sing, or can't sing well. Singing a cappella presents those people with the best opportunity to hear themselves and others singing, giving them a fresh perspective on their assumptions of their own abilities and the ability of the congregation's combined voice.

It emphasizes the unique ability of instruments to enhance the congregation's song. By showing the congregation that they can sing without instrumental accompaniment, instrumental accompaniment can then begin to enhance and empower the congregation's voice rather than acting primarily as a crutch.

It allows the instrumentalists to spend a Sunday listening carefully to the congregation to assess where their voice needs support. Often times it is hard to listen carefully to the congregation when you are focusing on playing your instrument ac-

curately and musically. This gives the instrumentalists permission to step away for a Sunday without feeling like they are leaving the congregation stranded.

Finally, singing a cappella is fun! By removing our typical means of accompanying song, our minds are often challenged to come up with new and creative ways to sing together that maintains energy and vitality.

This year's participants include:

Cathedral of Mary Our Queen – Baltimore, MD
Storrs Congregational Church UCC – Storrs Mansfield, CT
Truth Worship Centre, Sovima Logos Bible College – Dimapur, Nagaland, India
Little Zion Lutheran – Telford, PA
First Baptist Church – Rapid City, SD
St. John Lutheran – Angleton, TX
Winterville Christian Church – Winterville, N.C.
Village Church on Antioch – Overland Park, KS
St James Lutheran – Pottstown, Pa
Westminster United Methodist Church – Westminster, MD
First Baptist Church – Rapid City, SD
Friedens United Church of Christ – St.Charles, MO
All Saints' Anglican Westboro – Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
St. Philip's Anglican Church – Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada
Trinity Episcopal – Mattoon, IL
NuValley Presbyterian Church – Rural Valley, PA
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church – Akron, OH
SouthWest Church of Christ – Ambarvale, NSW, Australia
Boulevard Church – Oklahoma City, OK
NPM-Chapter of the Archdiocese of San Antonio – San Antonio, TX
Mayfield Central Presbyterian Church – Mayfield, NY
Port Stanley United Church – Port Stanley, Ontario, Canada
Vestavia Hills Baptist Church – Vestavia Hills, AL
St. Peter's Lutheran Church – Northfield, MN
Grace Community Church – Angier, NC
Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church – Crystal Lake, IL

I'm really excited about this worship opportunity to sing to the Lord a different song on March 10 at 9:00 a.m. AND 11:00 a.m.

Special Music Opportunities During Lent and Easter

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*March 17 - Jazz Sunday
at 9:00 AND 11:00 a.m.*

We will be led by John Morefield, piano,
Anthony Jay Houston, vibes, and Dan Bretz, drums.

*April 19 - Jazz Tenebrae Service
at 7 p.m.*

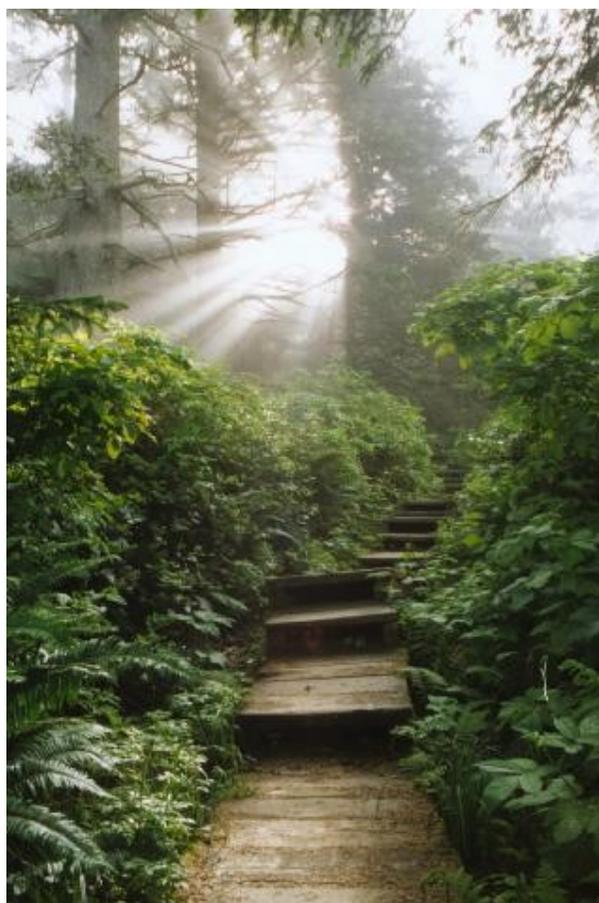
April 28 - Easter Cantata

The adult choir, joined by eight instrumentalists, will be presenting the premiere of “Exsultet” by John Morefield, a cantata for the celebration of Easter, on April 28th during 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. worship. John has been the choir accompanist at RCLPC since 2014. He holds a bachelor’s degree in music education, and in addition to accompanying and performing on the piano, he is a composer of instrumental and vocal music. John’s work in classical as well as modern music informs his composing style -- wedding old forms to the new in order to create familiar but entirely original work.

Joining a rich, centuries-long heritage of multi-movement musical works for use in worship, “Exsultet” sets portions of the ancient Latin Easter liturgical text to a fresh and harmonically rich soundscape. The cantata begins with a lively “Introit”, paraphrasing J.S. Bach in its orchestration. Following the triumphant conclusion of the opening movement, “Haec nox est” begins with an alto solo, sung by RCLPC’s Ashley Puenner, evocative of the chant of early Christian music. The spacious, meditative scoring of this movement crescendos to its apex where the choir, unaccompanied in 8-part harmony, makes the most striking statement of the text: “O truly blessed [day], when things of heaven are wed to those of earth, and divine to the human”. The following movement, “Gaudeat et Tellus” commands all people “Be glad! Christ’s resurrection will surely bring an end to darkness.” The cantata concludes with a “Gloria”, a final breathless and exhilarating chapter that releases listeners into an atmosphere of complete affirmation and celebration. ~ John Morefield

Prayer Labyrinth through Lent

As you journey through Lent and look for ways to grow closer to God, you may want to make time to walk the labyrinth, a tool for prayer and meditation for those seeking God. In walking the labyrinth, mind, body, and spirit are together focused on following a single path that leads to and returns from the center. The path we follow becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives. It touches our sorrows and releases our joys and creativity. It is also a place to create space, which can help us listen to our inner wisdom and gain new understandings. Each time we walk the labyrinth we may find ourselves led further to discover and do that toward which our soul is drawn. You are invited to walk the labyrinth located in the library/lounge beginning March 6. Come and just be.



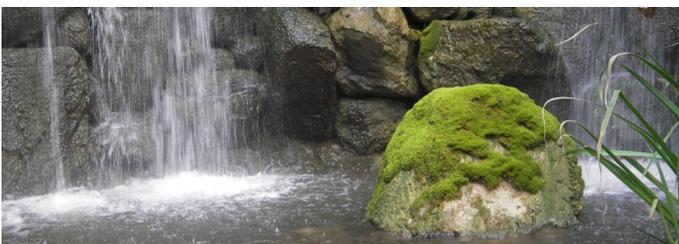
Digging Deep for Love

“Digging Deep for Love” in the context of your Compassion, Peace, and Justice (CPJ) team means thinking beyond the obvious, going the extra mile for understanding of, and solutions to, social justice issues. CPJ’s passion is to advocate and educate about the seemingly intractable problems that plague both our local and global community.

Consider immigration. Building physical barriers may seem a convenient and tangible solution to stopping the flow of migrants. But digging deep asks us to delve further into the issue and ask ourselves what are the driving forces behind migration flows. Is it poverty in their native lands, violence, lack of opportunity, and so forth? And, we must remind ourselves that we are a land of immigrants — immigration is part and parcel of our cultural heritage and is something to be celebrated. How can the church help resolve these core problems?

Consider the problem of hunger. We are all familiar with the wonderful work our area food pantries do in providing much-needed food to local families to help stretch their budgets. Too many families in America are faced with daunting choices every month of paying rent, utilities, buying food, health care. Food pantries and other direct assistance programs certainly help. So many of our neighbors live paycheck to paycheck (or worse) and are unprepared to pay for emergency car repairs or medical crises. But digging deep means asking why so many even face these monthly dilemmas. Is it lack of a living wage, our high-cost health care system, housing, the education system, or all of the above?

The list of “considers” is endless: Palestine, race, diversity, the environment, the homeless, affordable health care and so forth.



The following parable offers another way to think about “digging deep.” The parable has many titles, but “Babies in the River” is one of the more common ones.

One summer in the village, the people gathered for a picnic. As they shared food and conversation, someone noticed a baby in the river, struggling and crying. The baby was going to drown!

Someone rushed to save the baby. Then, they noticed another screaming baby in the river, and they pulled that baby out. Soon, more babies were seen drowning in the river, and the townspeople were pulling them out as fast as they could. It took great effort, and they began to organize their activities in order to save the babies as they came down the river. As everyone else was busy in the rescue efforts to save the babies, two of the townspeople started to run away along the shore of the river.

“Where are you going?” shouted one of the rescuers. “We need you here to help us save these babies!”

“We are going upstream to stop whoever is throwing them in!”

The obvious interpretation of this parable is to differentiate charity vs. social justice. Both are necessary – the babies had to be rescued and given care. The many villagers who performed these tasks were digging deep into their physical and other reserves to show their love. Similarly, the two villagers who ran upstream to discern the root of the problem were digging deep, facing the unknown, but using their passion for justice to tackle the root cause of the problem.

During this season of Lent, you are invited to “dig deep” by learning about RCLPC’s many local and global mission projects and consider using your time and talents. I also invite you to “dig deep” and ponder the underlying forces that give rise to our mission projects and other social justice issues, and learn what the greater church advocates as solutions.

~~~Mike Rugh, CPJ Team Chair

## Mission “Digs Deep for Love”

During Lent, our RCLPC Mission Team seeks to invite us all to “dig deep for love” as we remember our Lord telling us, “as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” The “it” Jesus was making reference to was providing for basic needs of people we encounter. As a congregation, we have many opportunities for everyone to be directly involved in reaching out to people in need in very meaningful ways. Check out our many mission opportunities both locally and globally and see which one God is calling you to respond to.

Things locally include PADS, Food Pantry, Script Cards, Old Firehouse, and other things that you can find in the mission booklet in the pews. Global projects such as projects in Kenya, Colombia, Egypt, and Guatemala are possible, too.

One of our recent mission projects that has involved many of you directly is our Living Waters for the World team. They just recently returned from a follow-up trip and report:

With deep joy your Living Waters team brings greetings from Presbyterian churches Monte Los Olivos, Ciudad de Refugio, and Belén. Your prayers carried us through a week filled with renewing relationships, improving technical aspects of the systems, discussing challenges, and celebrating successes. Your love for the people of these villages was shared through the dozens of pairs of shoes and reading glasses we left for the deacons of Monte Los Olivos to distribute to those most in need. The availability of inexpensive, pure water has made water-related illnesses, for both children and adults, a rarity. We returned home with a deep certainty that our partners are wise, compassionate, and resourceful, able to move forward with pure water for a generation or more. As they always say to us, *gracias a Dios* -- thanks be to God.

### *You are Invited to Get Involved at the Living Waters “Chili Cook-Off” on March 2nd*

Hear more about the experiences of the Living Waters team and to consider possible involvement in future efforts.

### *You are also Invited to Support the Team during the Upcoming Fiesta Agua Viva on April 13th.*

You can attend, cook, provide auction items, help in the kitchen or auction, help with activities, and contribute.

### *One Great Hour of Sharing*

During Lent we particularly want to focus on the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. This offering is divided among three programs: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Self-Development of People, and Presbyterian Hunger Program. What does that mean to us? When there is a hurricane or a flood or other disaster, we are there through the One Great Hour of Sharing. We are there in self-development projects providing people and resources to help people help themselves in all parts of the world. Our hunger grants meet needs both internationally and domestically. Minutes for Mission during Lent will provide more detail on each of these programs. We ask you to dig deep for love and give deep hope through the One Great Hour of Sharing so that our church might respond to opportunities and needs as they unfold in the year to come.

