

the saint mark messenger

the newsletter of Saint Mark Presbyterian Church

April 2011

Worship 9:30 and 11:00 AM

Church School for all ages 9:30 AM

www.saintmarkpresby.org

Saying Grace...from Roy



HOLY WEEK

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. That's the counsel of the Apostle Paul in his pastoral letter to the church in Rome. (Romans 12:15) This is not a greeting card sentiment; it's a summons to a spiritual practice of solidarity with all people. Such a practice does not come

easy or without commitment of one's being. For instance, last week in one shocking day there was the news of devastation in Japan alongside news of the brutal assault and murder of a young woman in Bethesda. The weeping was palpable. (Weeping is now joined with bewildered anger over the shocking news that the killer was an employee of the murdered woman.) In the midst of these twin sorrows, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Saint Mark with joyful music filled with rejoicing. The next day I had the wonder of holding a two day old baby and rejoicing with his parents.

Is it inappropriate to rejoice while others are weeping? In a world of increasing devastation – floods, earthquakes, wars, political upheaval – is one to spend the hours crying and ignore the opportunities for joy in this mortal life? What often happens is nearly the opposite, paralyzed by tragedies one simply sets them aside and carries on rejoicing. ("What can I do anyway?") Neither of these options strikes the difficult spiritual balance of simultaneously holding in one's heart both rejoicing and weeping with our neighbors. Surely no one can hold the grief and the joy in perfect harmony by sheer moral tenacity.

Implicit is the understanding that a spiritual practice is made possible only by opening one's life to the Holy Spirit who widens our capacity to be present with all people in times of sorrow and joy. Nor should we forget that Paul's advice for such spiritual solidarity with our neighbors was given to a congregation, not solitary individuals. A congregation can find ways to practice a spirituality of solidarity by giving voice to weeping and rejoicing; by standing with the suffering in acts of mercy and compassion and joining in gratitude with those celebrating the gifts of life. How? I think this is an instance of simply

taking the next right step, becoming a Christian by living like a Christian. This is a holy invitation to a spiritual practice that brings us into the fullness of life with Christ whose suffering displays the most radical solidarity – weeping with us, dying for us, praying for us - that in union with Christ we may be capable of such wide love for others.

Worship and Lectionary for April

April 3: 4th Sunday in Lent I Sam. 16:1-13;
Ps. 23; Eph. 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
Spirit and Service Sunday;
One Service of Worship at 9:30 AM

April 10: 5th Sunday in Lent
Ezek. 37:1-14; Rom. 8:6-11

Holy Week

April 17: Passion/Palm Sunday
9:30 and 11:00 AM Worship
Matt. 21:1-11; Ps. 118:1-2,19-29

April 21: Maundy Thursday
6:30 PM: Worship commemorating
Jesus washing the disciples' feet
7:30 PM: Worship

April 22: Good Friday
7:30 PM Ecumenical Worship Service

April 24: Easter Sunday
9:30 and 11:00 AM Worship
10:00-11:30 AM: Continental Breakfast
10:30 AM Children's Easter Egg Hunt
Church school is on break for Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43 or Jer. 31:1-6;
Ps. 118:1-2,14-24; Col. 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43;
John 20:1-18 or Matt. 28:1-10; Isa. 25:6-9;
Ps. 114; I Cor. 5:6-8; Luke 24:13-49





Legacy Campaign

The excitement grows as Saint Mark's congregation anticipates the actual launch of the Legacy Capital Campaign.

Campaign team members commissioned during worship on March 13 include: **Gerald Aldridge, Kari Aldridge, Emmett Barkley, Teddy Ferguson, John Hagner, Whet Hutton, Jerry Lowrie, Wayne Miller, Odonna Simpson, and Jon Spargur and Teresa Larson**, Co-Conveners.

Legacy Campaign Kick-Off is April 10! Saint Markers will celebrate the start to this long-awaited endeavor to secure pledges for the restoration of our beloved sanctuary. The church is calling all members to remember:

- How God has blessed us and Saint Mark in spirit and service in this place;
- How the Vision of our church will touch many more lives with the Good News of Jesus Christ; and
- How we want to respond with joy and thanksgiving to achieve the Legacy Campaign goal.

Reminder: Spirit and Service Sunday Is April 3!

We hope that all of you will find an opportunity to serve on one of Saint Mark's many ministries at 11:00 AM, following the 9:30 AM worship service and fellowship time, on the first Sunday of the month. There are other activities, including a Christian Education class, occurring at the same time. Please join us!

Lenten Evening Study Series Continues

through April 13 at 7:00 PM
Soup Supper at 6:30 PM

Free of Charge – Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace: In an increasingly graceless culture, how do we learn to forgive when forgiving seems so counter intuitive or even futile? When incivility reigns, where can we find the motivation to give? These are deeply personal questions of Christian faith and practice which Miroclav Volf, one of the most celebrated and respected theologians of our day, raises in light of God's generosity and Christ's sacrifice for us. This is a fresh examination of two practices at the heart of the Christian faith – giving and forgiving – that will launch our Lenten discussions led by **Pastor Roy Howard**. This book offers a compelling invitation to Christian faith as a way of life through personal stories, reflection and sheer celebration of the giving God.

Books are available for \$13 in the church office. Make your checks payable to: Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, with the memo portion noting: Volf book for Lent Study. Put in **Tom Hudson's** mailbox #21.

Adult Education

9:30 AM Sunday Morning Adult Education

Five Week Lenten Series:

March 13 to April 17 (no class April 3)

Spreading a Table in the Wilderness: Practicing the Presence and Absence of God

Leader: **The Rev. Maggie Hayward**,
our former Christian Educator

Saint Mark Book Lovers 2010-2011

Book Lovers, the Saint Mark book discussion group, meets the 3rd Monday evening of the month at 7:30 in the parlor. Our list of books to discuss for the coming year is below and on the website. Join us!



April 18: Sarah's Key by Tatiana De Rosnay

May 16: Triumph & Hope: Golden Years With The Peace Corps in Honduras by Barbara E. Joe

June 20: Potluck to choose books for 2011-2012

Youth News

The Youth Group would like to thank the congregation for the generous donations provided during the Annual Lenten/Mardi Gras Pancake Feed on March 6. The \$1,000 in donations will go to support the Youth Group Mission activities.

Recycle your small electronics

Help Saint Mark Youth Group and the environment

Updated your phone? Retired your old PDA? Has your Ipod given up the ghost? Got a drawerful of old ink cartridges? For a second year, the Youth Group is sponsoring an Electronics Recycling Project to raise money for mission trips and help the environment. Any electronics are accepted, including cell phones, laptops, and other portable electronics, and they need not be operable. The benefits are two-fold: the Youth Group collects money from these recycled items and we work toward greening our world by keeping these items out of landfills. Flyers are posted in the church and two collection boxes are available in the atrium and the coat closet. Collections will continue through mid-April. Contact **Carol Henig** at les@leshenig.com for further details.

Youth Group Calendar

- **April 3:** Youth Group Fellowship @ SMPC, 5:00 - 7:00 PM (meal provided)
- **April 10:** Youth Group Local Mission Project - Saint Mark Work Day 12:00-3:00 PM (Chipotle lunch provided)
- **April 17:** Palm Sunday (No Youth Group event)
- **April 24:** Easter Sunday (No Youth Group event)
- **April 29:** Rummage Sale set-up and pizza dinner
- **April 30:** SMPC Rummage Sale (proceeds go to Youth Group Mission Activities)

Additional information is provided via e-mail. To be added to the YG email list, please contact **Sharon Shoemaker** at sharon_shoemaker@hotmail.com



Cherub Choir

The children (K-3rd) of Saint Mark lift their voices in praise every Sunday during the last 15-20 minutes of Sunday School, and sing during worship services once a month. They sing next:

- **March 27:** during 11:00 AM worship
- **April 17:** during 11:00 AM worship (Palm Sunday - sing with Choristers and Chancel Choir)

For more information or to be added to the email list for updates, please contact **Teresa Larson** - tj120854@gmail.com.

Parish Life Ministry

Please join with us for our annual Continental Breakfast on Easter Sunday!



As in years past, there will be time for all to attend, so come early or stay late to enjoy the food and fellowship. (Look for details in the weekly news and in the Sunday bulletin.)

The Saint Mark Annual Progressive Dinner is coming – mark your calendar!

The weather may have its highs and lows, but you can look forward to nothing but highs and sighs (of delight) at the annual Saint Mark Progressive Dinner which is scheduled for Saturday, May 14. You won't want to miss the culinary artistry of the chefs and chef wanna-bes. Perhaps you could plan to host either appetizers, dinner or dessert, or simply contribute your favorite dish to one of the courses--or even just bring the wine...however you choose to participate, there will be an opportunity for you to enjoy this wonderful event to socialize with your fellow Saint Markers and learn who bakes the best bread, who makes the creamiest pasta sauce, or who roasts the juiciest ribs. Sign up sheets will be posted in the atrium on March 13. For information or questions, contact **Kari Aldridge or Kathy O'Brien**.

Coffee hour hosts are still needed!

This seemingly small task is a very important part of being a welcoming community on Sunday mornings. We need your help! There is a sign-up sheet in the atrium, but if you are hesitant because you're not sure what it involves, please email me (elder **Lyn Hill**) at lynhewitt@earthlink.net and I will call you or email you back to answer your questions!

Local Mission

Local Mission's 2011 Grants: A big THANK YOU to those who took a few moments to complete the Local Mission Ministry's Spirit and Service Survey in February. Your responses helped the Local Mission Team make important decisions about the allocation of Saint Mark's local mission funds for 2011. Based on your input, our funding goes heavily toward Hunger, Homelessness, and Health. The awards are as follows:



Action in Montgomery: \$2000; Rebuilding Together Montgomery: \$2750; Montgomery Housing Partnership: \$2000; Crossway Community: \$4000; Miriam's Kitchen: \$500; Hearts and Homes for Youth: \$2800; KHI Services: \$6000; Literacy Council of Montgomery: \$500; St. Luke's House: \$5000; ARC of Montgomery Co.: \$1000; Bethesda Help: \$2000; Bethesda Cares: \$3000; Manna Food Center: \$5000; Interfaith Works Clothing Centers: \$6000; Interfaith Works Homeless Shelter: \$5500; Friends in Action (Interfaith Works): \$6000; Primary Care Coalition: \$3000; Friends in Action Team (Saint Mark): \$500; Church Women United: \$100; A Wider Circle: \$1000; Montgomery Coalition for the Homeless: \$500.

Rebuilding Together update: Build Day April 30, 2011

The initial inspection of our assigned home reveals it to be ideal for Saint Mark's Rebuilding crew to make a real difference. The family (parents and 4 kids) are warm, personable and very involved in the renovation process. The house is basically sound, but comes with a laundry list of needed repairs. We could use workers with all skill levels. Some of the jobs are: weather stripping, insulating, gutter repair/replacement, post hole digging, flashing installation, electrical switch repair, deck repair, roof repair, hanging a bi-fold door, moderate to heavy-duty cleaning, building a railing, and replacing lights.

Have an extra electric range sitting in the basement you don't use? There is an urgent need to replace a 30" (standard size) electric range. The existing range is dangerous and we would like to replace it as soon as possible. So we are looking for a serviceable, good condition replacement. We have a truck and dolly and we make house calls.

Dana Johnson (danatina@verizon.net) and
Tom Hudson (shizont@gmail.com).

Remember you can sign-up to donate or volunteer:

1. on the bulletin board in the Atrium
2. by email at shizont@gmail.com or anatina@verizon.net
3. by phone at 301-530-5612 or
4. on line at
<http://www.rebuildingtogethermc.org/saintmarkregister.htm>

Get Out Your Sneakers – Saint Mark MOVES for Mercy Clinic!

Mark your calendars – Join Saint Mark as we Run/Walk for our health and the health of the uninsured at the 3rd Annual Mercy Clinic 5K Health Run/Walk on Saturday, May 21 at 8:30 AM at the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital Life Science Center Campus. Registration is \$25 and available online at www.mercyhealthclinic.org. Blood pressure readings, body density measurements, skin cancer screenings, and orthopedic consults will be offered! Prizes are awarded for the top three overall finishers and top 3 finishers in each age group. All runners/walkers receive the distinctive Mercy T-shirt. Please see **Dick Pavlin** for more information! Look for an update in the Bulletin in the coming weeks to join the Saint Mark Team!

Saint Mark's Scotland Scholarship Needs Your Help

The Scotland Scholarship Funds are depleting. We currently have six dedicated seniors and one hard working sophomore at George Mason who are diligently trying for scholarships to help fund their college educations. These students are aiming high – there are aspiring engineers, pharmacists, nurses, accountants, athletic trainers, medical assistants, and preschool teachers in the group. And you can help. Any amount you can give -- \$5, \$500, or \$5000 will help these students from the Scotland Community (with whom Saint Mark has had a relationship for many years) achieve their dreams. Please place your donation in **Barbara Welsh's** mailbox (#19) labeled for the Scotland Scholarship fund and help these deserving students reach their goals.

Saint Mark's Friends In Action Update

The FIA team is now working with a young mother with three lively young boys, ages 10, 8, and 3. These kids would LOVE playmates in the evenings and during the summer. If you (and your kids!) would like to meet them and help out, please call **Jon Davol**.

Montgomery's Faith-Based Community Gets Closer to Making the Maryland Dream Act Become a Law

The Maryland Dream Bill passed the state Senate this week, inching advocates closer to turning the bill into law. The Dream Act would offer in-state tuition benefits at community colleges to undocumented students who have graduated from a public high school and whose parents can prove they pay Maryland taxes. The students could transfer to a state university after two years, again paying in-state tuition rates.

This is an issue that Action in Montgomery (of which Saint Mark is a member) has been working on for some time. The bill must now pass the House. While the MD Dream bill has been passed many times in the House, it has never passed in the Senate when there has been a Governor who has promised to sign it.

Quill of the Clerk

At our meeting this month, the Session:



- Worshipped using the Daily Examen, a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us.
- Approved a report concerning the proposed Rock Spring Town Center across from Walter Johnson High School which recommended that no objections or comments be sent to the Planning Board.
- Heard a report from the Sanctuary Renovation Team. Appropriated \$112,098 from the Building Reserve Fund to enable us to complete the construction documents phase and the bid and award phase.
- Set May 15 for an informal meeting among Session and congregants for general communication about what is happening at Saint Mark.

Sara Coe
Clerk of Session

Coming to a Fellowship Hall near you!

The Annual Saint Mark Rummage Sale
Saturday, April 30 8:00 – 1:00

The Rummage Sale is one of the biggest fund-raisers for the Youth to support their mission and ministry trips in the summer. Plans are already underway to make this year's sale one of the biggest and best. We are going to try some new things this year:

- We will be advertising the sale on Craig's List as well as in the Washington Post and Gazette.
- We are encouraging you to think of donating "higher price" items this year in addition to our usual requests for clothes, household and decorative items. Think of things that might sell on EBay for \$50 or more (e.g., collectables, designer items, antiques, etc.).
- Tentative plans are to advertise these "higher price" items on Craig's List and allow buyers who request a "viewing time" to come on Friday night before the Sale to buy these items. Anything not sold then will be available on Saturday. We may take some unsold items to the ISold It on Ebay store if they don't sell on Saturday.
- We are lucky to be able to start taking donations a week before the sale, starting around April 20. Because there is no Sunday School on Easter Sunday (April 24) we will be able to use Rooms 104 and 108 downstairs to store the donations.

- We hope you will be able to transport the items on your own, but if you need assistance, please let us know and we will try to help.

We are always looking for willing volunteers to help with the sale, its preparation and cleanup. If you can help in any way, or if you have any questions, contact **Phyllis Norrie** (Phylnorrie@gmail.com) or **Sharon Shoemaker** (sharon_shoemaker@hotmail.com). Remember - It's never too early to start your Spring Cleaning and decluttering! Here are a few hints to help you clean out:

- Get three large bags, or boxes to collect items in: Label them 1) Trash, 2) Saint Mark Donation, 3) Hold (think about it). As you examine each item – put it in the appropriate bag/box. Throw the trash out, bring the Saint Mark Donation to the sale, and review the items in the Hold bag/box before the sale to see if you have decided what to do with it.
- Start with the obvious and easy – it will give you a sense of accomplishment and encourage you to do more. Go through the things you see every day, or the things that make you crazy because they are in the way, you don't know what to do with, have too many of, etc.
- Pick one room at a time and don't stop until you have finished going through items in that room. Set a timer so you don't linger too long on making decisions. When you finish, give yourself a pat on the back and don't do another room until another day.
- If you haven't used an item in the last year or so – it is a perfect candidate for donation. Think of those once in a lifetime used kitchen gadgets, clothes you haven't worn in years, CDs/DVDs that your children have outgrown, etc.
- Go through the heirlooms and mementos last. If they are a little more valuable than you might find at a rummage sale, let us know and we will see if we can sell it through Craig's List.
- When you are done – throw yourself a party! You deserve it. Better yet – come help us at the Rummage Sale and watch your things bless others.



Rummage Sale
Donations Needed

Stewardship

One Great Hour of Sharing

- Floods in Brazil, Pakistan, Australia;
- Earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, New Zealand and now Japan;
- U.S. Gulf Coast Oil Spill; Tornados in Kansas; Floods in Iowa
- Displacement of large groups of people due to political unrest in Libya, Ivory Coast and Sudan.

The needs are great, and we often find ourselves at a loss for how to help those who are suffering catastrophic loss as well as daily challenges. We, at Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, can and do provide support in several ways, through our prayers, finances and actions. Our Local and Global Mission Ministries actively monitor and seek ways to assist groups financially and with volunteer efforts. This is supported through your annual pledge giving. Our long-term partnership with "Hearts With Haiti" provides support for some of the most vulnerable in that country and is supported through your annual pledge and special fundraising efforts and mission trips. We also support, through special offerings, the national Presbyterian Church USA's efforts in disaster relief and hunger amelioration. **The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering is a special offering that we collect during the Easter season that supports Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program and the Self Development of Peoples ministry.**

The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Presbyterian Hunger Program support projects to provide basic humanitarian relief and, in some cases, long term re-building in the areas listed above as well as many others. Projects are supported with ecumenical partners as well as directly through projects initiated by the PCUSA.

The PCUSA's Self Development of People (SDOP) ministry partners with local groups in the United States or other countries that are oppressed by poverty or social systems and want to take charge of their own lives and communities. In 2010, the Self-Development of People of PCUSA provides grants for projects that are initiated and controlled by an economically poor community group who benefits directly from the work. Recent projects include: assisting low-income Hispanic women address poverty through a sewing program; supporting training in construction and building repair of a group of ex-offenders; and local urban garden projects, among others. We will be collecting the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering during the Easter Season (Palm Sunday and Easter).

The following prayer has been taken from several prayers written by the Reverend Karen Horst, the Minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Orillia, Ontario, and the Self Development of People's Ministry and is offered as you consider your support.



"Great God of Love and Justice, in gratitude we ask that you help us to navigate each day, seeking your ways through the power of your Holy Spirit. Come to us in our times of doubt and despair and remind us of your guiding love. Come to us when we feel overwhelmed and remind us of your sovereign power. Forgive us for the times we resist the change you ask for and we fail to act. We bring our gifts as symbols of our very selves, consecrated here to doing your will, bringing justice more fully to our society. Use us and our offerings to support ministries to those in places near and far where needs are greater than our own. Keep us forever disciples who respond to injustice by taking action in your name, for it is in your name that we both serve and pray." Amen

Planned Giving

If you are planning to make a relatively substantial contribution to the church (or other charity), you should consider, if you are in a position to do so, donating appreciated stock (or mutual fund shares) from your investment portfolio instead of cash. Your tax benefits from the donation can be increased and the organization will be just as happy to receive the stock.

This tax planning tool is derived from the general rule that the deduction for a donation of property to charity is equal to the fair market value of the donated property. Where the donated property is "gain" property, the donor does not have to recognize the gain on the donated property. These rules allow for the "doubling up," so to speak, of tax benefits: A charitable deduction, plus avoiding tax on the appreciation in value of the donated property.

A good illustration and explanation of this planned giving technique is provided on the Motley Fool website: http://www.fool.com/FoolCharityFund/Donating_Stock.htm

Members of the Planned Giving Committee are available to discuss this (**Laura Brouse-Long, Tom Champion, Joe Piff, Lee LaRoche**). **Jon Spargur** is the point of contact for donating securities to the church. Any decisions should be taken in consultation with your professional financial, tax, and legal advisors.

Alternate Transportation Sunday

Leave the car at home and come to church another way: walk, pedal, glide, run, jog, stroll, roll, skip, push or ride a bus or even carpool --BIKE or WALK (or SHARE THE RIDE) TO CHURCH DAY! – May 1, 2011 (raindate May 8) Mark your calendars for this fun Spirit and Service Sunday. Dress will be casual. The Welcoming Ministry planning team will offer zipcode groups for arranging carpools and biking teams. There are many details to make this event a success. If this effort speaks to your heart, please call **Alison Bennett** to volunteer.



A Successful Pancake Feed earned \$1000 for Youth Mission Trips this Summer!

Interested in joining a CSA this year and want to pick up your produce at Saint Mark?

“Over the last 20 years, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer. Here are the basics: a farmer offers a certain number of "shares" to the public. Typically the share consists of a box of vegetables, but other farm products may be included. Interested consumers purchase a share (aka a "membership" or a "subscription") and in return receive a box (bag, basket) of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season.”—LocalHarvest.Org

Veggie lovers at Saint Mark are working to make our church a pick-up location for two CSA's during this year's growing season. If you (or a friend, or a neighbor) are interested in joining a CSA, please contact **Stephanie Lai** for details at stephedmondson@yahoo.com. Deadlines are approaching quickly in order for the farmers to plan the season. For more information about CSA's and the advantages for farmers and consumers, please visit: <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>. If you have any CSA experience to share, we'd love to hear it!





Easter Memorials

Lilies or pink hydrangeas to decorate the church for Easter may be ordered, or Memorial Garden Fund contributions may be made, by submitting an order form and a check made payable to the church, marked "Easter Memorial." Please indicate in whose memory, or in whose

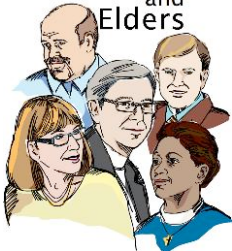
honor, you wish the flowers or contribution to be dedicated, and whether you wish the flowers to be given to a shut-in, or left in church for you to pick up after the 11:00 AM Easter service.

Contributions for flowers for delivery to shut-ins, or contributions to the garden fund, qualify as charitable contributions. The contributions cover the cost of the flowers, with no cost to the church operating budget. The balance goes to the fund for the upkeep of the memorial garden.

The Memorial Garden Fund is outside the regular church operating budget. It is supported by direct contributions, inurnment fees, and memorial contributions at Easter and Christmas. The latter averaged \$1,466 a year during 2008-2010.

Leadership at Saint Mark Please recommend an Elder or Deacon!

Deacons and Elders



Our leaders will be key for the church's future changes and challenges. Help us seek out those people whom God has prepared to lead Saint Mark. Please give us your recommendations of members whom you believe are being called to serve as Elders and Deacons beginning January 2012.

You may recommend a member or yourself (if you believe you are being called). Note that it is not necessary to contact the person in order to submit a recommendation.

Please return the form found in the atrium to any Nominating Ministry member, place in the box in the atrium, or by email to a.bennett7@comcast.net. Our deadline is April 23.

Nominating Ministry Members: **Alison Bennett**, (Chair); **Battokok Bityeki** (Co-chair); **Heather Banks, Carol Henig, Ellen Kiel, Dave Lyman, Sharon Shoemaker; and Roy Howard**, Ex-Officio. Thank you.

Saint Mark People

Nancy Landon, a longtime friend and member of the Saint Mark community died March 9 after a long illness.....our prayers are with her husband, John, and their children.....

The next Messenger deadline is Thursday, April 21. Please send articles to ellie@hagner.org or put in mailbox #11 in the office.

The Messenger is on the web! If you are still receiving a hard copy and would like to "go green" please contact Susan in the church office!

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We welcome everyone to our community
Regardless of race, class, marital status,
sexual orientation, ability or disability.
Here you can find a home for your
heart and an opportunity to serve.