

The News of National City

March Issue XVIII Vol. 3

Inside This Issue	
Upcoming Events	2-3
Congregational News	3-4
Camp & Conference	4

Gentle Reminder

Anticipating Spring and Transformation

As I write, Washington, D.C., is enjoying a beautiful spring-like day with temperatures nudging into the 70-degree mark. While weeks away from the spring equinox, we anticipate that winter is drawing to a close as we journey together in Lent. We look forward to a meaningful observance of Holy Week and a glorious celebration of Easter on April 1.

I hope that you are savoring this meaningful Lenten season by reading the extraordinary devotionals written by church members, praying the prayers, and joining in conversations with other Christians in one of our many Lenten Study groups. Editor Diana Morse and her team of 47 devotional writers have done such an exceptional job this year with the Lenten Devotional.

On the Third Sunday in Lent, March 4, National City Christian Church will welcome back to its pulpit the Reverend Sandhya Rani Jha. Ordained at National City in 2005, Rev. Jha is the Director of the Oakland Peace Center (OPC), a collective of innovative nonprofits working to create justice and peace in the city of Oakland and the Bay Area. The OPC is also a physical space, and the legacy project of First Christian Church of Oakland, where Rev. Jha pastored for seven years. She is the author of *Room at the Table: Struggle for Unity and Equality in Disciples History*, a book about people of color in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and co-wrote (with Ben Bohren and Paula Bishop Pochieca) *And Still We Rise*, a congregational study of transformation.



Speaking of transformation, one of the excellent opportunities we have for congregational transformation and growth will be on the weekend of April 14 and 15. Originally scheduled for the weekend of March 17, these new April dates will allow our whole congregation to come together for an important study to move us forward. Many urban congregations have experienced transformation and renewal as they have focused their ministries on meeting persons in their communities and learning from their neighbors about their greatest physical needs and spiritual longings. I am excited about the innovative ministries that we can learn about on April 14 and 15 as we are led by the Reverend Richard Morse of Hope Partnership of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). For now, make sure these dates are on your calendar and make every possible effort to be with us all day Saturday, April 14, and meeting again after 11 a.m. worship on Sunday, April 15.

More information about the Epiphany program is shared in my senior pastor's report in the 2017 Annual Report. Which, by the way, if you have not picked up your copy, the 2017 Annual Report is available online and in print in the Atrium. I am so grateful for Editor Loretta Tate and her great skill to bring together so many reports to accomplish such a momentous, annual endeavor!

Let us look forward with great anticipation, not only the springtime, but the preparation for and celebration of Easter, as we seek renewal and transformation in our own lives, and in the life of our congregation.

- Stephen Gentle

March Birthdays

5	Jeff Jeffrey
7	Loretta Tate
10	Rick Oettinger
11	Michelle Jezycki
13	Phillip Gentle
16	Aixa Diaz
	Peter Morgan
19	David Albee
23	Enid Maitland
	Bettie Moores
24	Jim Gentle
26	Norman Kruse
30	Loretta Franklin

For additions or changes, contact Kathleen Swihart at kswihart62@gmail.com

March Sermons

March 4

Third Sunday in Lent

Rev. Sandhya Jha
preaching
John 2:13-22

March 11

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Love Forever
John 3:14-21

March 18

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Troubled Hearts
John 12:20-33

March 25

Passion/Palm Sunday

Passion and Promise
Mark 11:1-11

NCCC Offers Prayer Call on Monday Mornings

All are invited to join the weekly conference prayer line for National City at 6 a.m. on Mondays. Simply dial 712-775-7031 and enter access code 371015. For more information contact Loretta Tate at 202-489-2020.

Bible Study To Meet March 6

Rev. Steven Baines will lead the Bible study on Tuesday, March 6, at 11 a.m. in the Music Suite. The discussion will be from John 8:31-38 on authentic discipleship--living life truly free. Contact Kathy Swihart for more information.

Lenten Study Groups To Meet in March

Four study groups using the 2018 Lenten Devotional are meeting in March.

On Saturday mornings at 10 a.m., Rev. Steven Baines will lead the study at National City Christian Church.

On Sunday mornings at 10 a.m., the Christian Pathways class will be using the devotional.

On Sunday evenings in Falls Church, Virginia, Lenten studies will be held at the home of Teresa Swihart, starting at 5 p.m. with dinner.

On Sunday evenings in Loudon, Virginia, studies will begin at 5 p.m., with dinner served. On March 4, studies will be at the home of Kathy and David Walker with Rev. Michael McMahon leading the study; on March 11 and March 18, studies will be at the home of Kathy Burger, with Rev. Steven Baines leading the study on March 11 and Rev. Beverly Goines leading the study on March 18.

It's Not March Madness: It's March Melodies!

Following four amazing February concerts, our free weekly Music at Midday series continues in March with four superb organists performing works by some of the world's greatest composers.

March 2: Composer, professor, and organist Wayne L. Wold (Frederick, Maryland) will perform one of his own recent compositions along with works of Edvard Grieg, Louis-Nicolas Clérembault, and Jean Langlais.

March 9: Joby Bell, organ professor at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, will perform works of J. S. Bach, Charles-Marie Widor, and Leo Sowerby.

March 16: Award-winning young organist Clara Gerdes (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) will perform works of J. S. Bach, Percy Whitlock, and David Conte.

March 23: Organ professor James Kosnik (Norfolk, Virginia) will perform works of Dietrich Buxtehude, Georg Böhm, Charles-Marie Widor, and Nicolaus Bruhns.

There will be no recital on Good Friday, March 30.

YADA Discussion Series To Be Held March 2

YADA is holding a small-group discussion series about current events from a Biblical perspective. Their next meeting will be Friday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at Sara Imhulse's, 1420 N St. NW. Each meeting covers a different topic, so you can attend at any time without missing a beat.

The group will enjoy dinner before discussion and ask members to bring a dish to share. Contact Matt at cahill.matt@gmail.com with any questions.

LGBTQ Community Activities for March Brunch on Sunday, March 11

Instead of our usual monthly happy hour, we're planning a brunch on Sunday, March 11, following the 11 a.m. worship service. We're planning to gather a group at 12:45 p.m. at Church Key, located just two blocks from the church at 1337 14th Street, N.W. Please sign up by contacting Rev. Michael McMahon at mmcmahon@nationalcitycc.org.

Bible Study on Wednesday, March 14

We are beginning a new series of Bible studies this month based on the Gospel of Mark, which we (along with churches of many denominations) are reading during worship on most Sundays of this year. This month's session will be held in the Music Suite on Wednesday, March 14, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., and will be led by NCCC Senior Pastor Dr. Stephen Gentle.

Easter Offering on March 25 and April 1

The Easter special offering will be collected on March 25 and April 1. This offering goes to the support of the General Ministries of the Church.

Some examples of these ministries include the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, Council on Christian Unity, Disciples Women, Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries, along with many other ministries which can be found on the disciples.org website. The website more fully describes each of the General Ministries of the Church.

Special Services Planned for Holy Week and Easter

Plan now to take some time away from regular activities and join in our annual celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday with our regular services, including a procession with palms at the 11 a.m. service.

Maunder Thursday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. Celebration of the Lord's Supper, including a dramatic presentation of the Scriptures and music by the Sanctuary Choir.

Good Friday, March 30, 7:30 p.m. The Good Friday service will include a reading of the Passion, choral works by the Sanctuary Choir, and a procession with the cross.

Easter Sunday, April 1, 8:30 and 11 a.m. We will celebrate the resurrection of Christ at our regular worship services. The Gospel Choir will lead us in joyful song at the 8:30 a.m. service. At 11 a.m. the Ephraim Brass will join the Sanctuary Choir, organist Kenneth Lowenberg, harpist Miriam Gentle, and timpanist David Robeck in a festival Easter service.

Annual Meeting Held February 11

Moderator Jane Campbell led the annual meeting at the luncheon held on February 11. Highlights included:

- Report on the Epiphany program in which National City will work with a Disciples of Christ Hope Partnership team of leaders. The first meeting will be April 14 with an assessment in which anyone from the church who wants to come can give input in an appreciative inquiry session. Our consultant Rick Morse, who has his notes from years ago, welcomes a fresh conversation for the process.
- Release of the 2017 Annual Report
- The 2018 updated officary
- Report from Tony Johnson and the "My Neighbors Ministries"
- Report of two financial secretaries added for the Iglesia Cristiana Nacional - Bianca Ellis and Carmen Sotero

Welcome to New Member

We welcomed **Marie Temple** into membership on January 28 at the 8:30 a.m. service. She sings in the Gospel Choir. A resident of Takoma Park, Maryland, Ms. Temple is transferring from Takoma Park Presbyterian Church.

Congratulations to Lieutenant Colonel John Von Almen

Congratulations to **John Von Almen** on his selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. He is currently serving as chaplain at Joint Base Anacostia Bolling in Washington, D.C.

Registration Opens for 2018 Camp and Conference Program

Did you know that there are two awesome campgrounds in the Capital Area?

Camp Mary Mac, our rustic facility, is in Sharpsburg, Maryland, and the Christian Church Conference Center is in Bethany Beach, Delaware, just two blocks from the beach.

Camps, conferences, and retreats for all ages are available throughout the summer. These wonderful facilities are also available for personal and group retreats.

Registration is now open.

At National City, remember that the Education Department is very excited to send campers and offers a 50 percent payment per camper per year. Please contact Teresa Swihart to get the code to receive this discount when you sign up. The region has moved to an electronic format which will make things much simpler over time and if registering for more than one family member or for more than one camp.

Online registration and electronic payment is available. Registration and camp information can be found at the following link: <http://www.cccadisciples.org/camp>



Ken Lowenberg Composes Several Commissioned Works

Recently, our organist Ken Lowenberg has received several commissions to compose music for special commemorative occasions at various churches.

On May 28, 2017, "Sonata on Lauda Anima," for brass quartet and organ, received its world premiere at Hughes United Methodist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland. It was commissioned by the church to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Dr. Van Knauss as organist there. Ken was also asked to play the organ at the morning service and rehearse with the brass, so that it would be a surprise for Dr. Knauss, and so that he could sit with his family in the congregation to enjoy the celebratory part of the service. The work is a three-movement work (fast-slow-fast) all based on motifs from the hymn tune *Lauda Anima* ("Praise My Soul, the King [God] of Heaven"), and the three movements may be performed as one major piece or (as was done in the service) done as three separate pieces in various parts of the service, as Prelude, Offertory, and Postlude.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Cleveland Park United Church of Christ in Washington, D.C., Dorothy

Mora and Georgiana Dunham commissioned Ken to compose an anthem for a four-part mixed choir (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass), piano, flute, and congregation. The result is "God of Our Past, Present, and Future," incorporating parts of *St. Anne* ("O God, Our Help in Ages Past") and *Sandon* ("God of Our Life"). It will be premiered at a festive service on Sunday, March 11.

At Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Bel Air, Maryland, Brent Pertusio, organist, commissioned Ken to compose an anthem for a three-part mixed choir (soprano, alto, and baritone) and organ based on the text, "I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me" to celebrate the church's 150th anniversary. In addition to the text from Psalm 122:1 & 7, the anthem also uses text from Genesis 28:16b-17 (Surely the Lord is in this place....this is none other than the house of God.), creating an ABA form. It will receive its premiere performance at the Festival Service on Sunday, March 18, 2018.

Ken is working on a fourth commission, but it is to be a surprise for the personnel involved, so we will have to wait for a more full report until after the event has taken place!