



This Issue:

From the Pastor's Desk
PAGES 01-03

Christian Ed Update
PAGE 03

Missions Moment
PAGE 04

Handbell Choir News
PAGE 05

Fundraising News
PAGE 06

Troop 438
Pancake Breakfast
PAGE 07

Outreach & Action
PAGE 07

From the Pastor's Desk...

BY REV. SEAN AMATO

""Shout Out" - Scripture: Luke 19:39-40

Friends, I've been wrestling with a question that I thought I had an answer to - but I'm not sure my answer holds water anymore. So here's the question: "When it comes to politics and faith, where's the line?"

I ask you this question, and offer you some of my relevant experience. In early 2025, just a few months after I was called to Slatersville Congregational Church, I began to first really notice what I now call 'the Shift' - a pivot in how Americans engaged with each other about religion, and how Americans treat 'opposing' religious leaders. I think I can pinpoint the start of this 'Shift,' even, to one specific event: Rev. Mariann Budde's homily at the Presidential Inauguration Service.

If you're not familiar, Rev. Mariann Budde is an Episcopal prelate who spoke as part of the National Cathedral's Presidential Inauguration Service in 2025; she spoke there not because of any partisan gerrymandering, but because she was and is her denomination's Bishop of Washington, D.C. - a position she earned after a lifetime of servitude to the people of God through the Episcopal Church. I can speak to the efficacy of her work, as well, having personally known people, including now-ordained people, who attribute their souls and lives being saved to Rev. Budde's ministry and pastoral care.

At that 2025 service, Rev. Budde preached a homily that was, from my pastoral perspective, not very political. (You might disagree, and that's fine, but I digress.) The crux of Rev. Budde's homily was the importance of showing a Christian heart to everyone - including the LGBTQIA+ community and America's wide immigrant population, groups of people who had been put 'on notice' by the incoming administration. She spoke out against our culture of outrage, advised humility, and appealed for mercy - because, whether we like it or not, these are Christian precepts. Her words were not controversial, friends, at least in my opinion: they were explicitly, fairly, and righteously in line with the faith we both likely claim.

(Continued...)



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

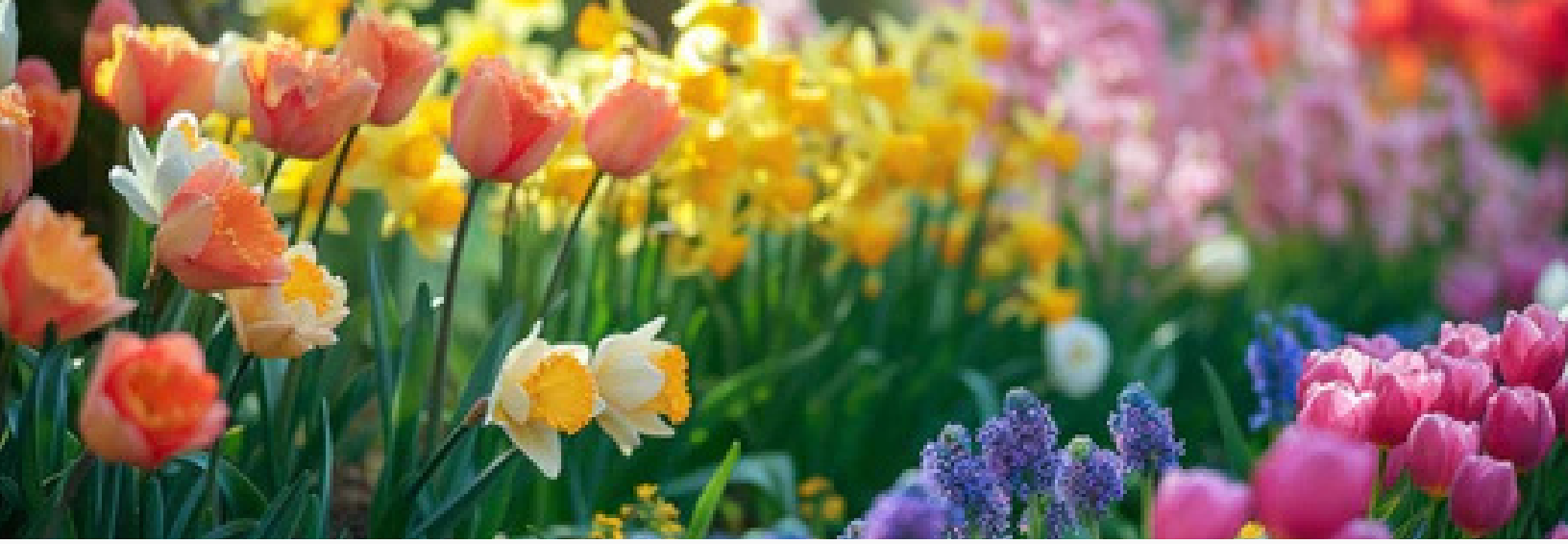
From the Pastor's Desk ... (Cont.)

But in the days to follow, Rev. Budde was castigated for her perceived partisanship - for her preaching a faith that seemed to bump up against the moral and ethical preferences of the incoming administration. In the days to follow, hundreds of threatening emails and calls were made to the National Cathedral; thousands of articles and millions of comments were posted online, ones that tore her apart. Her accomplishments, her appearance, her identity, her womanness, her status as a woman ordained - all were subjected to the scrutinous, foul eye of a public eager to rend her faith and witness for the sake of partisanship. Those with no clue as to who Rev. Budde was, whether she existed prior to the news of the day, declared her a heretic. Without even having moved, without even having preached 'out of line,' the line between politics and faith crossed right over Rev. Budde.

Since Rev. Budde's time in the fire, I've observed a new and aggressive willingness to cross the line between faith and politics - and it's hard not to notice for a pastor, quite frankly, because it's happening to all my friends, too. The lady pastors I've come to know, for instance, have begun documenting the constant attacks and threats they experience online... just in case those threats manifest in their church. Another pastor friend had to cancel service at his church two weeks in a row after repeated, serious threats.

Sadly, even I am not free of this abuse: I've received over a dozen threatening calls and messages, a trend that started about two months into my time as your pastor here - a trend that intensifies whenever Rhode Island and North Smithfield hits the news, be it for a vigil we're holding or a flag our friends at the library hang up outside their front door. Yes, to reiterate: I received threats for hosting a prayer vigil, on the basis of some stranger's politics. There's that line between faith and religion, crossing right over me. And it happens all the time now.

Continued)...



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

To survive the strangeness of what it is to be a modern pastor, I've found myself diving further into Scripture - into the 'best practices' of the Savior we Christians try our best to emulate. In addressing this matter of angry partisanship, of a shifting line, I turn to Luke 19:39-40 - a short passage, one in which Jesus chides the Pharisees after they try to silence his joyous followers. When the authorities try to clasp their mouths shut and charge them with partisanship, Christ responds, in effect: "You can go on ahead and tell them to shut up. But if they stop talking, even the rocks will find a way to preach my message."

When Christ said these words, he said them in defense - passive, even resigned defense - of his people's ability to joyfully practice and proclaim their faith. He knew that even if the authorities managed to shut up good Christians for a time, it wouldn't last: the message was so powerful, creation itself - the stones amongst our feet - would shout it for us.

Friends, the truth of our faith cannot be silenced - no matter how far into my lane, our lane, politics treads or swerves. We have a right, a need to live out a better way of life than what we're handed; we have a calling from our God to supersede powers and principalities by resisting their snares, their need to control and define.

(continued above...)

We are Christians, led by the Spirit; Christians, who - if you read that banner out in front of our church - actually care about our community, everyone in it, and want to make it good and safe for whoever walks in this door, and then some. And that is NOT political. That's the Gospel, and no partisan line can overrule or divert it. Amen.

- Pastor Sean

Christian Ed Update

BY MARY STELLE

We are looking forward to our Sensory Service on May 2 at 5 pm. Sunday school will have its last class on May 17.

May 17 is also Teacher Appreciation Day. Toward the end of service on May 17 the students will come upstairs to celebrate our teachers. (The nursery is open all year). Our Sensory Services will also continue all summer. The date for Apple Sunday is tentatively September 13. More details will follow.

And Save the Dates! Our Vacation Bible School this year will be held July 6th - 10th from 9am- 12pm. Many more details will follow!

MISSIONS

MAKE AN IMPACT ▶

Missions Moment

BY GAIL ELLIOTT

In recognition of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, during the month of April, the Missions Committee voted to donate \$500 to Day One. For more than 50 years, Day One has provided hope and healing to victims, survivors and families impacted by sexual assault and interpersonal violence providing a 24-Hour Helpline, group and individual counseling, victim advocacy and legal advocacy.

Day One is the only agency in Rhode Island that is specifically organized to deal with issues of sexual assault as a community concern. They advocate for public policy initiatives and systemic change for those at risk. They offer training to law enforcement and other community groups to help them respond appropriately when abuse is disclosed as well as providing workshops for adolescents and teens designed to increase respectful behaviors, decrease abusive behaviors, and build capacity of bystander intervention.

Day One works with Rhode Islanders of all ages, from preschool children to elder adults. Their vision is to create a community that is free of sexual abuse and violence.

At a time when households all across the US are reporting increased financial stress, the Missions Committee would like to remind you that contributions of gift cards to assist members of our community who are facing financial hardship are being accepted in SCC's new suggestion box.

The box is mounted on the wall by Pastor Sean's office. Any gift cards that are donated will be used to supplement the Pastor's Discretionary Fund as we are faced with growing need within our community. Please know that your donations will be greatly appreciated.





Handbell Choir News

BY JILL BODAY

Several members of On the Common Ringers attended the annual RI “Ring-a-Palooza,” held at Dunn’s Corners Community Church in Westerly, RI on April 25, 2026! Jane Nolan, retired Music Director of Shoreline Ringers, was our workshop leader. It was a great day of ringing, learning, and more ringing with other musicians from around the state!

Save the Date: On Monday evening, June 15, we will be hosting a concert of The Wesley Bell Ringers of Christ UMC, Salt Lake City, Utah! The Wesley Bell Ringers are one of the premiere youth handbell choirs in America. Each year the choir performs on a two-week summer tour to a different area of the United States. This year they are traveling with 18 student ringers and 6 adults throughout the Northeast. You don’t want to miss this night of wonderful music!

Our handbell choir will continue to play during worship services through June. New ringing members are always welcome in the handbell choir. We rehearse Thursday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm, right before Senior Choir rehearsal. Stop by!

After June we will officially be on summer break, but watch for more music-related events to pop up during the summer months, including some chime activities for kids during our annual Vacation Bible School this July!

North Smithfield Food Pantry

MAY

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

Tuesday, **May 19**
@ 5:30 pm

Saturday, **May 23**
@ 10:00 am

Tuesday, **May 26**
@ 5:30 pm

Saturday, **May 30**
@ 10:00 am

This month we are asking for Boxes of Broth, Mac & Cheese and Canned Fruit.

Thank You!

SLATERSVILLE CONGREGATION CHURCH

SPRING

Plant and Yard Sale

SATURDAY MAY 9TH 9AM-2PM

Stop by To look through the treasures or pick up a plant for Mother's Day! We'll see you soon!



25 GREEN ST, ON THE COMMON



Fundraising News April 2026

BY JEAN MEO

Spring Yard and Flower Sale will be Saturday, May 9th, 9AM to 2 PM.

Items can be brought to the church anytime during the week prior. The church will be open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. If the church is not open or you plan to come during the day, please call Jean Meo (401-692-1005) or Bob Meo (508-380-3132) and we will open the church. It is possible that volunteers will be at the church during the day anyway to help sort and organize.

We will need volunteers as well on the 9th to help during the Yard Sale and the clean-up process at the end. All hands are welcome!

Just in time for Mother's Day: We will have beautiful flowers supplied by Leeway in North Smithfield and wonderful tomato plants supplied by Jacavone's in Johnston.

And don't forget our **Mother's Day Breakfast** on Sunday, May 10th, starting at 8:30 AM prior to Worship Service. As always, Free Will Offering and Great Food!

FOOD and FUN as we raise FUNDS! Join Us!

From Mathewson Street Church

SCC has enjoyed partnering with Mathewson Street Church on a Sneaker Drive for the unhoused. A Blue Barrel was placed in the Sanctuary (to drop off new or lightly used Sneakers) and it was filled to capacity! Thank you so much, SCC for your Generosity!

The Barrel is still here - so if you missed out on the opportunity to donate some sneakers, you can still do so as long as it is on the premisis. If you prefer to drop off gift cards instead of Sneakers, you can drop them off in the wooden Property Suggestion Box hanging on the wall near the mail slots in the lobby. Just be sure to mark the gift card "for Sneakers" and the staff at Mathewson Street Church will be sure to purchase some sneakers on your behalf!





Scouts Corner...

Troop 438 - Pancake Breakfast!



YOU'RE INVITED TO
TROOP 438's
 5TH ANNUAL
**PANCAKE BREAKFAST
 FUNDRAISER**

TICKETS ONLY
 \$10 EACH!!



SUNDAY, MAY 17TH
 8:30AM - 11:30AM

ST. JOHNS CHURCH
 63 CHRUCH STREET
 SLATERSVILLE, RI

MYSTERY
 PRIZE BAGS
 \$10

FRESH
 PANCAKES!

HELP OUR SCOUTS GO TO PHILADELPHIA, BIKING,
 CAMPING, BACKPACKING, CANOEING, CLIMBING AND MORE!

From the Outreach and Action Committee

BY BONNIE DROLET

In April, it was Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month and Earth Day. We celebrated this month by adding quotes on Autism and related community events in our weekly bulletins. Additionally, in honor of this month, we wanted to recognize the ongoing Sensory Friendly Service. It is a shining example of creating that inclusive space for all here. Thank you to all who make this happen!

Earth Day was also in April. We participated in the recent successful North Smithfield Clean and Green Day on April 25, 2026. Volunteers took to the streets for a cleanup effort, removing litter and debris to beautify the town. Participants demonstrated how much can be achieved with many people working for a common goal.

Looking ahead to May, it is Mental Health Awareness Month. In honor of this theme, our committee will be putting up a mental health resource table in the Hallway. Please take a look at all the positive stickers, pop-out cards and resources. After all, Mental Health Matters!