

# OUTLOOK ~ MARCH 2021

## Unity Hill United Church of Christ

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*“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,  
you are welcome here!”*

The Rev. Dr. M. Todd Shipley, Pastor  
Diane Henderson, Moderator  
Dawn Brezina, Church Clerk  
Jeffrey Stokely, Music Coordinator  
Dorothy W. Pickens, Soloist  
Joanne Wickson, Office Administrator  
Calap Brown, Sexton



**APRIL OUTLOOK DEADLINE** ~ We welcome contributions to our monthly newsletter and invite you to share information, or even something more creative!

***Please submit all articles, events or special announcements for the April 2021 Outlook by Friday, March 19, if possible, and no later than Monday, March 22.*** Thanks!



***PLEASE REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND*** in your prayers or with a note:

Dorothy Barwick, Lucille Baver, Dolores Colaiacomo, Ilse Plitt,  
Katie Schneider, Mitch Wein and Wally Yeager.



***CONGRATULATIONS!*** Katie Schneider is a great-grandmother again.

A baby boy, Ethan Robert, was born to her granddaughter Lauren & husband John on February 12 at 7 lbs. 10 oz. Bob & Barbara Schneider are the proud grandparents.



**PASTORAL CARE ~ VERY IMPORTANT!** If you, or someone you know, is hospitalized, please call the church office to let us know. Hospitals do not notify us when a parishioner is hospitalized.

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** ~ Sun, April 11 after worship service. All members are asked to attend. **Committee reports** due by Sun, Mar 7.

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS** Sun, Mar 14 - Set your clocks ahead 1 hour.



## **Snakes and the 'Spiritual Perspective'**

You may not know the Bible backwards and forwards, but I bet you can recite one verse word for word: John 3:16. Say it with me, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that whosoever believed in him should not die but have eternal life.' One could say that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ in a nutshell and are arguably the most well-known words in the Bible. It's interesting to me that the verses immediately prior to this are a few of the least well known. John 3:14-15 read: 'Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.' The serpent Moses lifted up in the wilderness was not a real snake but one made of bronze. Looking at the image of a serpent was supposed to protect the Hebrews from the real snakes that were plaguing their camp. This idea of viewing an image of something and then being protected from the real thing was not new or isolated to the Hebrews. Many ancient people held this to be a kind of magic. Another example of this type of magic is the symbolic headdress of Egyptian pharaohs. It was shaped like a cobra which symbolized eternal life, healing, and protection from harm. So, are snakes good or bad? How can they be a symbol of healing and a symbol of evil a la the garden of Eden? Well according to the *Dictionary of Bible and Religion* by Richard Gantz it would be more appropriate to understand snakes as a symbol of desire or will, especially in the Old Testament. This understanding makes sense in the light of the 'apple in the garden' story and the fact that snakes were considered a symbol of healing in many ancient 'near eastern' cultures. They were symbols of healing because they seemed to purposefully shed their skins and become new. Remember the theory of evolution had not been posited so why would people see snakes as powerful, willful, and dangerous. It was these attributes that also led them to become a symbol of pagan religions later in Christian history. Given that this is the March newsletter some of you may have already guessed where I'm headed:

These are the snakes that St. Patrick drove out of Ireland! Actual serpents had died out during the last ice age circa 15,000 BC and they couldn't repopulate Ireland because it was now the Emerald 'Island' it hadn't been connected to the European mainland in a million years. No, St. Patrick was a missionary from England, and he drove out pagan religions with a fiery evangelism.

There was your historical perspective, now for the spiritual:

The above passages from John indicate that Jesus had to be lifted up just like the snake was lifted up in the wilderness in the time of Moses. So, if viewing a bronze image of a snake can keep you safe from snakes then what would viewing the crucified Christ keep you safe from? What does it heal you from?

You have to come to church on March 14<sup>th</sup> or view the recorded service to find out. (PS. that's the beginning of Daylight savings time so set clocks ahead 1 hour and don't be late!)

Yours, Pastor Todd

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## CHURCH UPDATES

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### Online Coffee Hour every Sunday evening at 7 pm ~ ALL ARE WELCOME! ~



Missing those fellowship hour check-ins with other members? Wondering what others are doing while at home? At these times, more than ever, we need to connect with our friends and family.

Whether you are attending in person worship, watching the recording afterward or just want to drop in for a chat while Pat Bowman hosts an online gathering each Sunday evening at 7 pm. Please call or email the church office before each Friday to let us know you are interested, and Pat Bowman will reach out to you ahead of the first session to make sure you are able to connect and are comfortable with how it will work. Although we will gather on ZOOM, if you are not familiar with this video conferencing platform have *NO FEAR*. You can use a computer, tablet or smartphone to participate with video and audio. But you can also call in from any phone to participate with audio only. That's right! You don't need any technology beyond your phone. No need to attend each week just come when it suits you.

For my own Lenten journey, I challenge myself to change one habit - pick up a good new habit or put down one that is not helping me. Since Lent is 40 days long and studies often say it takes between 20-60 days to change a habit this means, if I strive to make the change each day in Lent, I can be well on my way by Easter. So, if you are focusing on something new during Lent or maybe giving up chocolate or Starbucks (gasp!), we can check in each Sunday evening and encourage each other along the way toward the miracle of Jesus' resurrection within ourselves and the world.



**NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** – Wednesday, March 10 at 7 pm  
**COMMITTEE REPORTS TO COUNCIL** ~ Due by Friday, March 5

**DRIVE-UP OPEN HOUSE** - Sat, March 13 from 11 am – 1 pm



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**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE ~ By: Sharon Brezina, Chair**

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Well, it was great seeing the kids again this past week. Due to the no heat situation, we had been on a little hiatus 😊

Sunday our class was about Influence.

Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and many others have made a significant impact on the world. Although our kids might not feel like their influence is as significant, God can use their lives to make a huge impact in their schools and homes! I am happy to say that all our students agreed that they can have some influential effect on people ... so that is a great start!

I started the lesson by taking a survey – you might want to take it too ... you can either “Agree” or “Disagree” ... no “somewhat’s” allowed! 😊

### *SURVEY QUESTIONS*

1. One person can have a positive impact on thousands.
2. The most powerful people make the biggest impact.
3. A celebrity has more opportunities to influence others than the person sitting next to you.
4. A small group of people can change the world.
5. Inaction is as powerful as action.

The kids know you don’t have to be a Hollywood star or an Instagram influencer to make an impact. In fact, the Bible gives us example after example of people who, despite feeling inadequate, made a huge impact in their area of influence, and ultimately, the world ... and like us - they weren’t perfect.

We spoke about John the Baptist who preached the same message over and over again until people began to listen! His only goal was to make an impact for Christ. That’s about as far as I got into the lesson – because the kids took it from there -we discussed “today’s” issues – things that are affecting their lives and how they are trying to change things around. We have some highly intelligent youth in this church – loved listening to them discuss issues and how deep down inside they all believe they have it in them to make an impact –they just might need a little nudge.

We then discussed obstacles that can get in the way of making an impact like:

- Are you worried that no one would take you seriously?
- Are you worried that no one would listen?
- Are you worried that you cannot do it alone?

Most of these the kids answered yes. Then I told them that I am sure John the Baptist, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa and Gandhi all had the same thoughts. It did not stop them from reaching their goals. It all started with a simple daily decision to obey Lord and follow your call.

Next week I will continue the lesson – and begin our Easter project!!

Hope everyone is staying safe, Sharon

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## **MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR ~ By: Diane Henderson**

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Greetings Unity Hill UCC Members and Friends, I'm very happy March has arrived! January and February were not the easiest two months. We dealt with no heat in the church for 4 weeks, so it's great to have it back. Shout out to John Rossi for taking the lead on this project and being there every time work was scheduled. Many thanks John! February brought lots of snow, pretty to look at, but not fun to shovel.

March is here and I'm feeling hopeful Spring will be arriving, and with it a sense of renewal. The days grow longer with daylight savings time arriving on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

We are also in the season of Lent: a time for renewing faith, hope and love.

Also feeling hopeful due to so many of us receiving our vaccinations. I'm thankful I have received both shots. Looking forward to the day we can have some sense of normalcy.

I miss seeing so many of you and pray for the day we can gather together again.

I'll close with this ***Irish Blessing***:

***May your days be many and your troubles be few.***

***May all God's blessings descend upon you.***

***May peace be within you. May your heart be strong.***

***May you find what you're seeking wherever you roam.***

Peace and Blessings, Diane

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## **MISSIONS COMMITTEE ~ By: Brenda Finizio, Chair**

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*"This is My commandment: that ye love one another, as I have loved you."~John 15:12*

The Mission Committee has been busy this winter. We provided funding to help needy local families as well as families in third world countries.

We provided funding to Haitian Helping Hands to continue their ministries in Haiti, providing food, clothes, and basic needs to members of the community as well as education.

We also provided funding to Kevin Eidt Memorial Scholarship to help local students in Connecticut pay for college tuition. These students then give back by volunteering hours to help others in need.

We are currently collecting in March for **One Great Hour of Sharing**. OGHS special mission offering of the UCC supports relief for disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world.

We continue to support Council of Churches Greater Bridgeport and UCC mission initiatives. Thanks and God bless you!



## EASTER FLOWERS 2021

Choice of Lilies, Daffodils or Tulips at \$14.50 each. Payment and order MUST be submitted to Church Office by **MONDAY, MARCH 15.**

**DO NOT INCLUDE OTHER PAYMENTS OR PLEDGES IN THE SAME CHECK.**

**Mail to:** Unity Hill UCC, 364 White Plains Rd, Trumbull, CT 06611 Attn: Easter Flowers or put in the mail slot of the office door or call office at 203-374-8822.

QUANTITY	PLANT	COST	TOTAL EACH
	Lily	\$14.50	\$
	Tulips	\$14.50	\$
	Daffodils	\$14.50	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	Cash ( ) Check ( )		\$

### Office Use Only



Check number	
Date received	
Amount	

**Please print your name as you would like it to appear on the memorial list.**

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In Celebration of \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check off one:** ( ) I will help deliver the plants.

( ) I will pick up my plant (s). ( ) I wish to donate the plant(s) to a shut-in.

**IMPORTANT:** If you do not check off a choice, your plant(s) will be donated.

**DO NOT TAKE YOUR PLANT** until you check with one of our helpers. Thank you.

## FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

**FELLOWSHIP OF UNITY HILL ~ By: Dorothy Pickens, President**

**GOLDEN HILL COMMUNITY SUPPERS** - On Wed, Feb 24, at Golden Hill UMC, Bpt, we served 28 curbside. Many thanks to our help: Marsha Piper, Carole Fanslow, Phyllis Bachinski, Brenda Finizio and her friend, Kaitlyn Gallipoli. Helping to prepare the meal at church on Sun, Feb 21 were Patrick Marro, Phyllis Bachinski, Susan Colangelo and Carole Fanslow. Many thanks!

Our next turn will be on April 28. Additional help is always needed and appreciated.

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ~ By: Carole J. Fanslow, President**

No March **Executive Board Meeting or Monthly Luncheon Meeting.** I hope we can have a Spring Tea on May 20. Please stay well until we can meet again in person.

**Kits for Church World Service** – Last year because of the pandemic, the kits were not delivered to the Depot until August. Our church prepared 42 School kits and 20 Hygiene kits. I have bags for school kits so call me at 203-375-1284 and I'll deliver.

## **CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS ~ Responding to 2020's Natural Disasters**

**CWS KITS** - An all-church project, deadline **SUNDAY, APRIL 11!** When we will dedicate them during worship. If you are unable to shop, the cost of kits is \$15, plus \$2 for processing fee; or you can purchase a gift card for \$15 + \$2 postage. Thank you! Please do not enclose money or extra items inside the kits!

CWS Kits are small packages of supplies assembled by volunteers and shipped to families and communities in need around the world – especially in the aftermath of disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and floods. We're rushing these supplies to our neighbors in the wake of these crises, and we need your help.

**CWS HYGIENE KITS** can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families in the face of natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty.

<http://cwskits.org/assemble-kits/hygiene-kits/>

All items need to fit inside a one-gallon plastic zipper closure bag. Remove the excess air from the bag and seal before boxing. Do not add any extra items or toothpaste. A tube of extended expiration date toothpaste will be added to each Kit just prior to its journey.

Processing fee: \$2 per Kit \* Value: \$15. \* Do not enclose money inside the kits or in the shipping boxes. **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

One hand towel measuring approximately 15"x28" to 16"x32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)	One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package (either acceptable)
One washcloth	One wide-tooth comb removed from the package (must be sturdy with at least 6 inches of teeth; no pocket combs or picks)
One bath size bar of soap in the original wrapper	Ten standard size Band-aids
One toothbrush in the original package	

**CWS SCHOOL KITS** give children in impoverished schools, refugee camps, or other difficult settings some of the basic tools for learning. <http://cwskits.org/assemble-kits/school-kits/> All items must be packed inside of the cloth bag. Processing fee: \$2 per Kit \* Value: \$15; \* Do not enclose money inside the kits or in the shipping boxes. **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

One pair of blunt scissors removed from the package (rounded tip, only)	One large eraser (no pencil cap erasers)
Three 70-count bound notebooks or notebooks totaling 200-210 pages (No loose-leaf or filler paper.)	One box of 24 crayons (only 24)
One hand-held pencil sharpener (removed from the package)	One 12-inch/30-centimeter ruler
Six new, unsharpened pencils with erasers (pencils removed from the package)	One 12"x14" to 14"x17" finished size cotton or lightweight canvas bag with cloth handles (solid color or kid-friendly fabric; no logos; no reusable shopping bags; no backpacks)

**There are copies of the CWS KIT LISTS on the table in Fellowship Hall.**

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## COMMUNITY GROUPS AND HAPPENINGS

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### TRUMBULL INTERFAITH COUNCIL

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**GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE** ~ on April 2 at 12 noon at Unity Hill UCC sponsored by TIC.

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### COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT

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**The Rev. Cass L .Shaw**, President & CEO of the Council of Churches is retiring in June after serving the Council for 8 years. During her tenure with the Council, Cass has provided outstanding strategic leadership across each of its programs. She has been instrumental in moving the Council from a model of charity to justice. Cass has become the cornerstone of our organization, a respected leader in the Greater Bridgeport community, and a beloved member of the staff.

Plans for a celebration of Cass's legacy of service will be shared over the coming months and will provide us all an opportunity to express our gratitude for her unflagging dedication to the mission of the Council and her service to the community.

Best wishes to her from Unity Hill UCC!

**DELEGATES MEETING** ~ Tuesday, March 23, 2021 - 6:30 – 8 pm on zoom. Contact Council of Churches for more info at (203) 334-1121 or [info@ccgb.org](mailto:info@ccgb.org)

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### CROP WALK OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT

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The **47<sup>th</sup> Annual CROP Walk** will be held on Sunday, October 17. Hopefully we'll be able to take a walk in the Park that day. Unity Hill collected \$1730 in the 2020 walk! Great job! Thank you!

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### SILVER LAKE CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

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Each year the **FAIRFIELD EAST ASSOCIATION (FEA) BUDGETS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS** to help youth attend events that will help them grow in their faith, learn more about their church, and simply enjoy Christian community. [Click here](#) or call Unity Hill UCC office to obtain a scholarship application for financial assistance to attend ANY Silver Lake Summer Conferences (SLCC) this summer - including family camp. If you have questions, contact Kimberly Martinez Cordova, FEA Scholarship Administrator at [feascholarship@gmail.com](mailto:feascholarship@gmail.com). **Remember: deadline for FEA scholarships is April 15.**

**Also Silver Lake offers scholarships (in addition to any provided by FEA).** The Silver Lake Scholarship Application is available through the Document Center when the camper is logged in to his or her account.

**Questions?** Email [slcc@silverlakeect.org](mailto:slcc@silverlakeect.org) or call the Silver Lake office at 860-364-5526.

## March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 7pm Online Coffee Hour	8	9	10 7pm Church Council Meeting	11	12	13 11am- 1pm Drive-Up Open House
14  7pm Online Coffee Hour	15	16	17	18	19 Info for March newsletter due by today	20
21 7pm Online Coffee Hour	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 7pm Online Coffee Hour	29	30	31			

### Birthdays in March ~ HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

6 Bert Ruys	14 Bob Coulson
10 Maddy Rondon	18 Roseann Giordanella
10 Michael Wheeler	30 Linda Polito
13 Trisha Tetreault	

MAY YOUR TROUBLES  
 **BE LESS**   
 and your  
*Blessings*  
 .....be **MORE**.....  
 AND NOTHING BUT  
**HAPPINESS**  
 come through your  
 **door**  
IRISH BLESSING

*Happy Anniversary!*

### March~ HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

March 11, 2021 ~ Patrick and Rose Parker

Now is a good time to start looking ahead and considering other, non-COVID-19 aspects of your well-being, or recommit to, a self-care regimen. [Bimal Ashar, M.D.](#), an internal medicine specialist, offers tips on safety, health and self-care you and your family can start now.

### **Safety for You and Your Family**

**Keep up the COVID-19 precautions** ~ Though the long-term outlook for the coronavirus pandemic is improving, now is not the time to ease up on wearing your mask or maintaining physical distancing, whether you get a COVID-19 vaccine or not. Until more is known about what kind of protection the vaccines offer and how long immunity lasts, sticking to the tried-and-true coronavirus precautions — [wearing a mask](#), [physical distancing](#) and frequent handwashing — is essential to protect yourself, your family and others.

**Clean out the medicine cabinet** ~ Dreary, rainy or cold days are perfect for cleaning and organizing, and your medicine cabinet is a good place to start. Throw out old first aid supplies, and pitch any makeup and cosmetics that are more than a year or two old, since over time they can become contaminated with bacteria and contribute to skin infections. While you're in there, use the [Food and Drug Administration guidelines](#) to dispose of expired or unused medications properly and safely.

**Avoid low back pain** ~ If you're working at home, watch your back. [Low back pain](#) is a common discomfort, but it can be preventable. Investing in a good chair, a standing desk or a more ergonomic workspace can help you feel — and work — better. Avoid picking up things that are too heavy, and if you run or exercise regularly, check your workout shoes and make sure they still providing adequate cushioning.

**Make exercise enjoyable** ~ Getting more physically fit does not have to be a chore. There are hundreds of ways to get moving, and at least one could be a good fit for almost everyone. Try something new: chair yoga, dance, walking, swimming or running, until you find one that you enjoy. If you choose to go to the gym, wear your mask throughout your workout and ensure the gym is following cleaning and physical distancing [guidelines](#). Some people find that adopting a dog provides both companionship and a healthy incentive to get out and walk.

**Stretch your muscles** ~ Most of us sit too much, and though that comfy chair is tempting, living in it can make you feel worse instead of better. Try setting a smartphone alarm and make it a point to get up from that chair or sofa every couple of hours and work through some slow, safe stretches to help circulation, concentration and comfort.

### **Feed Your Health with Good Nutrition**

**Take one step toward eating smarter** ~ Fast food and processed snacks are all too easy to grab when you're [rushed](#) or stressed, and your health can pay the price for extra fat, sugar and salt. A total overhaul of your diet can be overwhelming, so start small by switching out

one junk food snack each day for something healthy like yogurt, fresh veggies and hummus, or a piece of fresh fruit.

**Cut down on sugar** ~ If you're like most Americans, you eat a lot [more sugar than you need](#), and a lot of it is hiding in foods (and drinks) where you don't necessarily expect it. Soda sweetened by sugar or corn syrup, sports drinks, coffee beverages and canned or bottled teas are a leading cause of excess sugar in Americans' diets: Try unsweetened varieties or water (still or sparkling) with fresh fruit slices instead.

### **Mental well-being is essential**

**How are you doing — really?** ~ Hanging in there, or hanging by a thread? After so many months cut off from loved ones and familiar routines during the coronavirus pandemic, your mental health may need attention. Talk to your doctor and get help right away if you are experiencing persistent signs of [sleep disorders](#), [anxiety](#) or [depression](#): These are not “just in your head,” but genuine health problems that can be treated successfully with the help of a doctor's expertise. Telemedicine appointments may be available.

**Practice mindfulness and reduce stress** ~ You deserve the benefits of taking time to breathe and focus! Even without an in-person yoga class, you can discover the [power of mindfulness](#) with a good app or virtual instruction with an expert in complementary medicine. At the very least, a few daily minutes outside gives you a breath of fresh air and chance to reconnect with the natural world and feel more centered.

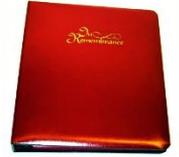
**Are you self-medicating?** ~ If you have noticed an uptick in your drinking (wine and beer included!) or other [substance abuse](#) during the pandemic, you're not alone. Problematic drinking and prescription (or illicit) drug misuse are health problems, and isolation, worry and stress can make them worse. Have an honest heart-to-heart with a professional who can help you get back on a healthier track.

**Beautify your space simply** ~ You don't need a big redecorating budget to make your home base more “you.” Indoor plants, a scented candle, a new piece of art, kids' drawings, pictures of loved ones or a bunch of cut flowers in a colorful container can refresh your surroundings and boost your mood while you wait out the pandemic.

**Self-care: Start now** ~ As we await more COVID-19 vaccinations and look for encouraging news about the coronavirus pandemic, it's time to recommit to your health. **Resume your tests and screenings** ~ If you've put off routine tests such as your regular [mammogram](#), [colonoscopy](#), [Pap test](#), dermatologic exams, and other tests based on your individual risk factors, it's a good time to get back on schedule. The right tests can help give you and your doctors early warning if your health is changing.

For more info: [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/self-care-tips-for-a-happier-healthier-you?et\\_rid=710505143&et\\_sid=3673706&utm\\_source=SFMC&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=YourHealth&utm\\_content=SelfCare](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/self-care-tips-for-a-happier-healthier-you?et_rid=710505143&et_sid=3673706&utm_source=SFMC&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=YourHealth&utm_content=SelfCare)

## Unity Hill United Church of Christ Easter Memorial Contribution to the “Book of Remembrance”



If you would like to make an Easter Memorial Contribution in addition to, or in place of, an Easter Plant, please complete this form and return it, with your check, **to the office no later than Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>** so we can prepare the list of memorials for the Easter bulletin. Donations payable to “Unity Hill UCC” with a notation for: “Book of Remembrance” on the check.

Please fill out completely and be sure to write your loved ones’ name exactly how you want it inscribed in the Book of Remembrance. Thank you!

**Donor’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Loving Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Book of Remembrance Donation: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

*Office Use Only*

<i>Check number</i>	
<i>Date received</i>	
<i>Amount</i>	

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