

# ON THE COMMON

April 2026

## From the Pastor's Desk...

BY REV. SEAN AMATO

**"HOSANNA!"**

**SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-11**

In last week's scripture, Jesus and his people approach a place and time that their Savior, our Savior, knew to be his end. They approach Jerusalem – the City of David, the City of God. And it has been a long journey. In my sanctified imagination, I imagine Jesus reflected on his haggard group of friends and family – those to whom he'd been preaching, at least for the last few weeks, something like his own death. Under the shadow of a Roman fortress just outside the Holy City, His people walk into the place – walk through a crowd, even – that would kill the Son of Man. A little grim, I'd say.

And having seen this grimness, felt this grimness – for Jesus had human emotions; Jesus wept, and would weep – I like to imagine it wasn't just prophecy that led our Christ to summon a donkey and a colt – no, it was an understanding that even His people needed joy.

Joy – yes, joy! That forgotten emotion, one that the world so endeavors to squeeze out of us – to take from us through endless streams of bad news and countless hours of doomscrolling. Joy, an emotion that some of us barely feel outside of paying off another bill or clocking out of work. Joy, which Jesus's followers might not have known much of, following him through His ministry. Jesus knew that joy was part of the human experience, having shared in it Himself; He knew how important it was to humanity, too. And he chose one of Jerusalem's city gates, through which Rome's armies had passed in "triumph" time and time again, to share his joy.

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**OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

- Rick Stelle, Moderator
- Ruth Mills, Clerk
- Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
- Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

**CHURCH STAFF**

- Sean Amato, Minister
- Joseph Godfrey, Music Director
- Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
- Donna Myers, Administrative Asst
- Patricia Renaud, Organist
- Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
- Romeo Mendes, Sexton

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

- Ruth Mills, Caring
- Mary Stelle, Christian Ed
- Michell Eskeli, Diaconate
- Jim Robshaw, Hospitality
- Teri DeBoise, Karen Yetter, Missions
- Mark Colton, Music
- Bonnie Drolet, Outreach & Action
- Kerri Conway, Property
- Bob Meo, Stewardship
- Bob Meo, Fundraising, Projects

**DIACONATE**

- Michell Eskeli, Chairperson
- George Briggs
- Marcia Brodeur
- Richard Brodeur
- Sandy Gamache
- Martha Hunt
- Darlene Magaw
- April McAllister
- Jim Robshaw
- Stephen Wowk

**From the Pastor’s Desk ... (Cont.)**

For those outside the historical ‘know,’ a Roman” triumph” was a great wartime procession meant to herald a major political or military victory. A triumph was considered one of the Roman Empire’s greatest honors: glory, supremacy, success, and sometimes even living godhood were afforded to the triumphator leading the march. And the folks of Jesus’ Jerusalem, subject to Roman rule, would have been familiar with the pomp and circumstances of a triumph: they’d been conquered not so long ago, and some in the crowd might’ve been paraded through their own streets as wartime spoils.

Before that same Roman Empire, Jesus would assemble His followers in a mock triumph – a funny, provocative celebration that that contrasted Roman might with Christian humbleness; contrasted Roman order and efficiency, Roman control and conquest, with a beautiful and joyous gathering. They tossed down their palms and their cloaks instead of laurels and denarii; they shouted “Hosanna” – “deliver us” – in the same kind of way that a Roman citizen might hail their passing triumphator. Before the very people who would kill Him, before the same people who would scatter and abuse His church for generations: Jesus and his people laughed at the false power of those who had conquered God’s City, for they know the Romans hadn’t conquered what mattered.

They joked and cheered, knowing of the shadows to come; they celebrated with their Savior, a Savior who loved and cared for them, who cultivated their joy and humanness amidst a world that could not make them joyous, that never intended to make them joyous. Christ’s people resisted their harsh and unforgiving world that day, and they did it by not hiding their joy.

Friends, we find ourselves in a time of unprecedented strangeness. This is a season of tumult and division – much like the one in which Jesus and His followers did their work. And just like those days,

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## From the Pastor's Desk ... (Cont.)

we Christians trundle forward, stumble forward, with no idea as to how rough things might get. In this, we follow a familiar path for our people. And in this scripture, Christ makes it clear: Inviting in joy isn't just a 'nice' thing to do: after a long and hard road, with another long road ahead, joy is a means of survival. Here, Jesus shows us how to be joyful before even our enemies – how to laugh and parade before their gleaming soldiers and harshest judges.

Be joyous, my friends, even if it seems strange. Be joyous, knowing that being joyous before danger and death is a Christian endeavor; be joyous, knowing that it is okay to be joyous despite the state of the world – be joyous, knowing that the only reminders our friends might have of their joy is our joy. Rejoice, friends – for though our Christ walks His heavy path, and though we walk alongside him carrying some of that heavy weight, we know the truth: that for every death, there is a resurrection.

This Sunday, I invite you to join us in celebration of this truth – in celebration of the defeat of Death and Sin by our Risen Savior. Come and see, my friends, what joy should feel like; come and rejoice with us, won't you? Amen.

- Pastor Sean

## Christian Ed Update

BY MARY STELLE

Our Christian Education Easter Season has been a great time together already! On March 21 we held an All Church Easter Egg Hunt on the Common. The sunlit afternoon was beautiful as was the happy fellowship of the families who turned out. NRI NOW showed up to cover the event and many wonderful SCC Folks were interviewed and got to share their joy of the day. The Story can be found here on the NRI NOW link:

<https://www.nrinow.news/2026/03/24/photos-families-turn-out-for-egg-hunt-on-the-common/>

On Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm we are looking forward to our Sensory Friendly Service and Common Meal. This month a Sensory Friendly Service Easter Egg Hunt is also in the mix! We're excited!

On Easter Sunday, the Sunday school students will stay in the service and enjoy the joyful music of the morning Service with their families.

There will be Sunday School on April 12 but not on April 19 due to school vacations. Sunday School will resume on April 26. Our last day of Sunday School will be on May 17 with a special teacher recognition. Apple Sunday's date will be announced.

# MISSIONS

## Missions Moment

BY GAIL ELLIOTT

In March the Missions Committee voted to donate \$500 to “The Arc Rhode Island” in recognition of National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

The Arc Rhode Island provides advocacy and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to help them reach their full potential and thrive in their communities. To this end, Arc Rhode Island offers a Special Education Advocacy program which provides individualized guidance to parents and students to help them understand their rights, to review IEPs and 504 plans and to support them through school meetings.

Among their other programs Arc RI also offers guidance and support for individuals with disabilities who are transitioning from childhood into adulthood, caregiver support groups and free Mental Health First Aid certification training.

We also continued supporting the Men's Shelter in Woonsocket by providing a monthly hot meal to the men who are sheltering there. Those meals have been provided, in conjunction with the Broaster House, throughout the months the shelter is open which is November through March.

Many thanks to Bob Meo and Steve Wowk who have been delivering these meals and to Sandy Gamache who has been providing special homemade desserts to top off each meal.





## Handbell Choir News

BY JILL BODAY

On the Common Ringers have been busy rehearsing and performing for worship services over the past months! Thank you to all involved. A special thank you to Rick Stelle and Matt Boday for narrating our Ring-a-Story: The Resurrection and the Book. It was fun!

I will be organizing a handbell workshop this month! Why not come with us to try it out?

The annual RI “Ring-a-Palooza” will be held at Dunn’s Corners Community Church in Westerly, RI on April 25, 2026 from 9:30am-2:30pm (we can carpool). No matter your age or experience level, this event will let you “sample” a handbell workshop. We will participate in fun musical activities and ringing which will all be led by Jane Nolan, retired Music Director of Shoreline Ringers. All levels are welcome. There is no music to learn ahead of time, and there will be no public performance at the conclusion of the day. We will have fun, all while ringing and learning! \$15 per participant. Let me know if you’re interested.

New ringing members are always welcome in the handbell choir. You do not need to read music or know how to ring a bell. We will teach you! Most of our members started from scratch. We rehearse Thursday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm, right before Senior Choir rehearsal. Join us!

## North Smithfield Food Pantry

**April**

For the Month of **April**  
our Food Pantry hours  
are:

Saturday, **April 18**  
@ 10:00 am

Tuesday, **April 21**  
@ 5:30 pm

Saturday, **April 25** @  
10:00 am

Tuesday, **April 28**  
@ 5:30 pm

This month we are  
asking for donations  
of canned pasta, beans  
and spaghetti sauce.

Thank You!



## Outreach and Action Committee April Spotlight: Autism from Awareness to Acceptance

The month of April is designated as Autism Acceptance Month and dedicated to fostering inclusion, understanding, and support for people with autism and their families. It's also an opportunity to recognize the talents, strengths and contributions of the autistic community. One in 31 children in the United States have been diagnosed with autism. Sensory and learning differences are common and interventions are varied in their scope and intensity like the condition itself. Advocacy for better screening and education on the causes and interventions have helped move the spotlight from awareness to an active pathway to acceptance.



## Fundraising News April 2026

BY JEAN MEO

### UPCOMING:

Spring Yard and Flower Sale will be May 9<sup>th</sup> – in time for Mother's Day. Please start saving your Attic and Spring Cleaning treasures!

Items can be brought to the church the week prior beginning on Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. We will need volunteers on the 9<sup>th</sup> to help during the Yard Sale and clean-up and during the week prior to help set up. All hands are welcome! Sign-up sheet will be in Globe Hall!

Stay tuned! You never know what's coming!  
FOOD and FUN as we raise FUNDS! Join Us!

## From Mathewson Street Church

Our friends at the Mathewson Street Church would like to remind us about their ongoing clothing drive for the homeless. There is a special need for sneakers (either gently used or new - especially sizes 11-14!)

Thank you for your continued generosity!