



April 2018

400 W. Chesapeake Ave.
Towson, Maryland 21204
410-823-6500

www.towsonpres.org

The TPC Staff

Rev. Rob Carter
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Rev. Joel Strom
Pastor, Associate

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Jeness Hall
Director of Children and
Family Ministry

Tara Flynn Runge
Administrative &
Communications
Coordinator

Kathryn Bojanowski
Business Administrator

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Towson Presbyterian
Preschool

Kyanne Fields
Childcare Coordinator

Walter Austin
Sexton

Towson Presbyterian Church

*Towson Presbyterian Church is an inclusive community of faith
growing as disciples of Christ.*

Pastor's Thoughts

Dear Friends,

On the first Sunday of the month, 495 of us gathered in the sanctuary at one of our two services and proclaimed loud and clear that "Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!" It's the hallmark story of our faith that reveals the lengths God goes to keeps God's promises. That nothing in life—not even death—can stand in the way of God blessing us with love and life.

But as Easter Sunday has now come and gone, the temptation we inevitably face is to ignore the new life God makes possible. It's much easier to return to what we know—to what's familiar. As we explored on Easter Sunday, the stuff of resurrection is scary, if for no other reason than new life only comes about after death. And who likes death—of people or things? So we quickly turn the page on resurrection and return to the status quo not because it's what's best but because it's what's comfortable.

But that's the thing, TPC. I really don't think our resurrection faith has anything to do with being comfortable. Or returning to the status quo. After all, Jesus was killed for confronting the status quo with the ways of God's kingdom.

Which means the Church isn't about being comfortable, either. Granted, when we take part in a community of faith where love and peace are given and received, comfort is a natural by-product. And that's a wonderful thing. But keeping things comfortable is not the goal of the church. Not when there's still so much new life out there that needs raising up.

Instead, the Easter season reminds us that a resurrection faith doesn't look for places of rest or ease, but for places of darkness that need light to shine in. In the same way, communities of resurrection don't decide to stay away from the problems, places, or issues that make some uncomfortable; rather, resurrection communities intentionally engage the tough stuff in hopes of finding ways to sow seeds of love and understanding that might enable new life to sprout up.

So let's set comfort to the side, TPC, and start pursuing resurrection wherever we can!

Happy Easter!
Rob

Visioning the Future



“Appreciative Inquiry” Cottage Meetings April 15, 29

As you may know, Session has been busy this past year exploring who we’ve been, who we are, and who we are called to be as a community of faith. And to help explore the depth and breadth of these questions, Session has been seeking congregational input.

One such way of seeking congregational input is through a process known as Appreciative Inquiry—a process of asking folks what they value (or appreciate) most about our church, and what they believe are the core characteristics of our church. While Session would love to interview everyone individually, time simply doesn’t make such an endeavor possible.

Instead, Session invites all who have not yet participated in an Appreciative Inquiry Interview to participate in an “Appreciative Inquiry Cottage Meeting,” which will be held after the 10 a.m. worship service on **April 15** and **April 29**.

Limited to the first 20 participants, these meetings will be a venue for members to share some of their favorite memories regarding church life (where you felt a deep connection to the Spirit or knew God was using you to be a blessing) as well as their greatest hopes for the future of our congregation. You may sign up on the sheets in Thompson Hall.

Tending the Flock

In Thanks and Gratitude

To our TPC Family of Faith,

After a year of losses, heartbreak and healing, we wanted to let each of you know how thankful our entire family is for your heart filled prayers, comforting words, and nourishing food for body and spirit. Without your compassion, many kindnesses, love, support and our two amazing pastors through this time of grief, fear and unknowing, we would not be able to see light shining through the darkness. We await in hope and abide in faith, that God's embrace encompasses all who suffer and grieve in a world of injustices. His light does keep shining in the darkness. In this Easter season, a time of resurrection and renewal, please know how much our living by God's grace with you this past year has meant to our family. Through the shadow of the cross, comes the joy of new life. In the words of John McQuiston from his book, *Always We Begin Again: The Benedictine Way of Living*:

“Life will always provide matters for concern. Each day, however, brings with it reasons for joy.”

May it always be so, and may you truly know that our grateful hearts feel the love, hope, strength and joy with you all at TPC, our dear family of faith.

In Christ's peace,
The Jackson Family



**BLUE JEAN
SUNDAY**

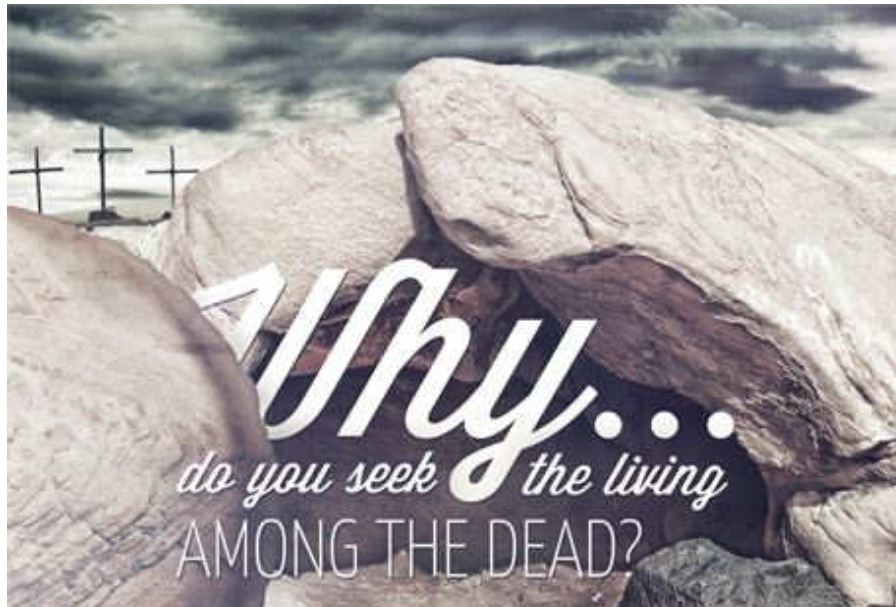
Blue Jean Sunday Sunday, April 22

Following the 10 a.m. service on the 22nd, all are invited to join in Blue Jean Sunday—a day in which we all offer our hearts and hands in care for the facility and grounds TPC is blessed to call home.

Please wear jeans—there will be both outdoor and indoor projects.

A special lunch will be shared following the morning's work.

Worship at TPC in April



*Easter is not simply a day or a season.
Easter is way of life. It's a truth to be lived.*

Throughout the month of April, we will live into the Easter season by exploring ways God continues calling us to live out our resurrection faith.

April 8 As we continue living into the Easter season, we encounter the story of Jesus appearing to his disciples after he was raised. Rev. Strom will offer the morning message, based on John 20, in which Jesus greeted his terrified disciples by offering them “peace.” While they were overjoyed, Thomas, who wasn’t there at the time, didn’t believe what he’d heard; he needed proof. While he’s come to be known by an unfortunate moniker, “Doubting” Thomas reveals that faith and doubt are not opposed to each other.

April 15 Easter reminds us that the Church’s life is birthed within the story of Jesus’ resurrection. To be sure, there is no Christian faith without this central story to our faith. So as Luke illustrates in chapter 24, remembering and retelling the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is central to who we are as Easter people. Pastor Rob will explore the importance of storytelling and this story in particular in this morning’s message.



April 22 This morning, we celebrate Earth Day and TPC’s special covenant to care for God’s beautiful and abundant Creation. Indeed, as Pastor Rob will explore, both the Old and New Testaments declare the magnificence of God’s handiwork throughout creation, while calling on humanity to both enjoy and tend to what God has so beautifully made.

After worship, TPC will also celebrate *Blue Jean Sunday!*



April 29 Most “mainline” Christians (those from traditional Protestant denominations) believe that disciples are called to live into the story of Easter and resurrection’s reality. What is much more complicated, however, is Christ’s clear call to *share* the story—to tell it to others that they might come to know Christ has lived and died for them, as well. In fact, as Pastor Rob will explore in Act 10: 44-48, one of Jesus’ disciples’ greatest works was spreading the story of Christ’s life and love beyond the bounds of Israel, into Gentile (non-Jewish) territories.

Youth

Confirmation

Ever call Tio Pepe's a day or two before your dinner reservation to *make sure* they have the time and date correct? How about repeating back to someone who just gave you directions what you heard to *double check* the turns so you didn't wind up in the wrong place? Ever check a recipe twice to *be certain* that it said "Teaspoon" and not "Tablespoon"? You were just *confirming*, huh?...

That's exactly what's going on during these winter to spring months with 13 young men and women here at TPC as they *confirm* their beliefs, understandings and commitments to God. It's called Confirmation for a reason. When most of them were very young, too young to think or speak for themselves, their parents – and in fact, all of us – spoke for them by proxy at Baptism and expressed their desire to become a child of God. Now, they have reached the age where each can *make sure, repeat, double check* that this is an independent and personal desire.

Our classes typically begin with a prayer, followed by a short video. Class themes have included Brainwashing, God's Sovereignty, Grace and Gratitude, Service, Salvation, Sacraments and Stewardship so far. The bulk of the time, however, is spent questioning, ourselves, each other, even God, and searching for answers that find their basis in God's Word. We are all reading the Book of Mark in the Bible and discussing four chapters at a time, trying to discern how it speaks to us *individually*.

And so, throughout these months of questioning and bible study, these 13, along with their 13 mentors and four teachers, are personalizing and crafting a Statement of Faith which crystallizes their own conception of God and their own place in His world, as it fits into the Presbyterian faith. Please keep all the members of this class in your prayers that the Holy Spirit will guide and enlighten them as they think and speak for themselves. Please also join us to honor and welcome them as they are confirmed on Sunday, May 20, at the 10:00 service.

Montreat Youth Conference TPC Stock

This summer our high school teens will be traveling to the Montreat Youth Conference in Montreat, North Carolina from July 22-28. MYC is a unique gathering of young people from all over the country for a week of study, worship, and recreation. Activities include morning energizers, music, keynote, small group meetings, afternoon recreation activities, and evening worship.

To help offset the cost of MYC, teens will be selling TPC Stock on Sundays throughout May in Thompson Hall after the 10:00 a.m. service. Your monetary investment, as well as your prayers and support, will help provide a transforming experience for a teen. Stop by their table in TH to purchase shares (a single share is \$5) and invest in our teens and in their journey of faith. Thank you!



Session



Session Highlights from March 28, 2018 Meeting

Reverend Carter led the Session through a worship-focused agenda.

Reverend Strom led Session through a prayer exercise.

Visioning

- Session received updates regarding the number of Natural Church Development surveys that have been submitted and the number of Appreciate Inquiry Interviews that have been completed
- Session approved dates and leaders for congregation-wide Appreciate Inquiry Cottage Meetings, to be held at 11:30 a.m. on Sundays April 15 and 29.

Policies

- Session approved a revised Personnel Policy, as well as an updated Wedding Policy.

Nominating Committee

- Session called a congregational meeting for Sunday, April 29 following worship.

Session also learned that:

The Mission & Outreach Committee

- Is exploring ways to continue dialogue begun in the study of Waking Up White
- Has begun dialogue about the church's call to address gun violence
- Approved \$5,000 from Mission funds for the Honduran Presbytery's need to build a new mission center in Telgulcigapa, Honduras.

Finance Committees

- The church's year-to-date net revenue over expenses, before investing activity, is well on track

Personnel & Worship Committees

- Both committees approved the use of the Music Memorial Fund to extend the Music Director's continuing education allowance for 2018 by \$1250 so that he can attend the 2018 Worship & Music Conference at Montreat, NC.

Communications Team

- Team members reported on what they learned while attending the NEXT Church Conference and the Baltimore Presbytery Communications Workshop
- Team continues to explore the church's website, social media and e-mail platforms.
- Team is in dialogue with consultants regarding potential work.

Emergency Response Task Force

- Has been reviewing TPC's current Emergency Management Plan and exploring current best practices
- Will meet with leaders from the Baltimore County Police Department's SHIELD on 4/26

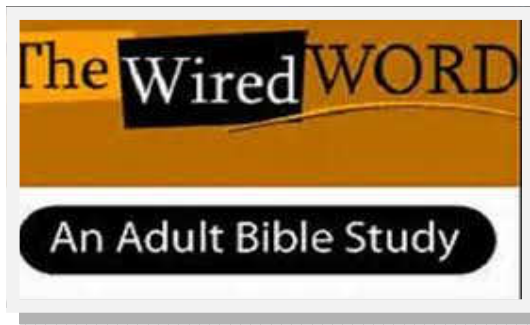
Adult Spiritual Formation / Small Groups

Running Small Group

The Running Small Group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays in April, May and June at the intersection of Loch Raven Drive and Morgan Mill Road at 8:00 a.m. To register contact Brenda Evans



The Wired Word



Sundays—April 29, May 6, 13, 20
11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

A question that resonates with all of us is how to connect our beliefs with our day-to-day life? As the theologian Karl Barth once said, how can we read the Bible in one hand with *The New York Times* in the other? On April 29 and May 6, 20 facilitator Chuck

LaBerge will explore *The Wired Word*, which relates current events and stories ripped from the headlines to biblical texts. Join us as we approach a current event, ask questions, lay it alongside Scripture and explore it together. Join us at one or all of the above dates.

Seated Yoga - Small Group

Explore mindful meditation and yoga poses during a 4-week chair/seated yoga small group beginning on **Wednesdays in Thompson Hall**. We will not need mats or special props. Instead, we will use the chairs and tables as ways to support seated and/or standing poses. We will focus on peace, breathing, and releasing stress. We'll begin on May 2 from 12:30 -2 p.m. The first hour will be devoted to seated/chair yoga. The last 1/2-hour we will reserve for fellowship. Bring a water or a thermos of tea. Karen Cicmanec, a registered Yoga Alliance teacher, will guide this practice. And, based on the level of interest, other adjustments will be made to the leadership and nature of this small group.



Children



Church School & Earth Day

Earth Day will be celebrated in Church School on April 22nd which happens to be Blue Jean Sunday. The children will be involved in activities focused on Earth Day and all the gifts our planet gives to us. Please have your children dress in “Blue Jean Sunday” attire so we can get down and dirty.

Young Musicians Singing in May!

Mother’s Day - Sunday, May 13th

Our 2nd – 5th Graders will sing at the 10 am service with our own Stephen Harouff leading the children.

Spiritual Practice for Families

May 2 & 16 -- 6:00-7:30 p.m.

If there’s one common denominator these days about families with young children, it’s that we all tend to be very busy. Which then begs the question: how can we possibly find time to bring faith and spirituality into our homes? Is family spirituality a contradiction? No. And not only is it possible, but it’s extremely important for children, as well as their parents! On Wednesday, May 2 and 16 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. parents and their children from Preschool-Grade 5 are invited to TPC for “*Spiritual Practices for Families.*” Dinner for everyone will be served from 6:00-6:30 p.m. in Thompson Hall. From 6:30-7:30 p.m. parents will gather with co-leaders Jenness Hall and Katie Cashin to discuss how parents can help implement spiritual practices into their families, while children gather upstairs in the Gym and Youth Room for a program led by Pastor Joel, youth and adults.

To register sign up at www.towsonpres.org

Life is busy right now for parents of children – we get it! Is family spirituality a contradiction? Not if we view spirituality not as an escape from our everyday lives, but rather a search for God in our busy schedules

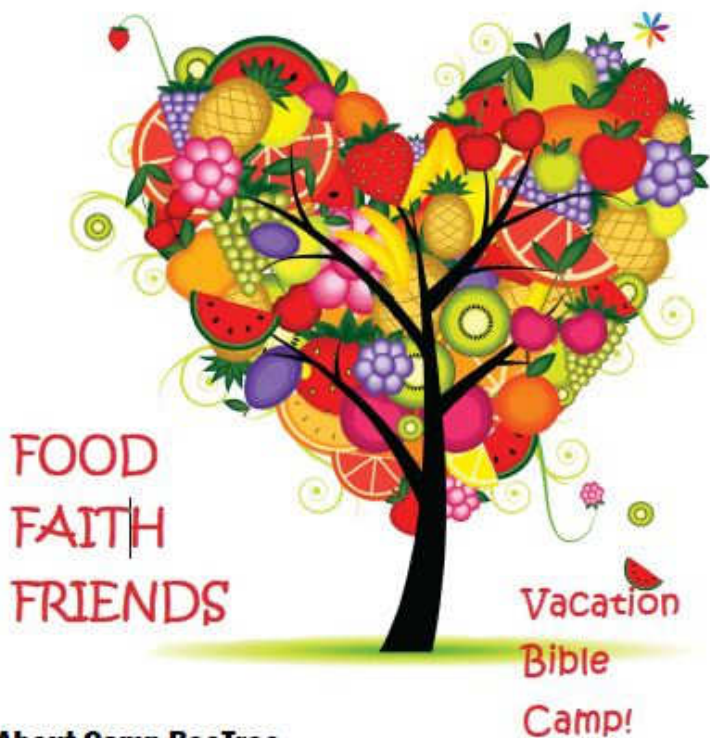


**Faith-Filled
Families**

Camp BeeTree

CAMP BEETREE

JULY 9-13, 2018



About Camp BeeTree

Please join us for a fun-filled week at Camp BeeTree as we focus on

FOOD—FAITH—FRIENDS

as we learn about where our bountiful food comes from, how we can be stewards of our food, our farms and our many gifts. We will build relationships as we explore nature, splash in the stream, surmount obstacle courses, learn music, dance & storytelling and create amazing crafts.



NEEDED! WANTED!

COUNSELORS IN TRAINING (CITs)

ADULT VOLUNTEERS



Mission



Project Clean Stream

Sunday, April 15

3:-00 5:00 p.m.

Cookout to follow (see below)

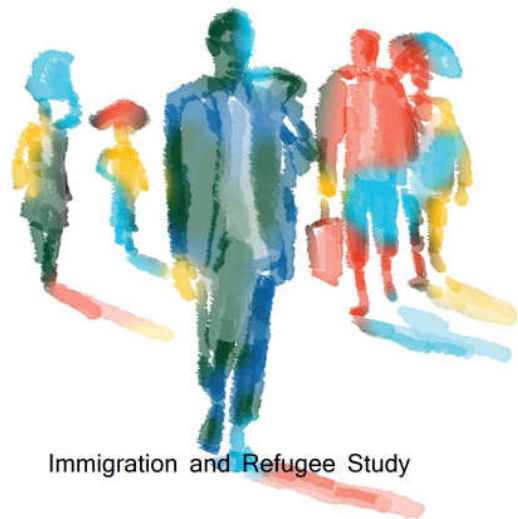
April is when Earth Day is celebrated. Join fellow TPCers as we show our care for creation by cleaning a portion of Roland Stream. Wear clothes that can get dirty and

meet in Thompson Hall at 2:45 p.m. to carpool over to Roland Run Lane. Register online at www.towsonpres.org

A cookout at Chuck & Lorene LaBerge's home at 8236 Burnley Road in Towson 21204) follows at 5:30 p.m.

Immigration/Refugee Study

Coming in May, a 4-week study that explores the Christian calling to seek the well-being of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Join co-leaders Ruth Anne Randolph and Judy Rice and explore 1) how Christians are called to believe in the intrinsic worth of each person 2) how the will of God seeks to ensure that the basic needs of persons for food, clothes, shelter and safety are met (Matt. 25:35-40) 3) and our Christian calling to transform "strangers" into neighbors. Dates and meeting times are still to be determined.



Earth Corps

Earth Sunday and Blue Jean Sunday - Sun. 4/22 11:15-1:15

EARTH CORPS is offering prizes to those who walk or bike the farthest to church this morning! Come in your work clothes to worship and get inspired. Then stay to help with clean-up projects inside and outside TPC, including planting the Intergenerational Garden for season 9! Tasks available for all ages and abilities! Lunch provided afterwards in Thompson Hall.

Season 9 underway in the InterGenerational Garden - so we need YOU!

With the group work day in April, we launched the 9th season of the IGG! Next group work day is Blue Jean Sunday 4/22. We also need volunteers throughout the rest of the season to water, harvest and weed. Come spend some time in this lovely corner of God's creation. Bring a friend, the kids, the dog. Care for creation and our neighbors by helping to provide fresh, wholesome vegetables to ACTC. You can sign-up for one or more dates that work for you, either through the IGG Sign-Up Genius (<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4cacae2da6fb6-2018>), or by contacting Carol (carolappleby@comcast.net) or the church office (tpc@towson.pres.org).



TPC re-certified as an Earth Care Congregation!



This is the 9th consecutive year that TPC has been certified by PC-USA as an Earth Care Congregation. To qualify a congregation must earn a certain number of points in 4 areas - worship, education, facilities and outreach actions. Then each following year the bar is raised, because in order to be re-certified a congregation must do more than they've

done previously, and earn additional points in all 4 areas. This is a church-wide effort, so our thanks go to all of the staff and committees who's actions and commitment contributed towards TPC being re-certified. We're already looking at ways that we can be better stewards of God's creation, and earn the additional points needed for next year's re-certification! If you're

Benefit Concert and Hymn Sing



3 p.m., Sunday, April 29, 2018
Towson Presbyterian Church

Light refreshments in
Thompson Hall

Free will offering for donation
to the Assistance Center of
Towson Churches

Ascension Lutheran Church
Handbell Choir

Central Presbyterian Church
Choir

Immaculate Conception
Church Choir

Mt. Calvary A.M.E. Church
Choir

Towson Presbyterian
Church Choir

Towson Presbyterian Church
400 W. Chesapeake Ave.
Towson, MD 21204



The Assistance Center of Towson Churches, an ecumenical consortium of churches, is a ministry of resources, volunteers and advocacy that provides emergency food and financial aid to families and individuals suffering hardships in our communities.

www.actonline.info | 410.296.4855 | actc316@gmail.com

