



The Messenger

January 2022



Happy New Year!

I hope everyone has had a lovely holiday. It has certainly been beautiful around here this week. We are starting the year off—let's call it interesting!

This past Saturday afternoon, our neighbor, Dr. John Prahinski, let me know that the situation at the hospital has, once again, become overwhelming. He advised that we consider going back to virtual worship for a few weeks. Our Congregational Council voted, via email, to go to virtual worship through the month of January and reassess the situation towards the end of the month. What that means for us is the following:

- We will need to pre-record worship during the week before each Sunday—we need **worship leaders** and anyone who might be willing to **offer music** to let us know so that we can schedule those recording times;
- All other in-person activities will be postponed. In this newsletter, I'll share some of the ideas we have for fellowship and mutual care. We may be able to do some things via Zoom if anyone can take any more Zoom time in their lives.

Our news, as a community, includes the very good news that we have all weathered this situation before and we will do so again. You have been a very responsive and nimble congregation, which has meant that we have not had to worry that our carelessness has led to someone's illness. We continue to prioritize each other and the community and going virtual is the best way to do so right now.

A word about the winter during this lockdown: LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE NEEDS. Among us, we can support each other through power outages and other weather related issues as much as possible.

The Season of Epiphany

As with many elements of the official church year, I did not grow up hearing about Epiphany. The story of the star and the wise men was included in the Christmas pageant (in which I longed to be a shepherd or a wise man, but had to settle for Mary or an angel) and when Christmas was over, it was over. Nothing remained until next December. When I discovered Epiphany, it became a favorite of mine—as a religious holiday, it centers the new year beautifully, offering a moment for each of us to consider what light has been brought into our lives, what light we might share with others.

In a sermon years ago, I mentioned that, to me, Christmas is like the lights of a nighttime party—bright and cheery, but also allowing for the shadows to stay put, for the dark to remain dark. At Christmas, in order to get along, you let the shadows stay where they are. Epiphany is like the LED bulbs that come on the morning after the party, where you see what is in the corners. It's an invitation to embrace reality, to bring light to the edges of our lives, to unveil our truths and to allow the shadows to be filled up, even vanished, in the presence of the brightness of God.

January 6th is Epiphany, but we will celebrate this Sunday—have some candles ready to celebrate the light that fills the world.

Care Groups

What is a Care Group?

- A group of 8-10 people who have a shared interest (of any sort) who agree to connect with each other once/month through the year.

How do I join a Care Group?

- Gather some friends and let Martha know who has joined you in the Care Group;
- Join our Care Group Zoom on January 16th and meet up with other people in break-out rooms to get things started!

Why should I join a Care Group?

- One of the most frequently stated priorities of the church that came out of our summer conversations was a desire to get to know each other better—Care Groups hope to serve that need;
- Our Deacon program has offered care over the last two years, but our deacons struggle to get responses from their groups and we have struggled to get enough people to serve as Deacons.
- Care Groups allow each of us to carry a small piece of looking out for each other without anyone having to be overburdened.

What will be asked of me in a Care Group?

- Meet (in person when possible) once/month. You can have any kind of gathering you wish—food, games, sports, your shared activity, hot tubbing...whatever the group decides.
- Each member of the Care Group will cover one task:
 - Communicating needs to the church
 - Bringing food
 - Organizing the group
 - Leading the activity
 - Writing notes or emails to those who cannot attend
 - Connecting with homebound members (each Care Group will get one or two homebound members to connect with)The tasks can be permanently assigned or float around the group, but Bonnie Benedict, the Chair of the Care Group team, will need to know who is doing the communication each month.

Join us on **January 16th at 5pm** for our initial meeting on Zoom. Once we've met, your group can set up your meeting times however you would like.

Here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84416750258?pwd=L3FGalArczkzbnU2Snk1WTY2bGQ0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 844 1675 0258

Passcode: 506351

+1 301 715 8592

Some ideas for Care Group shared interest:

- Books, movies, podcasts;
- Outdoor activities
- Sports
- Food/Food preparation
- Art, music, theater

See you **JANUARY 16TH AT 5PM ON ZOOM!**

Youth and Children's Programs

While we had plans to get things going with our youth and children again after the holidays, the necessity to return to virtual gatherings makes that difficult. Families are welcome to get a reprieve from winter/COVID lockdowns by coming over to use the game room—just let us know when you'd like to come!

Here are some things to think about for when we can gather, hopefully by February:

- Middle School Afternoon at the Mall
- More rock climbing?
- Game nights
- Spring youth retreat
- Summer Camp/Wisdom School
- Other?

Also, think about Care Groups—would you like to join with your parents? Would you like to let the youth/children's group be your care group?

Love Your Neighbor
Arts & Crafts Fair!



Thanks to everyone who made stuff, donated stuff, moved stuff and bought stuff from our Love Your Neighbor Arts and Crafts Fair! It was a great success for a first year out. We made around \$2500 for Interfaith Outreach Association, as well as raising awareness of their need. It is my understanding that other donations came in as a result of our focus on IOA.



Here is director of IOA, Shawne Farmer, who came out to show her support (pictured with Merlin the Disappearing Dog). Other faith organizations included First Unitarian, Agudath Sholom Synagogue, Westminster Presbyterian and Grace Episcopal. We're looking forward to next year. Keep on crafting!



Directory Updates

During the month of January, Leslie and Martha will be working on updating our directory. Our plan is to make this an annual part of our new year planning each year. You will receive a copy of the current directory by email or snail mail if you have requested to receive your information that way. We'll ask you to fill in any missing information, as well as updating any changes in addresses, phone numbers, or emails that may have occurred over the last year. We'd also love to have any addresses you have for college students if you're ok with sharing them.

We will also ask if anyone needs to be added or removed from the directory, so that our information matches what each of you sees as your status with the church. Through the year, we always appreciate updates as they happen. We're able to update our directory regularly and can print a new copy for you at any time if you request one. Otherwise, we will only print copies once a year.

New Carpet, New Wall, Annex Repairs and
No Messy Brush!

The Facilities Team has been hard at work getting projects done or lined up over the last month. Some of the repairs to the Annex were made before Christmas and completed in just a few days. There is more work to be done there, but the project is off to a good start. Jim Ray lines up a team who came in and tore down the broken retaining wall and replaced it with a very nice-looking wall (I wanted to show a picture here, but it is covered with ice and snow—next month!) That same team was available to tear out the tangle of brush that had grown up around the upper parking lot, making way for some much nicer vegetation to be planted there in the spring.

In addition, Jeff Curcio has been working on getting the new carpet for the sanctuary installed. Wait until you see the sanctuary with this new carpet! It's going to be even stunning than it already is and there will be NO TRIPPING HAZARDS! Yeah!

We have exciting projects ahead and some wonderful questions to answer, particularly, "How do we take this amazing place that we share here at PBC and make it into a "safe haven for all" (that quote is from the new Covenant we voted into our organizational identity in December).

We'll keep you posted on our projects, but look forward to a time when everyone can see them in person!

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www.peaklandbaptistchurch.org
Rev. Dr. Martha Dixon Kearse, Pastor



- JANUARY BIRTHDAY
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|----|-----------------------|
| 3 | Wamda Templeton |
| 5 | Garrett Lois Sawyer |
| 6 | Margaret Phillips |
| 8 | Norma Jean Rist |
| 9 | Ryan Riley |
| 9 | Tyler Riley |
| 10 | Debbie Snidow |
| 11 | Marvin Templeton |
| 15 | Beth Ellis |
| 15 | Denise Riley |
| 15 | Jennifer Thomasson |
| 16 | Benton Riordan |
| 17 | Martha Jane Arrington |
| 18 | Jim Patterson |
| 19 | Pris Riley |
| 20 | Phil Sanders |
| 21 | Nicole Zulauf |
| 23 | Andrew Cook |
| 25 | Chase Templeton |
| 27 | Grady Zulauf |
| 28 | Bonnie Benedict |
| 29 | James Blackburn |
| 29 | Cheryl Curcio |
| 29 | Norman Moon, Jr. |