



Broad Brook Congregational Church

What's Happening at BBCC!

Bulletin Mailer

Sunday, March 22nd

This is the season of Lent, and while we didn't anticipate abstaining from seeing each other, we are all still connected through the message of Jesus and God's light and love.

To help keep us connected, we will be mailing an informational newsletter that will include a spiritual message from Rev. Carol and important news/updates for the Broad Brook congregation.

If there is any news you would like to include, any prayer requests or other information, please call a deacon to have that information sent to our church secretary, Chinue Clifford.

Please be as cautious and safe as you can during this period of social distancing. Follow the CDC guidelines that we have included in this news letter.

CDC Guidelines as posted on the website:

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Put **distance between yourself and other people**

Clean and disinfect

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.





Words from Rev. Carol

The First Dinner: Risking Rejection

(Mark 14:3-9, Matthew 26:6-13,
John 12:1-8)

What if we began our Lenten journey by observing a “first supper”? Jesus said: “Truly (Amen) I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” (Mark 14:9). He is, of course, referring to the unnamed woman who anoints his head with expensive nard. Despite Jesus’ command to remember her, she has been pushed out and forgotten! We need to bring back her story and remember her and her most generous act.


Her story appears in all four Gospels with varying details. We will concentrate on Mark’s, Matthew’s, and John’s telling of her story. Hopefully we will discover why each author told her story the way they did and why that is important to us today.

John places the “first supper” at the beginning of Holy Week. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus host the gathering. John’s story also gives the woman a name—Mary—the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Mary anoints Jesus’ feet in this version. Judas is the one who complains about the frivolous use of the money. He was not concerned about the poor. Rather, he wanted the money for himself as keeper of the money purse. After Mary anoints Jesus, the house is filled with the perfume’s sweet fragrance. This is in direct opposition to the last encounter we had at this home. Remember when Jesus raised Lazarus. Mary exclaimed, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days” (John 11:39). John wishes us to experience the full impact of the gospel story. All our senses are to be engaged: sound, sight, taste and smell. The good news should engage fully all our senses, according to Amy-Jill Levine in her book *Entering the Passion of Jesus, a beginner’s guide to Holy Week* “so that the world we encounter in its light, its sound, and its taste, is transformed.” She continues and calls us to take a breath and recall the “breath of life” we remember from the garden of Eden. In communion, John calls us to “taste the bread.” John calls Jesus the “bread of life.” Taste the grape and remember Jesus is the “true vine.” See the sunlight and remember Jesus is the “light of the world.” Touch the hand of a neighbor and remember, according to John, the “word became flesh.” Be still and listen for the good news.

In Mark and Matthew, on the other hand, the woman remains unnamed. The woman in Mark’s version anoints Jesus’ head. And Matthew tells us that the complainers were the disciples and Mark relates that the complainers were just some people sitting around the table. There are many questions to ponder. Why does it matter who complains? With whom do we identify? Is it Judas, some people at the dinner, a Pharisee, the disciples? About what do we complain? Do we judge how others choose to spend their money? Their reasons for spending? Do we complain about why certain people are at the table? What stories do we remember and why? What do we do with our memories?

What did our unnamed woman in Mark’s gospel risk as she entered the banquet and anointed Jesus’ head? She was an uninvited intruder to the banquet. She risked rejection, humiliation, and insult. She showed great courage walking into a room full of strangers uninvited. It’s scary entering a room full of strangers even though you have been invited! Is she thinking: “Will I be welcomed? Will I be judged?, Will I find a home? She faced a great deal of risks. What might have been her reward? We can only speculate.

Let’s enter the story more deeply. We know the First Dinner took place in Bethany just outside of Jerusalem. And it took place near the end of Holy Week according to Mark and Matthew. Bethany was also the home town of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus but neither Mark nor Matthew mention them at all.



Our Mission Statement:

We are a caring family of God where all people are welcome to share in spiritual growth, guidance, fellowship, and support. We work together to spread God's love and the words and mission of Jesus Christ to others.

Words from Rev. Carol, con't

Jesus is among friends. There is no testing going on here. The Greek says that Jesus was “reclining at the table.” If that is the case, he would have been lying on a “couch, resting his head on his left hand and eating with his right;” according to Levine.

Think back to the story of the unnamed widow who put all her money in the collection at the Temple. The two women’s stories connect. Both are single, set apart from upper-class people, but whose gifts are extravagantly generous. Neither woman speaks and Jesus honors both of their actions. He wants us to **see** the widow and to **tell** the story of the second woman.

Today’s story tells us that the woman anointed Jesus’ head. There are different kinds of anointing in the Bible. If the word *christos* (Greek) or *mashiach* (Hebrew) is used it means “anointed one.” Both languages used other terms meaning “anoint” to represent a variety of types of anointing. They anointed not only Kings, but the ark of the covenant, corpses, women’s bodies, pillars and altars. Therefore we cannot be certain whether the underlying Hebrew or Greek pertained to a task blessed by God.

The woman’s action in Mark uses the Hebrew “mashiach.” She was pouring myrrh over his body. Her focus was not on a divine task. Her mission focused on the human body of Jesus.

Like the widow at the Temple who gave her “whole life” this woman’s action is extraordinary. While the word “christos” was not used, her action implies a royal intent. Kings were anointed on the head. Jesus states she is anointing him for his burial. Normally that would have been done after death. Is that what she thinks she is doing? Perhaps she is anointing him the King of the Jews. Is she the only one who took seriously Jesus’ words about his impending suffering and death? We can only speculate because she is silent.

Mark 14:9 reads: Truly (Amen) I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.” Have you heard this story before? Has her action been remembered as we celebrate communion remembering the “Last Supper?” What about the many stories of women, both named and unnamed, whose stories are not told or remembered? What about women like: Joanna and Susanna, Mary and Martha, the mother of James and John, Mary Magdalen, the various women Jesus healed—Peter’s-mother-in-law, the Canaanite/Syro Phoenician woman with a demon possessed daughter, the widow of Nain whose son Jesus raises, the daughters of Jerusalem who weep for Jesus, the bent-over woman in the synagogue, and the women who watch the crucifixion of Jesus and come to anoint him at the tomb? What are their stories? What can they tell us? They were considered important enough to be put in the Bible and yet we do not remember them. Each one has something to tell us but that is for another series.

What was this woman’s reward? She was recognized by Jesus. He let’s her anoint him. Jesus has her back—telling everyone to “Let her alone, why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me....She has done what she could...Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” Mark 14:3-9. Jesus is calling us to speak up and defend our friends. We need to use our power for good; to speak up for those who are voiceless-whose story is not heard.



Words from Rev. Carol, con't

Why were the guests so quick to judge? Are we doing the same thing? Who are we to judge? This is a moral question. If the Gospels can open up moral questions like these—the ones that make us squirm—then they are doing exactly what they are supposed to do.

Jesus is anointed by an unnamed woman. Details like: “who she is, where she is, when she performs this act, what was her reason behind her action, and what resulted?” are details that might change each time we tell her story. Not to worry—it’s okay. What story do we tell? How do we tell it? And what is the good news that comes from remembering Jesus and remembering the risk taking woman of the “first dinner?”

Next week is “The Last Supper: Risking the Loss of Friends”



Announcement:

Rev. Carol has a new church cell phone line. By calling this number Rev. Carol will be able to answer it at any time. So instead of calling the old BBCC number (860-623-4548 **please call:860-987-8625. Thank you**

The weekly church worship services have been suspended as per the protocol of the government. Watch Channel 3 every Sunday morning.

We are together during this time even when apart. As a church and community of God, we are here for each other. If you are needing support, please reach out and call Rev. Carol or one of our deacons. Stay safe, follow guidelines from the CDC, and practice social distancing.

For those who wish, join our Facebook page and share with others. For those who don't use social media, remember support is just a phone call away!

Share with us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/BBCongregationalChurch>

