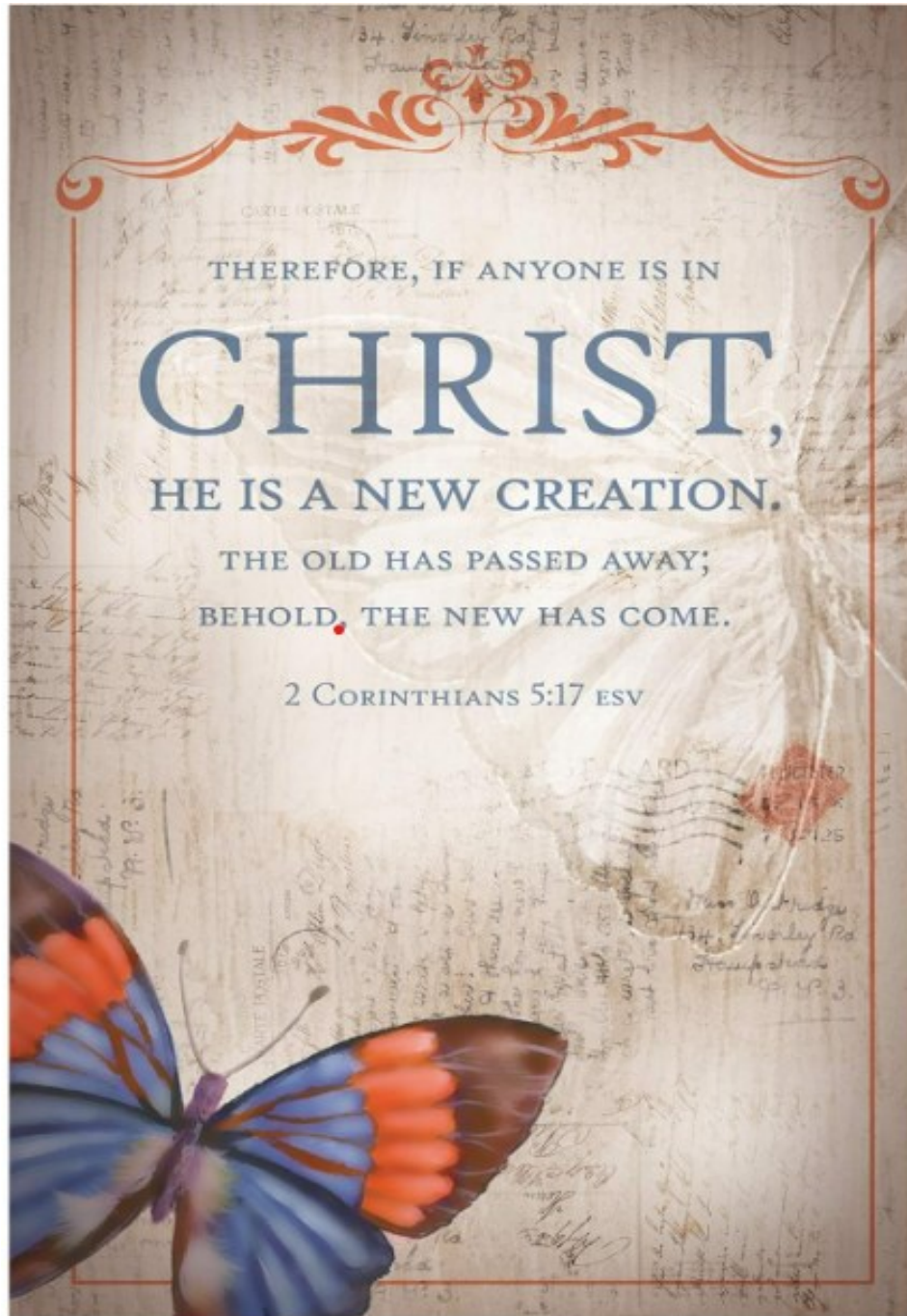


A PUBLICATION OF CHURCH ON THE HILL IN BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

VANTAGE



May 2024

Pastor's Page



The Day of Pentecost

Pentecost is a Greek-based word for an ancient Hebrew celebration also called the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. In Palestine, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall. Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest.

This name is also used to refer to the events in Acts 2, when after the risen Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit broke into a gathering of disciples and brought about a decisive moment that initiated the Church's birth. This year, Pentecost will be on Sunday, May 19th, 2024, as always observed on the seventh Sunday after Easter.

Scripture tells us, "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." This strange occurrence drew a large crowd, and Peter stood up to speak to them about repentance and the gospel of Christ. By the end of the day that the Holy Spirit came, the Church grew by 3,000 people we are told. This is why Christians still celebrate Pentecost.

The celebration of Pentecost Sunday reminds us of many aspects of the Christian faith.

The reality that the Spirit of God that started the Church and unified the disciples is the same Spirit that works today.

Pentecost reminds us that Christ's promise to send the Spirit of Truth and the Comforter are at the heart and the start of the Church.

Pentecost tells us that the Church Universal is baptized by one Spirit into one body, that we are all, when true to Christ's call, co-heirs with Christ, to sacrifice and even suffer in Christ, so that we may also be glorified with Christ.

Pentecost reveals that the same Spirit that worked with Christ to provide for Christ's sisters and brothers, is the one that both resurrected him and brought about his ascension.

Having accomplished those feats, this same Holy Spirit bestowed itself onto the lives of those who make up the Church, from its beginning and for all times.

With Pentecost, we celebrate how God moves among and through us, how God brings us truth that gives our lives meaning, and how God comforts us when other forms of comfort stand far removed.

Peace and joy,

Pastor Tom



If you are interested in participating in worship service by being a lay reader, please speak with Pastor Tom

May Teachings

May 5
1 John 4:16b-21

What is Love?

Scripture says, "God first loved us." The fact is we're never as sure of this as when we're being loved first by someone. It feels good. The world is in its correct orbit when we're the beneficiary of someone's else love and kindness. But we also know this doesn't happen all the time. Too many people are not doing anything between the times when they get their love fix. There is much more we can do than hope that someone will get around to loving us. Someone wise said, "It is sad not to be loved, but it is much sadder not to be able to love." Our lives are impoverished when we're not able to love richly. Choose to love over being loved.

May 12

Youth Sunday

Join in worship on this special Sunday as we honor High School Graduates, enjoy our youth as they participate in the worship service, and of course celebrate all mothers and adult women of the congregation!

May 19
Daniel 2:20-23

No Laurels Yet

Without change, growth is impossible. Abram learned the truth that it is impossible to stay where you are and go with God at the same time: "The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you.'" There's no doubt it's tough to leave what we have become in order to continue on God's journey. But we shouldn't rest on your laurels. Your soul needs new growth. Let the Lord's hand work something better in your heart. Refresh your mind with ideas of your potential. Nobody is a finished product.

Pentecost Sunday

May 26
1Samuel 30:16-25

Gaining Your Spoil

I like what the poet Mary Oliver said, "I don't want to end up simply having visited this world." When everything is finished, we should have gained spoil. We aren't supposed to finish empty-handed, without contributions to our names and legacy Where's your spoil? The apostle John taught that our loving service to others shows that we are in synch with God's gracious will to save us. John said, "Our love for each other proves that we have gone from death to life."

Team Reports

Moderator's Report

Sarah Hugus sarahhugus@outlook.com
News for May 2024

In our April Vantage newsletter, some of you read about what good stewards we are being of our wonderful facilities, for which we are so thankful! On April 21 during worship, I included this information in an announcement - to include those who maybe don't have the opportunity to read our newsletter.

This is a brief recap of the news that on May 26 we will make a change in sharing our worship space. Lifepoint Church has been here, mostly on Sundays, since October. Our Vision Ministry leadership team decided we were *tapped out* with our ability to work with their growing numbers, and *their* need for us to change our worship time.

In January, Radiant City Church, a young church, called and were looking for worship space. After several weeks of visits, phone call, Vision Ministry consideration, and negotiating, they committed to a *4-1/2-year agreement* to use the sanctuary and other spaces on Sundays, starting their worship at 11:30. They will have weekday office hours and will take over the Upper Room, except for our music library. Late in April they hired crews to remodel the Upper Room to their liking and at their expense - **hence** the need for bright PINK dumpster in the lower parking lot.

Below are several reasons why the switch to Radiant City Church:

- They are a smaller congregation of about 100 worshippers,
- They have space needs on other weekdays and monthly Saturdays, for which they are paying,
- They desire to cooperate in enhancing *our* spaces, by painting and cleaning out items in our limited storage areas, to enable them to also have some storage space,
- They want to partner with us to bring more good news to our area.

Radiant City Church's worship style will include some new lighting, cameras and sound, with equipment being much LESS obvious than currently. Perhaps larger TV screens will be

installed to benefit Church on the Hill and Radiant City Church for displaying lyrics, announcements and more. We will be able to share a more modern video/audio system as well.

Lifepoint's time will end May 25. Many of you have commented on their energetic and happy worshippers arriving on Sundays. We DO wish them well. We are so grateful to Lifepoint Church for their financial contributions for these 7 months.

Radiant City will have a soft opening of their new home within our church facilities on May 26, and will add more of what makes them who they are in the weeks after. We want to be ready to welcome Pastor Cliff McCray Jr. and members into our beautiful church.

Publicity and Promotions Update

Jerry Clinton, Team Lead

Work continues on designing and purchasing brand new banners for the lawn sign. Several messages and designs have been created and final edits are in progress.

Member Care Update

Jeannie Clinton, Team Lead

jeannieclinton1@gmail.com.

If you or someone you know wants a visit or phone call

from the Member Care Team, please contact Jeannie Clinton at 561-901-5935.



Recently, Sarah Hugus and Jeannie Clinton enjoyed a visit with Florence Gomes.

Deacon Update

Bob Murphy, Team Lead
with Rocky assisting

The Deacon team is hosting a brunch after the Sunday service on Father's Day, June 6. Unlike last year when men from the congregation purchased, prepared and served the food, this year it will be the women's turn. Watch for details and an attendance and chef-for-a-day signup sheet soon. Also, The Deacon's Fund will provide gifts for our high school graduates on Sunday, May 12.

Events & Notes

BCEO

All are invited to eat out, dutch treat, almost every Thursday evening. This group has been active, except during the pandemic, for about 20 years. We all make suggestions and decide where we would like to eat. We try to change up the location to suit everyone. When YOU would like to attend, please RSVP to Bob Murphy: 610-996-7827.

Here is the May line-up

May 2

Eat District Healthy Asian Bowl
1914 NE 5th Avenue (Fifth Avenue Shops)
Boca Raton 33431
561-576-2046
Menu at eatdistricts.com

May 9

La Condesa Mexican Restaurant
3320 Airport Road
Boca Raton 33431
561-931-4008
Menu at lacondesamexican.com

May 16

Henry's Restaurant
16850 Jog Road (Shoppes at Addison Place)
Delray Beach 33446
561-638-1949
Menu at henrysofbocaraton.com

May 23

The Cuban Cafe Restaurant
3350 NW Boca Raton Blvd (Plumtree Center)
Boca Raton 33431
561-750-8860
Menu at cubancafe.com

May 30

Persis Indian Grill
1100 Linton Blvd (near to Target store)
Delray Beach 33444
561-614-2325

Menu at persisdelray.com

Bon Appetite!



Captain Penny and Julie gave time, talent, and truck to load & move 40 chairs given to COTH by neighbors of Temple Beth El. Thank you!

Book Buzz

Book Buzz participants enjoyed a great discussion of The Secret Chord by Geraldine Brooks. The story of David in the Bible was told with many twists that proved interesting to discuss. Some of us loved the take and others not so much.

The next book that we discuss will be: The Women by Kristin Hannah We will meet on Friday August 2nd at 10:00 A.M. We are taking a summer break from meeting and the next few sessions will be Zoom based.

You don't have to read the book to participate. All are welcome and since the session in August will be on Zoom, all you need to do is let Thomas Brown know and he will be sure to send you the necessary link to join and the required technology. See all of you then!

Mothers' Day - May 12

What is the best gift for our mothers - or to any mother or mother-figure who is special to us?

TIME!

To go to a shop and buy that perfect card to send her - on time!

To make a phone call to check in and say "I love you."

To text her in a loving way.

To go to a shop to purchase fresh flowers to bring along on that in-person visit.

To go to her gravesite and reminisce about times gone by.

Do you remember when land lines were often unavailable or were all in use when you tried to make a call on Mothers' Day? Evidently mobile phones have solved that problem - so pick it up and make those calls! Your generous act of the gift of time will make someone's day.

2024 Florida Conference UCC Dues!

Church on the Hill is a member of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ. Yearly dues are \$15.00 per person in your family who is a member of this church through joining or Confirmation. **Our church must pay this amount for all members, so your contribution will definitely help keep our budget on track.** If you are unsure whether you have paid, contact Sarah at office@churchofboca.org. Every contribution helps!!

Celebrate Florida Newsletter

Want to know what is happening around our Florida Conference and our National UCC? Both have comprehensive web sites, with links to many topics and resources. Find it here: uccfla.org and ucc.org.

Events & Notes

The Preaching of the Trees

Barbara Mahany writes of the converting experience the Book of Nature had on the Christian mystic Brother Lawrence:

Sometimes, when closely reading the Book of Nature, the profoundest of lessons are learned from the quietest, most quotidian of happenstance. Suddenly seeing what you might have walked past countless dozens of times. Being awake to gospel in the plainest of wrappers. A buck-naked tree, perhaps. A tree whose very nakedness suddenly offers *aha!*

Brother Lawrence [1611-1691], the seventeenth-century barefoot friar who found God in the pots and pans of his monastery kitchen in Paris, told one such story. In his one published work [1], a collection of fourteen letters, a wisp of an eighty-page volume I once unearthed from a library's musky archives, he wrote how a tree in winter, stripped of its leaves, played the pivotal role in his uncanny conversion. It seems the good brother absorbed the tree's stark emptiness, and, in that way that saints and wise souls do, he saw beyond it. He imagined the possible. As it's recorded in his little book's preface, the soon-to-be-friar stood before the naked tree picturing its branches soon filled with tiny leaves as if clasped in prayer. And thus he was hit, head-on. The surging sense of the immensity of the Holy One all but knocked him down, realizing the life force, the beautiful that would burst from the barren. In his little book's preface, I was struck most of all by how strange it is that divine attributes can sometimes be seen in something so common. And how we'll miss the whole of it if we refuse to be stopped in our tracks.

Mahany describes some of the sermons offered by the Book of Nature:

What *are* the sermons that the woods—those places of betweenness, repositories of ancient stories—might impart from their fretwork of branches and twigs, their columnar trunks and the boughs that hold up the sky? Certainly, there are tales of resilience, the way they stand against whatever time and the weather gods hurl their way, tornado or drought, ice storm or Noah-like rains. And lessons to be learned of holy communion, the way the woods and the birds and the scampering critters all keep watch, share food, warn each other of danger, create ecosystems that moderate heat and cold, store water, and generate necessary humidity. What else of the time-tested truths, laid down like the rings revealed in a fallen tree's stump?...

My temple, my mosque, my church of the woods, where the center aisle is earth rubbed raw, threadbare, not unlike a great aunt's mothballed

Persian rugs, where the vaulted halls are awash in shifting shadow and numinous light, bathed in a mystical halo, it is the holy place to which I return and return. It is a woods that preaches to me, fills me with wordless wisdoms. It is the place where I behold the awe-inspiring mystery of how I hope heaven will someday be.

Copied from "Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations" available at: www.cac.org

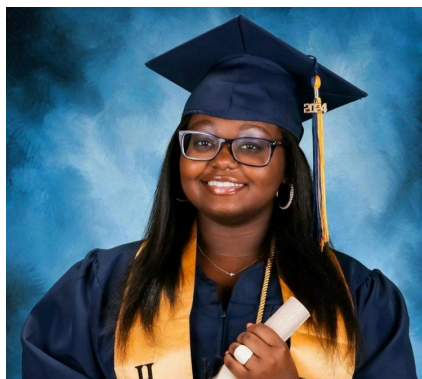
Church on the Hill High School Graduates



Lucas



Elise



Rosalinda

Honoring our High School Graduates on May 12 during worship.

No photos for: Noah, Jake, Markus

Holly and friend Johnny



Additional photos will be available in the worship bulletin for Sunday, May 12, 2024.

Information & Reminders

Offering / Donation / Pledge Options

Cash/Check: offering plate on Sundays or by mail

Credit/Debit Card/ACH: Simply use the QR code to donate. You can also access this option using the **DONATE** tab on our website:

www.churchofboca.org

Questions? Just ask at the office and we will help!



Upper Room Devotionals 2024

These periodicals are released every other month.

May/June edition available soon!

<https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

Prayer Requests

Please contact Pastor Tom with needed prayers.

Text him at 561-306-5208 or email him at

pastortomlacey@gmail.com or to

COTHPRAYERS@GMAIL.COM

Email Communications

Please let us know if you would like to receive electronic copies of the weekly worship bulletin and Vantage newsletter by sending us a note at office@churchofboca.org

Stay in touch for the latest news/photos!

- **Facebook:** Church on the Hill-Congregational Church of Boca Raton
- **Twitter:** @UCCchurchboca
- **Instagram:** @ChurchontheHill_
- **Website:** www.churchofboca.org

Stay Connected

Did you move? Have you changed your USPS address? Would you prefer to receive our monthly Vantage newsletter via email? If you answered YES to any of these questions, please send your contact information or changes to be placed on our church email list to: office@churchofboca.org. Thank you!

Special Events:

- ❖ Youth Sunday – May 12
- ❖ Father's Day – June 16 Brunch after the service.
- ❖ On most Sundays after fellowship a casual discussion time is held downstairs; you're invited!

May ANNIVERSARIES

05/04 Marit Hasmats & Tom Lacey
05/07 Sue & Dave Brown
05/11 Danielle & John Peterson

May BIRTHDAYS

05/02 Danielle Peterson
05/08 John Fenner
05/10 John Peterson
05/15 Jerry Clinton
05/16 Aaron Alter
05/22 Stephen Harris
05/27 Adelaide Sternecker

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Vantage Newsletter Deadline

Wednesday May 15th at noon

All articles, pictures, or announcements for the next Vantage are due.

Sunday Bulletin Deadline

Every Wednesday at noon

Sunday Bulletin Announcements are due on Wednesday each week.

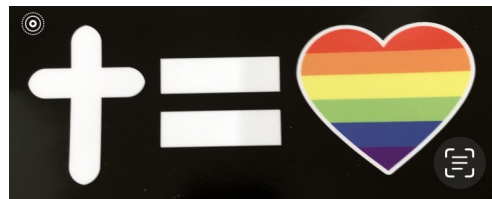
Email items to: marron33@gmail.com

ONA Covenant Statement

ONA Covenant adopted January 13, 2019

At Church on the Hill, we affirm that every person has worth as a unique creation made in the image of God. We recognize, value and give thanks for the many diverse gifts of God among us. We believe that through diversity, all can worship together and grow in a faith that transcends our differences.

Accordingly, we declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation, inviting and welcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons into the full life and ministry of Church on the Hill, as well as persons of every race, culture, age, ability, gender and economic status.



Church on the Hill

Address: 251 SW 4th Avenue
Boca Raton, Florida 33432

Office Phone: (561) 395-9255
E-mail: office@churchofboca.org
Web site: www.churchofboca.org

Pastor:

Tom Lacey

Cell/work phone: 561-306-5208 email: tomlaceypastor@gmail.com

Church Moderator:

Sarah Hugus

sarahhugus@outlook.com

Prayer Requests:

cothprayers@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Service

In-Person & on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bocaucc/

Staff

TV Monitor & LiveStream Administrator:

Marit Hasmats-Lacey

Accounting Manager / IT Consultant

Markus Asch

Worship Song Leaders:

Guest Musicians

Accompanist:

Georgene Barger

Sexton:

(Jan-Pro Co.)

Volunteers

Sarah H, Kathy B, Bob M, Thomas B, Lois F, Dan S,
Faye F, Victor I, The Hinshaws,
Barbara & Larry L, Mena, Marit L.

Property:

Bob Murphy

