



# SHARING Our Faith

A Quarterly Publication of Middlesex UMC

Spring 2021

## Worship with us this Spring!

### This Easter, Dare to Dance Again

In the classic film *Singing in the Rain*, Gene Kelly sings, "the sun's in my heart and I'm ready for love," as he danced in the rain. It is daring to dance when pain still exists in the world. And yet, when we dare to dance together in spite of the pain, we proclaim our readiness, courage, and celebration of love that has, and will, get us through. Join us this Easter season as we read post-resurrection stories that point to the joy of living in community, extending our witness, and allowing God's joy to invade our reality.



### Join us on Easter Sunday at one of our three worship services!



#### **7:00am Easter Sunrise**

Join us outdoors for worship in Word and song as we welcome the day celebrating the resurrection.

#### **9:00am Outdoor Service**

Bring the entire family to this outdoor worship service with Holy Communion and a special Sunday school for our children and youth. Nursery will also be available in our preschool playground.

#### **10:30am Blended Worship**

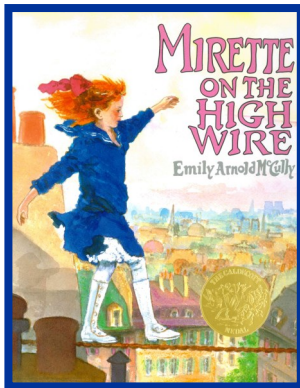
Join us in our sanctuary or online via Facebook Live for Easter worship and Holy Communion. Due to limited seating, you must register to attend Easter Sunday worship in our sanctuary.

A registration link will be provided or you can call the church office to register.

# Easter—A Time to be in Service of Others

By Carol Lawton, Director of Children's Ministries

Easter can be a busy time. With all the egg hunts, candy to buy, eggs to decorate and fancy outfits to find. Throughout all our to dos it can be easy for us to forget what it is we are celebrating during the Easter season. The power of the resurrection can be missed out on simply because we have become so familiar with the story. One way to remember this incredible sacrifice that Jesus did for us is to be in service of others. This year our family is going to keep track of our acts of service using plastic eggs. Every time we do something for someone else, we will add an egg to our centerpiece on our dining table. The goal is to fill up the bowl by Easter. Showing how Christ came not to be served, but to serve. By participating in this activity, our family will be an example of how to live in the world. Won't you join us?



## Finding our Confidence

By Sandy Stuart, Office Administrator

*"but those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31*

Sometimes, when we lose our confidence, finding it again can be difficult. Several years ago, when I worked at a public library, I had the privilege of meeting several authors and illustrators as part of my job. I discovered that many children's books contain wonderful stories and illustrations of life that apply to adults as well as children. When I met author Emily Arnold McCully, I was fascinated with her process for researching and illustrating books. Many times, her stories began as biographies. But she would end up writing stories that blended history with her own childhood experiences. One such story is "Mirette on the High Wire", based on the real-life daredevil Charles Blondin, a French tightrope walker and acrobat from the mid 1800's. As a child, Ms. McCully loved to climb trees and to be high up off the ground. In her story, the high wire artist is the Great Bellini and Mirette is the author as a child. Bellini loses his confidence and fear prevents him from walking the high wire. Only the young Mirette can restore Bellini's courage to walk the tightrope once again. God tells us in the Bible "to not be afraid". But at times, we still lose faith in ourselves. For us to regain our confidence, we must cling to God and not try to balance life's high wire on our own. God is holding us. He will carry us and balance both of us through life. In doing so, God renews us to reach the heights he has intended for us.



# Signs of Transformation

By Jay McDermond, Associate Pastor

It is February 28, and it is overcast and beginning to rain. As I look out my office window there isn't much which I would describe as attractive, let alone beautiful. There are patches of snow on the dead leaves and not yet green grass. There are no spring flowers. No leaves on the trees.

At this point in the seasonal calendar, we all are looking for signs of the transformation from winter to spring. Right now we don't have many. Except one. One which is so subtle, it is easily missed. The male American Goldfinches are beginning their annual transformation.

If you aren't a birder, casual or avid, you may think these beautiful little birds leave our area for the winter. They don't. There are four of them at my feeders as I write. They are, for the most part, still in their drab gray-green and black plumage. However, they have begun the transformation to their stunning summer yellow and black feathers. By April, they will essentially look the way we expect them to look.



As a person who enjoys watching birds and thinking about Christianity, I am thankful this process occurs most dramatically during Lent and is essentially completed around Easter. Like the male American Goldfinch, we also have the opportunity for transformation due to the work of God in Jesus Christ. Christ offers us a transformation from drab and dull to beautiful and bountiful. Every year at this time we are reminded of this in different ways, subtle and not so subtle.

*3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,*

*“See, the home of God is among mortals.*

*He will dwell with them;*

*they will be his people,*

*and God himself will be with them;*

*4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

*Death will be no more;*

*mourning and crying and pain will be no more,*

*for the first things have passed away.”*

*5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”*

*Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” [NRSV]*

*Revelation 21:3-5*

# Authenticity

By Erin Rose, Youth Director

In today's society it is so easy to use a filter. The popular app 'SnapChat' offers many photo filters that can make wrinkly skin look perfectly smooth, eyes big and beautiful, and sparkly make-up look real. It can also twist our features in funny and silly ways. It's easy with social media to use filters or the process of filtering or editing our lives to make them appear a certain way to people who follow us. Who is it that you are drawn to? That perfect face? The perfect seeming life? Or something more real?

God challenges us to live an authentic life. Presenting to our friends, acquaintances and the world our true selves. The dictionary defines authentic this way: "Not false or copied, genuine, real. Representing one's true nature or beliefs, true to oneself. Reliable, trustworthy." Paul tells us in 2nd Corinthians that he pleaded with God to take away the thorn in his flesh but God said to him "My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness."

If we filter or hide our weakness, we ignore God's promise and miss an opportunity to be authentic in our relationships and how we deal with the world. Our weaknesses are a huge part of who we are and how we interact and support each other. I personally find myself drawn to people who are authentic and imperfect like me. I am intimidated by those who seem to have it all together. To be honest - lots of days I'm a mess! But, like all of us, I'm a work in progress, and I'm striving to accept all the thorns God leaves me with, so I won't forget that his grace is sufficient.

Live unfiltered and authentic. Be you, because you are awesome. God made you that way.

## Living Authentically

Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen.

~Brene Brown~

