



## Towson Presbyterian Church

*Towson Presbyterian Church is an inclusive community of faith  
growing as disciples of Christ.*

### Pastor's Thoughts

Lenten Questions for Disciples:

How are we truly living as Christ's body in the world today?

How are we connecting people with the grace and hope of Jesus Christ?

How are we spreading the peace of God's kingdom?

How are we spending ourselves for the sake of the Gospel?

Lent is upon us. The 40 day season in which we examine the distance between the ways we are living and the way to which Jesus calls us. It's a vitally important season for the church. It forces us to examine the ways we model the kingdom of God to the world around us, versus all the ways we slink back into the comforts of the status quo. As such, it's a time to ask ourselves deep and difficult questions (see above).

On the first Sunday of Lent (the Sunday following the Parkland tragedy), I preached a "Lenten Lament," 1) expressing my pain at the violence 2) admitting my culpability within it all, and 3) expressing my conviction of the church's call to do something about it. We share a slightly abridged version of that lament again here:

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O God of Parkland, FL... God of Marshall County, KY... God of Las Vegas, NV...  
God of Baltimore, MD... God of Towson and Towson Presbyterian Church

It happened again. And you know it. I know, even now, you grieve it, as you tend to all those crying out amid the pain of children taken. Innocence stolen. Caregivers killed. Unspeakable violence hurled against your people in places we assumed they'd be safe.

For how much longer will this go on, Lord? How many more need to die? How many more parents and siblings and children will be forced to lose a loved one? For how much longer will we worship at the altar of guns and violence? Answer me! Speak up! I want to know! How much longer? 'Cause I'm sick of it. I'm sick of seeing the photographs of children who've been taken from this world too soon. I'm sick of seeing videos of terrified children running from their schools. I'm sick of seeing the unspeakable pain of parents amid unfathomable loss. And I'm sick of feeling helpless to do a damn thing about it. I'm sick of it all, O God.

And I'm disgusted that in these moments of horror and pain that I also feel a sense of gratitude that it didn't happen at one of my kid's school. How selfish is that, O God? How inward is my perspective? How confused is my heart—repulsed to tears at the violence and yet shakenly thankful my children are safe? Speak to me, Lord, for I can't make sense of it. Not one horrific bit of it.

*Continued on next page*

### March 2018

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[www.towsonpres.org](http://www.towsonpres.org)

#### The TPC Staff

**Rev. Rob Carter**  
Pastor, Senior

**Rev. Joel Strom**  
Pastor, Associate

**Stephen Harouff**  
Director of Music/Organist

**Jeness Hall**  
Director of Children and  
Family Ministry

**Tara Flynn Runge**  
Administrative &  
Communications  
Coordinator

**Kathryn Bojanowski**  
Business Administrator

**Leslie Foretich**  
Director,  
Towson Presbyterian  
Preschool

**Kyanne Fields**  
Childcare Coordinator

**Walter Austin**  
Sexton

So hear me, God, and feel my anger. Feel my fury that this has happened yet again. As if anyone didn't expect it to happen again when we keep doing nothing about it. Hear my anger at a society that keeps allowing this to happen. Hear my anger at a government that refuses to take culpability amid this problem while bowing at the feet of special interests. Hear my indignation at a culture that stigmatizes mental illness to the point that people are afraid to talk about it or deal with it transparently. Hear my rage at a culture that teaches weaponry leads to safety. That you solve problems by having more weapons than the next guy. Hear my anger at all of it.

And particularly, O God, hear my voice, my anger at myself for my own culpability in this problem. You know me, Lord. You know the thoughts I think... the words I say... the actions I take. So tell me, God— what have you seen me do to reduce gun violence in my own community, let alone this nation? Where have I spoken out, Lord? Where have I acted to mitigate the systemic issues that lead to violent crimes in the first place? What have I done to alleviate the systemic poverty that creates conditions ripe for violence? What have I done in pursuit of a better education system in Baltimore City? You know and I know, God, that I have not done enough. Not nearly enough.

How hypocritical, O God... how hypocritical for me to say I care about something, but then do so little about it. How pointless are my prayers when I don't back them up in the way I live and the actions I take.

So hear me, God of justice, as I lay myself at your feet, pleading for your mercy... as well as the strength of your Spirit. And hear me as I ask for your help as I grow in the conviction that I can and must do something about this...

Be with me, Lord, and all those who're participating in the upcoming seminar in two weeks at NEXT church, where we'll spend at least some time exploring ways of reducing gun violence in our communities.

And help me, dear Lord, be one who does not condemn those who disagree with me. But rather, may I learn how to build better bridges of understanding with those who hold a different understanding on the origins of gun violence. That even if we disagree on some things, we might still plot a path towards tomorrows where school shootings are a thing of the past, and where mass shootings are only read about in the history books.

For while I feel angry and guilty... while I grieve amid this national trauma, O God, I cling to the hope I have in you, and your promise to never abandon this world—wherever we might find ourselves within it. And I cling to the peace of knowing you are already in the midst of Parkland—that you were in that school shedding tears with those who suffered, and embracing the departed into the arms of your salvation as soon as they passed. And I trust that you will continue to work your grace into those who will continue to suffer from the trauma of gun violence... in Parkland, Marshall County, KY, Las Vegas, and every other place innocent lives have been innocently gunned down. Be with them all, and all those tending to them.

And hear me, Great God, as I find the faith to voice my hope, my trust, my conviction that we—your children—your body of Christ in the world today—will be not just a voice, not just a vessel, but a *force* for peace in this world. That we might be a people who not only speak peace with our words, but create communities of peace on our way to establishing your kingdom of peace. Peace where weaponry is laid down and tools for harvesting are picked up. Peace where the shackles of abuse, and poverty, and mental illness are dealt with openly and honestly, without fear or judgment. Peace where people who disagree on such a complex issue can still unite in pursuit of something bigger than any one of us—the common good.

Hear me, God. Answer me. And be with each and every soul who seeks to pursue the peace of your kingdom, and the grace of Jesus Christ. My Lord. My Savior. I thank you for him. And I plead for his kingdom here and now and always. Amen.

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## Tending the Flock

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### A Note of Thanks

*"We wish to send a heartfelt thank you to all who sent prayers, warm thoughts, cards, food, rides, etc. during Ed's recovery from cardiac surgery. Your caring support was overwhelming. We are truly blessed to be part of such a church family."*

Blessings to you all. Ed and Ann Lehwald



### Spring Forward!

Daylight Saving Time begins on the morning of **Sunday, March 11**. Please remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour before going to bed the previous night.

### Sanctuary Flowers

Many Sunday dates are still available for 2018. Please consider this special way to honor someone (who may have passed away) or a special occasion (anniversary or special birthday). To sign up the chart is located outside the Chapel.

**Flower containers needed:** Frequently, the Sunday Sanctuary flowers are donated and small arrangements are made up for Karen Williams, Member Care Coordinator, to take to members as she makes her visits. Many of these folks live in small apartments or may be in the hospital and therefore, we need **SMALL** containers; including pint size canning jars.



Thanks to all who have donated containers in the past; we have used every one of them. Please bring the clean containers to the Deacon office located in the Narthex.

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## Worship at TPC in March

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**Sun., March 4** Throughout the month of March, we continue following Jesus along the annual journey to Jerusalem. To be sure, the Lenten journey is not an easy one. It reveals a path requiring repentance and sacrifice and, ultimately, mortality that many fear and others flat-out ignore. But such is the path of discipleship—one that gives up life in order to find it! Rev. Strom will offer the message on this third Sunday in Lent. The sacrament of Communion will be shared.

**Sun., March 11** If the Lenten journey to the cross reveals anything, it reveals the harsh realities of sin and death. Our Reformed faith teaches that we cannot overcome either by ourselves. But the glory of Lent revealed in Easter's "Alleluia!" uncovers the gift of grace beyond our wildest dreams! But who exactly gets the grace? What's required? Pastor Rob will dig into John 3 as we explore these questions together.

**Sun., March 18** As the cross comes ever closer on this fifth Sunday of Lent, we explore Jesus' words in John 12:20-33. Words that reveal a Savior who is troubled, but willing to die. Words that reveal just how far this world will go to keep the status quo.

**Sun., March 25** This morning we celebrate Palm Sunday—the day on which we celebrate Jesus' long-awaited, triumphant (if ironic) entry into Jerusalem. As Mark 11 tells it, the people of Jerusalem greet him like a king. But come Friday, they'll cry for his death.



**Thurs., March 29** We gather in the sanctuary at **7:00 p.m.** to celebrate one of the richest services of the Christian year—a Maundy Thursday service of Communion & Tenebrae. Amid the Tenebrae (A Service of Shadows), the rich symbolism of light, reflecting the light of Christ alive in the world, plays a central role as we progress through Christ's journey to the cross.

As Maundy Thursday also marks the celebration of Christ's last supper with his disciples, we will also share the sacrament of communion.

**Fri., March 30** On Good Friday, we gather for a noonday service (**12:00 p.m.**) in the chapel. This Taize-style worship offers time for prayerful reflection and meditative song, as we reflect on the depth and meaning of Christ's death for us.

**Sun., April 1** On Easter morn we gather in celebration of resurrection, celebrating two identical services at **9:00 & 11:00 a.m.**

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## Easter

For Advanced Planning  
Holy Week Schedule

March 25 - Palm Sunday Service @ 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

March 29 - Maundy Thursday Communion & Tenebrae Service @ 7:00 p.m.

March 30 - Good Friday Service @ noon

March 31 - Easter Party & Egg Hunt @ 10:00 a.m. in Thompson Hall and Lawn

April 1 - Easter Breakfast in Thompson Hall 8:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Easter Services @ **9:00 a.m.** & **11:00 a.m.** both services in the Sanctuary

*“Last year I agreed to participate in the **Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service**. I was not certain what to expect. As scripture was read, sanctuary items were removed or covered, Will Jones sang “Were You There”, and the lights gradually dimmed. The Tenebrae Service turned out to be one of the most moving and inspirational services I have experienced at TPC. I was so thankful I was there.”*

- Barbara Heinfeldten

### Easter Flowers

Easter Flower Order Forms may be found at the entrances to the sanctuary and on the [TPC website](#). Flowers are \$15 each.

Orders and payment are due by March 23. They may be left in Tara’s mailbox or placed in the offering plate.



### Easter Breakfast

**TPC will again host Easter Breakfast  
for our members and guests  
on Sunday April 1, 2018.  
In Thompson Hall at 8:00 - 10:45 a.m.**

Please register [on line](#) or sign up in Thompson Hall on March 18 & 25th after the 10:00 a.m. worship services. The cost is \$6.00 per person or \$25.00 for a family of four or more.

If you are available to help set up, prep and serve, or clean up --- volunteers are greatly appreciated. Please reach out to Sandi Burt - [SJBWPC@msn.com](mailto:SJBWPC@msn.com) or call the Church Office.

**Donations are welcomed:** Easter is almost here and spring is just around the corner. This year we will decorate our Easter breakfast tables with plants that can be planted outside near the Thompson Hall door or in the flower garden next to the IGG vegetable garden. We welcome any donations to defray the cost of these plants. Please mark your donation "Easter breakfast plants". Thank you and happy Easter.



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## Worship Reflections

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### Reflections on the Wholeness and Healing service



Held on Sunday, January 21, 2018, the service included the Anointing of Oil for anyone who wished to receive it. The Book of Order's Directory for Worship reminds us that "Healing was an integral part of the ministry of Jesus which the church has been called to continue as one dimension of its concern for the wholeness of people. Through services for wholeness, the church enacts in worship its ministry as a healing community."

The following is a reflection from TPC member, Pat Keller.

*Me? Agree to be an 'anointer' during the service for Healing and Wholeness? Honestly, why would anyone think I am 'worthy' to anoint them with oil and to Bless them? Well, maybe another female would feel more comfortable sharing her request for Healing? Lord have Mercy, what have I agreed to? Although I memorized the Blessing, I held the typed copy (thank you Jim K), firmly in my hand that held the Holy Oil. I was amazed at the number of people 'in my line'. After placing the Oil, in the sign of the Cross, on their foreheads, the most unique feeling came over me. As I read the Blessing to each person, I did not feel like it was ME speaking, but someone speaking through me. I am so glad that I did not decline Joel's request to participate. This was one of the most moving experiences in my life.*

**Youth Sunday** was February 25. Worship was led by TPC Youth members, and the theme of the morning was "Strength".



From some members who attended or listened online...

~~ "What a wonderful and inspiring service. These kids give me hope for our future!"

~~ "Their messages were excellent!"

~~ "Wow! Moved me to tears!"



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## Adult Spiritual Formation

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### New Small Group - Seated Yoga

Explore mindful meditation and yoga poses during a 4-week chair/seated yoga small group beginning on **Wednesdays in Thompson Hall**. We will not need mats or special props. Instead, we will use the chairs and tables as ways to support seated and/or standing poses. We will focus on peace, breathing, and releasing stress. We'll begin on March 7th from 12:30 -2 p.m. The first hour will be devoted to seated/chair yoga. The last 1/2-hour we will reserve for fellowship. Bring a water or a thermos of tea. Karen Cicmanec, a registered Yoga Alliance teacher, will guide this practice. And, based on the level of interest, other adjustments will be made to the leadership and nature of this small group.



### Epiphany Star Reflection

By Alison Peer

**Think.** This is the word on the Epiphany star that chose me. As more of an action taker than a thinker, I knew pretty quickly after that star leapt into my hand that God has a sense of humor. Since then, I've been trying to do as Joel suggested and, "let the word work on me." Although there are days where I've faltered, I've found myself more and more letting the "think" creep into my everyday. When I'm having a difficult conversation at work, I have found strength and guidance in stopping to **think** about the words, decisions, and actions I am choosing. When my kids are pushing me to my limit, I've taken time to **think** about the best response for the long term gain for all of us. When I'm frustrated with a colleague or friend, I've challenged myself to **think** more about their circumstances or perspective before judging. Thinking takes energy and time for me, but it's starting to slow me down, helping me to feel God's presence in my day to day, and grounding my actions in a way that brings confidence and peace. God is there all of the time. Sometimes, I need to **think** to feel His presence.

### My Experience with a *Waking Up White* small group

By Cass Mairs

Going into my small group experience for *Waking Up White*, I was thinking how it might compare to other book clubs I'm in. I wondered if we'd all get along, if our thoughts on the book would coincide, if we'd naturally listen to and add on to each other's ideas. During the early sessions of our group, I experienced some frustration. I wasn't sure I understood some of the other members' points, and I was reticent about asking for too much clarification. Would this be seen as questioning their views? Or simply what it was – a request for a restatement. I felt like we weren't quite connecting. That instead we were each expressing an individual opinion that had little tie-in to what the previous speaker had said. Nevertheless, I did walk away each week with something new to ponder. Some things resonated with me for a few days; some I still think about.

As our sessions progressed and we became more comfortable with each other, our conversations deepened. We laughed more. We shared more intimate experiences. Consequently, I leave this experience realizing that this small group experience was not a "book club." The book was simply a tool to get us talking to each other about a charged subject. Although I'm glad I read the book as it did change and expand my thinking, I'm more thankful for the opportunity to have had real conversation with people at TPC – both members and nonmembers. We shared an experience together, one that took us beyond "cocktail party" conversation and into true fellowship.



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## Session

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**Session & Deacon Nominations** - The 2018 Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for the offices of elder (to serve on Session--the governing body of the church) and deacon (to serve on the Board of Deacons--the caregiving body of the church). To nominate individuals to either board, please complete and submit a Nomination Form, which can be found outside the main entrance to the Sanctuary or downloaded from the website --- click [here](#).

*Newly formed.....*

### **Emergency Response Policy Task Force**

The pain of recent gun violence demonstrates the inherent vulnerability of simply living in community—something we do as a church each and every week. Session not only joins in lamenting the recent loss of life due to violence, but also seeks to ensure the safety of all involved in any church ministry, including Sunday morning worship. As such, Session has formed a new Emergency Response Policy Task Force, charged with:

- 1) exploring current best practices regarding emergency prevention and management and
- 2) recommending updates to TPC's current Emergency Management Policy.

Among the emergencies to be studied are fire, illness, weather, and active shooter emergencies. Members of the task force include Ken Pennell, Pat Keller, Kent Rayburn, and Bob Williams, to whom we are grateful.

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## Communications

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The newly formed Communications team is currently meeting every other week as we review all the ways in which TPC communicates --- with its members and the Community --- both intentionally and unintentionally. No small task! But we are up to the challenge.

To aid our moving forward, we hope to enlist TPC members who have the skill and desire of: photography, editing, interviewing, writing, and marketing; If you are interested in the occasional task or would like to volunteer, please let Tara Runge ([tpc@towsonpres.org](mailto:tpc@towsonpres.org)) know your availability and skill.



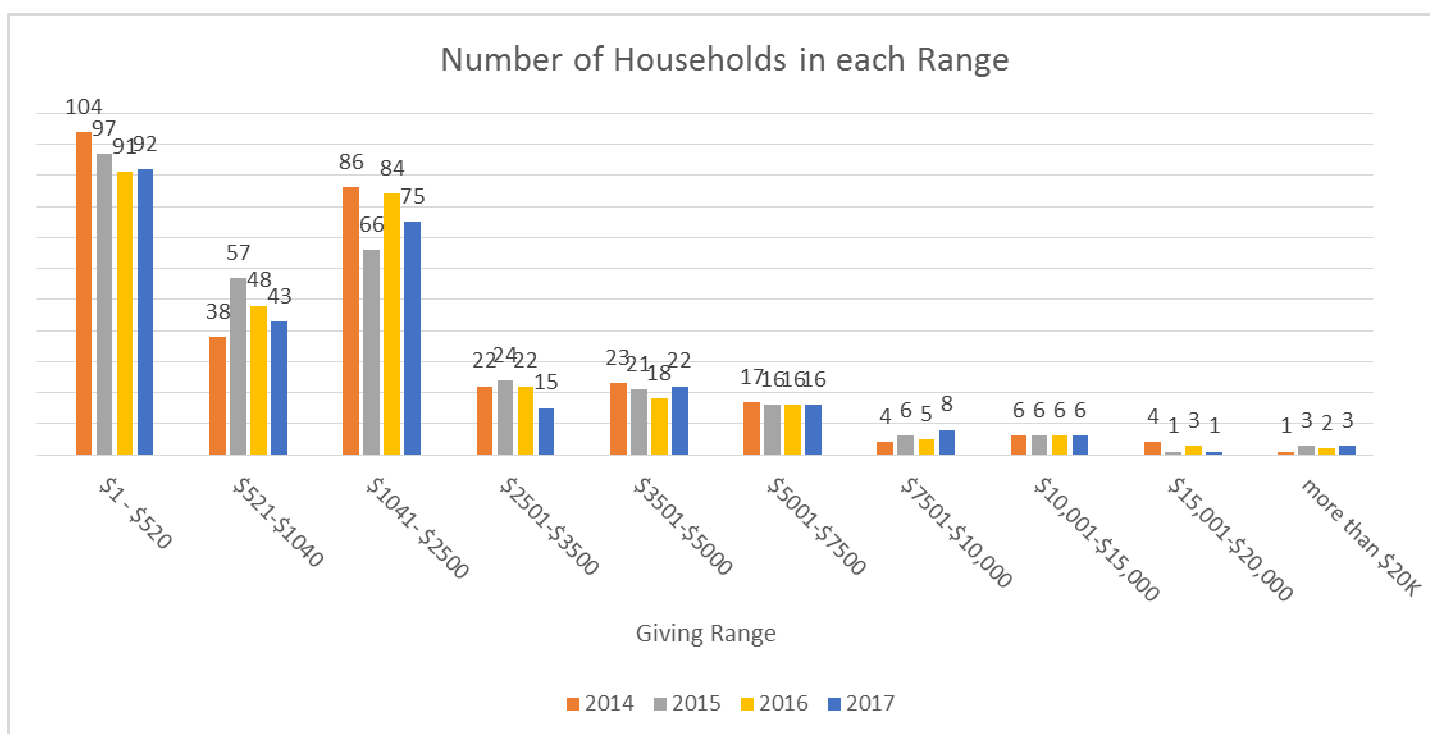
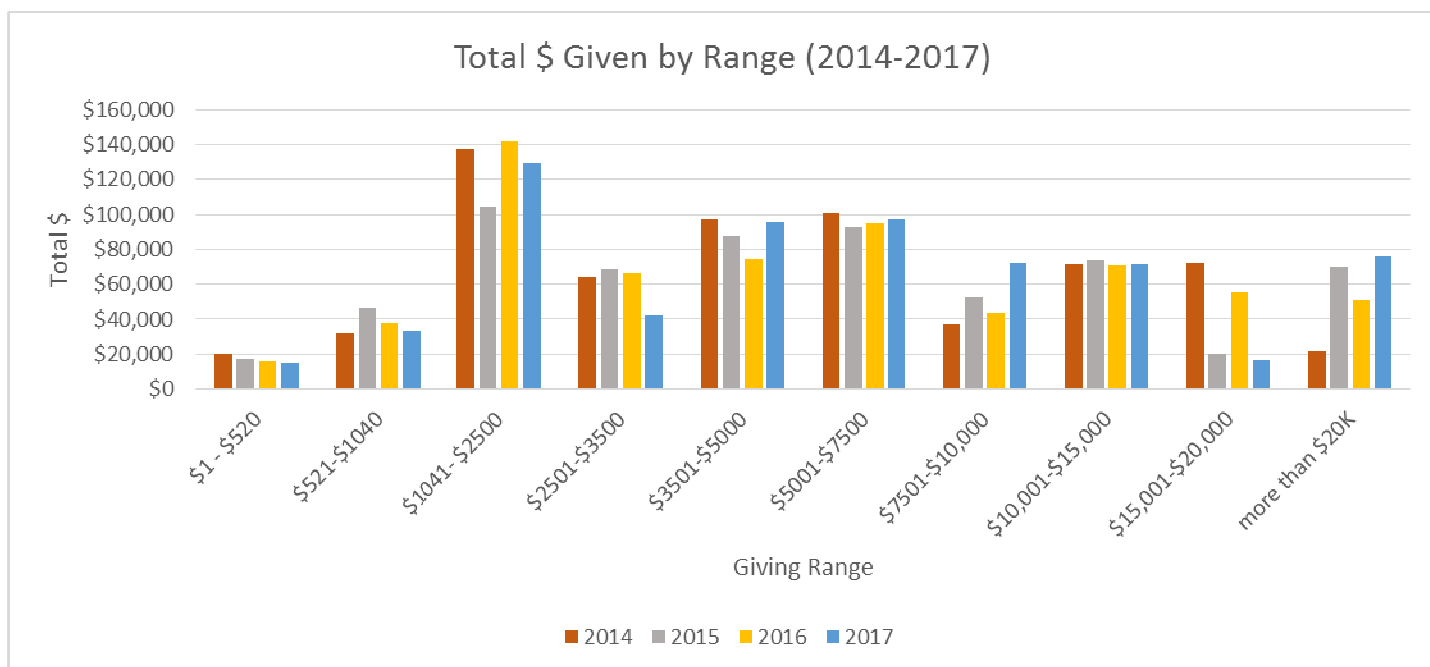
# Stewardship

## Amazing Gifts!

Thank you for your gifts to Towson Presbyterian Church. More than \$642,000 was given to the General Operating Fund in 2017. Using each and every dollar, TPC is doing the work of God here in Towson and throughout the world.

As we look to a goal of \$650,000 for 2018, we pause to take a look at some historical giving trends over the past four years. It is exciting to see an increase in the number of households that were able to give in the \$7,500 - \$10,000 range. What would TPC look like if every household aims to move up one giving level?

- Cornelia McKenna, Chairperson



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## Children

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### CAMP BeeTree Returns!

We are so excited that our annual vacation bible school will be held **July 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>**. What other church offers such a unique summer camp in the wilderness?! We are so fortunate to offer this fun filled experience to children.

Did you know that back in the 1960's, TPC was gifted a 220+ acre tract of land called BeeTree Preserve. Located in northern Maryland, it is *almost* to the Pennsylvania border. The buses we travel to camp make the trip full of fun, laughter and singing.

Approximately fifty (50) children from Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade get to run, play, hear about how God loves each of us as well as learn about this year's theme ***Food, Faith & Friends***.

Hunger is a local as well as a global problem. We will hear from special guests who are experts on food and agriculture to teach the kids what each of us can do to be loving caretakers of our land – especially farms. And of course there will be yummy food to make and devour!

One of the loveliest aspects of Camp BeeTree is our middle & high school students who volunteer to be Counselors-in-Training (CITs). Many of our CITs attended BeeTree as campers, and return to be leaders and role models who bring joy, laughter and love to this special week.

A day at Camp BeeTree includes amazing arts & crafts, learning songs, a huge hillside waterslide, daily snow cones, field games, stream walking, and more. It is such an amazing experience that many of our families, at the insistence of their children, schedule their summer holidays around the BeeTree dates so their children won't miss it. We can't wait!!!



### An Update from Our Church School's Godly Play Class

By Stephanie Hemm

In our Godly Play class (4 and 5 year olds) we are exploring the mystery of Easter as we introduce the symbolism of the season.

For our introductory lesson we passed around a reversible drawstring bag of rough, purple velvet on one side and smooth, white satin on the other. Inside were six large puzzle pieces, each one rough purple on one side and smooth white melamine on the other. As each student withdrew a piece we had a wonderful discussion as we noticed the rough purple surfaces, the smooth white surfaces and the fact that there were six pieces, just like the six Sundays of purple leading up to Easter. We completed the puzzle as a community and found they made a cross, purple on one side for Lent and white on the other for Easter.



his led us into a lesson using our favorite prop, the desert box (a sandbox on wheels) as we told the story of Jesus in the Wilderness.

During our creative response time we made Lenten calendars for home, colored stained "glass" crosses for our windows and played "Go Fish!" and "Memory" with our Biblically themed decks.

You are invited to stop by our Godly Play classroom (*located in the Education Wing- second floor*) to see the beautiful materials and serene space our young learners get to enjoy each week!

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## Earth Corps

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*A reminder ... calendars are still available*

### **MD Lenten Creation Care Calendar - a special opportunity**

Lent is a time for prayer, fasting, and more intentional sharing. This year, TPC is joining with many other people of faith in Maryland in heeding God's call to be stewards of God's Creation. This calendar, created by Interfaith Power & Light, is an aide to help us be more mindful of the ways that our daily habits impact both "our common home" and all of those with whom we share it. Suggestions include opportunities for prayer and reflection, lifestyle changes, advocacy and appreciating nature. All of the suggestions may not speak to you, but we encourage you to continue striving for 1, 2 or 3 a week throughout the remainder of Lent. Mark the days that you attempted the action suggested, and turn your marked calendar in to the Earth Corps mailbox on Easter. For those completing 6, 12 or 18 of the actions listed; *recognition* will be shared on Earth Sunday. Calendars can be downloaded from the TPC website link, or copies picked up in the narthex and Thompson Hall.



### **Come Play in the Dirt - Launch of Season 9 of the IGG**

Saturday, March 24 - InterGenerational Garden - 9:30 -11:30 a.m.

Weather permitting we'll meet in the IGG to begin Season 9! Bring gloves, garden tools and join us as we make some repairs, prepare the beds, and plant the first cool weather crops. IGG volunteer sign-ups in Thompson Hall, or just join us! All ages welcome. Questions? Contact Carol Appleby.

[carolappleby@comcast.net](mailto:carolappleby@comcast.net)

### **Here Comes the Sun - Let's go solar!**

Earth Corps is excited to partner with Retrofit Baltimore, a program of the nonprofit Civic Works, to bring a free, public info session on residential solar power! Considering going solar, and want to learn more about the process? Join us to learn about the basics of residential solar power, the installation process, financial considerations, and how you can receive an exclusive discount off the market price of your solar system through Retrofit Baltimore's Solar Co-op. Saturday, March 24 @ 3:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m. in Thompson Hall. Please RSVP at [www.retrofitbaltimore.org/rsvp-towson](http://www.retrofitbaltimore.org/rsvp-towson).



- Carol Appleby, Chairperson

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## Mission

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The annual Mission Trip to Honduras has been cancelled this year due to political instability in the country. The major concern would be the availability of fuel and personal safety during the 4 1/2 hour trek from the airport to the town of Copan where we work.

We are planning the 2019 trip for next spring, anticipating that the political climate stabilizes.

- Patty O'Brien, Chairperson



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## Memorial Commission

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As I write this newsletter it is 75 degrees in the middle of February. I am beginning to think spring and Easter, which is a perfect time to honor a loved one. Many needs of the Church remain available for memorials, and restricted contributions for specific projects are also deeply appreciated. New ideas are added frequently and may not be included in the current list but are available upon request. You are welcome to take the brochure (located in the Narthex) home to review the memorials. New suggestions are always welcome.

An up-to-date Memorial wish list is being compiled with new ideas for Memorial gifts. Examples of some items on the list are:

General Landscaping-spring is an ideal time to think about the landscaping of three areas of the Church property, now filled with weeds and over-grown perennials.

- The bed right between the Chapel and Sanctuary doors,
- the bed adjacent to the Thompson Hall entrance
- The bed along the Thompson Hall parking lot

Memorial Music Funds for annual repairs and maintenance of the organ.

Somewhat out of season, but really needed, is a ten foot artificial pre-lit Christmas tree for the holiday season. About (\$500)

For Memorial Gifts, I would like to remind you to send appropriately identified donations directly to Kathryn Bojanowski in the Business Office. If they are placed in the Sunday Offering, they may not get credited to the proper Memorial account. If this happens, thank you notes, family notification, and appropriate record keeping of the gift may not occur as the information is not forwarded to the Memorial Chairman.

If you would like further information, you may call Susan Hossfeld 410-683-4357 or  
by e-mail at [shossfeld@comcast.net](mailto:shossfeld@comcast.net).

