

# SPIRIT SOUNDINGS: MAY 2019

## EASTER FAITH

Easter came late this year. The daffodils had been in full bloom for several weeks, and even the tulips were showing more than their buds. It was a beautiful day, to be sure—until you opened the morning paper or turned on the TV to see the photos of the carnage in Sri Lanka brought on by hate. In the midst of a celebration of new life, the old life crawled up from the sewer of intolerance.

In response to the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting the Monmouth County Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness presented a workshop on church security. First, you should all know that the church has a basic security system. The enhanced system that was put in place when there was a nursery school is no longer required. Other than one young man who used the church as a place to sleep quite a few years ago and the tearing down of our LGBT flag, we have not experienced problems.

But in the light of the attacks on synagogues Pittsburgh and Poway and the burning of three historically black churches within the past year we know that the results of hate and fear that have been stoked by political demagogues is not far from us. What is to be our response then?

We are a people of an Easter faith. Easter is not just some event like Christmas, once over, can be put into a box and taken out for next year's celebrations. Easter is something that is with us all year long. Easter is the realization that love can and does overcome death. Easter is the experience of the living Christ in our midst, not just in our worship but in our daily lives.

This does not mean that we are willy-nilly about issues of security, but it does mean that the fear created by such attacks cannot rule our lives as a congregation, as a community. There is no such thing as a risk free environment. Although we may not consider our actions and behavior in such a way, we take risks every day just in our daily lives. Because they are so common, we usually do not consider them as risks.

Our Easter faith requires us to move beyond the rank fear sometimes felt when we hear stories of shootings and other such attacks. The way to address these issues for us as an Easter people is to speak out against the hate filled rhetoric we hear around us, to become instruments of peace and justice in the world.

Certainly in our political culture and society it is not easy to be a voice of tolerance but that is what we are called to be as Christians. Our continuing message to the world around us should be a call to create a society where all can live without the fear that the forces of darkness will overtake our lives. Our Easter faith requires us to be a voice for light in a dark world for we know that love does indeed overcome fear and death.

—*Pastor Joyce*

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Joyce Antila Phipps • Worship 10:30am • Communion 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday • Fellowship Hour, Sundays • Book Club, monthly  
Website: [oldfirstchurchnj.org](http://oldfirstchurchnj.org) • Facebook: [facebook.com/oldfirstchurchnj](https://facebook.com/oldfirstchurchnj) • Twitter: [twitter.com/old1stchurchnj](https://twitter.com/old1stchurchnj)  
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## *Moderator's Message for May*

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*Weekend in Old Monmouth* will be on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 5 pm and on Sunday, May 5 from Noon to 5 PM. During these times, visitors will be given costumed tours of our sanctuary and graveyard (weather permitting). Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall for our guests. Lunch will be served for those who help staff the building. Most of our guests are amazed at the history and significance of Old First in the early formation of our Nation. Organized in 1688, our church played an important part in the establishment of America and was a witness to the aftermath of the Battle of Monmouth.

Roland the golden retriever and his master, Randy Gabrielen, will drop by on Saturday for a visit. Roland enjoys his annual outing to Old First and is always provided with special doggie refreshments. We hear that Roland goes to the beauty parlor before ***Weekend in Old Monmouth*** to have his golden appearance spruced up for the occasion.

### *Dangerous Situation*

**DANGER!** This year, we cannot use our lower level stairway to access the undercroft for *Weekend in Old Monmouth* tours. The stairs have become extremely dangerous, inasmuch as the old railing has completely separated from its upright spindles. Someone could fall and be seriously injured if they attempt to use the stairs. Please stay away from the steps until we can make a secure repair.

### *Weed and Feed*

Our recent sprucing up of the church grounds is a spring tradition. We thank those who showed up to rake, dig, trim and remove yard debris. We hear that Dominick Green and Ron Randolph helped to remove overgrown hedges in the graveyard. Barbara Bates and Dave Sorber did a great job to trim the front hedges near the roadway. We salute Mary Pearson and Rev. Phipps for their labors, along with anyone else that I may have forgotten. Thank you, thank you!

Blessings, Elaine S. Lent



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## Social Media

Please check out our website: <http://www.olfirstchurchnj.org>. Here you have links to the prayer and thoughts for the week, prayers for our denominational missionaries across the globe, Pastor Joyce's sermons, and the calendar. New on the website is a DONATE button to make your pledge or other donation with your credit card or bank transfer.

How to set up your account via the DONATE button on the website. Click on DONATE, then "sign up"; new page opens where you add your contact information; proceed to the next page to enter your credit card or bank account and routing numbers. Then enter donation amount and SELECT FUND (general fund or One Great Hour of Sharing).

Barbara Withers, Church Clerk  
baw.withers@gmail.com

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### CALENDAR:

**The schedule is subject to change. For the most up-to-date information please view the OFC calendar online: [oldfirstchurchnj.org](http://oldfirstchurchnj.org)**

For information on office hours check twitter: [twitter.com/old1stchurchnj](https://twitter.com/old1stchurchnj)

**Sunday, May 12, 12:00 PM:** Deacons meeting

**Sunday, May 19:**

**12:00 PM:** Trustees meeting

**2:00 PM-3:30 PM:** Riotous Readers book club meets to discuss *Moonglow: A Novel* by Michael Chabon.

**Sunday, May 26, 12:00 PM:** Church Council meeting

### Please remember these people in your prayers:

- ✝ Peter A. & Family
- ✝ Margaret Ann & Bobby B.
- ✝ Mark B. & Selina F.
- ✝ Gretchen & Jim H.
- ✝ Jean H.
- ✝ Ruth J. & Family
- ✝ Sandy K.

If you would like someone added to the June 2019 Spirit Soundings prayer list, send an email to [ofc@oldfirstchurchnj.org](mailto:ofc@oldfirstchurchnj.org) with "JUN Prayer List 19" in the subject line.

**Reminder from the Deacons:** We are planning our calendar three months in advance. If there is something special you think the deacons should include, please contact Pastor Joyce or a Deacon. (Deacons are listed on the hallway bulletin board.)

**Shop at [smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2974220](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2974220) and AmazonSmile donates to Old First Church.**

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*Old First Church is dually affiliated with the American Baptist Church and United Church of Christ.  
We are a community of faith, open, welcoming and affirming to all.  
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