



# THE CHIMES

## IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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### *“Revlections”*

March 2018

As our Lenten journeys continue among the swirl of national chaos and pain, I keep seeing the MSD Strong Parkland High School kids and their parents every day. When did the deaths of children become acceptable, inevitable losses? How much longer are we going to let the power-obsessed, money-fueled politicians decide that protecting weapons of war are more important than the lives of our kids? What in the world is wrong with us?

We’ve been too passive for too long. The UCC has been fighting the good fight about gun violence and easy access to assault rifles and high-powered ammunition for over 20 years. We’ve marched, boycotted, signed countless petitions, and lobbied in Congress and state houses. Sensible gun control laws have always been our goal – not revoking the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and gun ownership in general.

But this is a different day being led by the kids of Parkland and across the nation. We, the adults of several generations before them, know how to exert political pressure and how rarely change actually happens. Many of us were the change agents from the 60’s. Our kids aren’t going to settle for anything less and they need us!

The UCC and the Central Atlantic Conference are joining the youth of the nation and supporting the “March For Our Lives” in DC on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The event begins at 10:00 a.m. Thanks to the generosity of a family at First Congregational UCC, Berlin Heights, OH, Rev. Casey Cain’s church, we have money to cover any transportation and sign making expenses! Isn’t that cool? I’m actively recruiting our Nerd Herd kids and their parents to join us. What about you?

With Holy Week quickly approaching us with all of the personal sacrifice of Jesus and the meaning of his death and ultimate resurrection in full view, can you think of a better way to stand up and be counted as a disciple and follower of the Way? No kid, no teacher, no school administrator, should be faced with the fire power of automatic weapons. But they are. And far too many have died. The Parkland kids are right. Enough is enough.

I’m marching for them and with them. Will you? This is a real opportunity for us to join together as a part of our Lenten experience and do some real good as a part of our continuing mission and ministry in our nation. I know how busy you are, but are a few hours impossible to give?

The call is clear. Jesus didn’t give his life to protect the power of the sword. It’s up to us to carry whatever cross is necessary for the children that God loves. Are you ready?

Peace...

Rev Bev

# Traci Blackmon: How are the children?

February 16, 2018

From the UCC Website. Written by **Connie Larkman**

Among the many fabled and accomplished tribes of East Africa, there is no tribe considered to have warriors more fearsome or more intelligent than the mighty Maasai. The tribe is unique and popular due to their long preserved culture.

Despite education, civilization and western cultural influences, the Maasai people have clung to their traditional way of life—making them a symbol of Kenyan culture.

So it is not surprising, then, to learn that the traditional greeting passed among the Maasai warriors; "Kasserian Engeri," translated "And how are the children?" is still the traditional greeting used today. This greeting acknowledges the high value that the Maasai place on children's well-being.

Even warriors with no children of their own give the traditional answer, "All the children are well," meaning that peace and safety prevail; the priorities of protecting the young and the powerless are in place; that the Maasai people have not forgotten their reason for being. Their proper function and their responsibilities.

"All the children are well" means life is good.

It means the daily struggles of existence—even among the poor and the marginalized—are seen. That the village is committed to providing proper care for those incapable of providing for themselves.

So the question I invite us into once again today, in the shadow of yet another mass shooting, this time at a high school in Broward County, Fla., is "How are the children?"

How are the children who were held hostage to terror as gunshots rang through school hallways leaving 17 people dead in their wake?

How are the children who are afraid to attend school today, traumatized by a fear of dying in a place that should be safe?

How are the 46 children who are shot daily, seven of whom will die? Who shall it be today?

How are the children who find guns they believe to be toys until their play ends in the death of family and friends? How are the children who live with such guilt?

How are the broken ones, like this 19 year-old shooter, whose life can be redeemed, but not restored, because access to assault weapons and magazines have forever closed the door to undo what has been done?

How are the children sacrificed on our capitalistic altars of self-protection? How are the children?

Do we care about our children enough to do all we can to keep them safe? How are all of our children? The ones killed in preventable violence and those left behind to mourn their passing.

Imagine what might be the effect on the consciousness of our communities, our nation, and our world if we began greeting each other with the same daily question of the Maasai; "And how are the children?"

How might this question reframe our conversation around sensible gun control?

How are the children?

How many school shootings will it take before the need to protect our children supersedes the greed of our national leadership?

This week's massacre brings the total of school shootings in the first 46 days of 2018 to 18. Is this the number?

How many more children?

How many more tears?

How many more prayers before we regulate guns and take our children out of harm's way?

How many children must die before we acknowledge our children are not well?

I wonder, if we heard this greeting of the Maasai passed along to one another a dozen times a day, would begin to make a difference in our collective consciousness and how children are thought of—and cared for—in this world?

I wonder what it would be like if every adult among us—parent and non-parent alike—felt an equal weight of responsibility for the daily care and protection of all of the children.

What would it be like if every presidential address began with this question, "Mr. President, how are the children?"

What if this were the question we asked of religious leadership, "Your Excellency, how are the children?"

What if our denominations asked this question—"How are the children?"

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What if we asked our Governors, and our Mayors, and our teachers, and our law enforcement, and all of our elected officials—and what if we asked ourselves, "How are the children?"

What if we asked the NRA, "How are our children?"

Let us be courageous enough to examine our present, to see and not un-see, to hear and not un-hear, to do all we can not to hinder, by asking ourselves this question; "And how are the children?"

All of the children.

For the children are not well.

### ***A Facebook Posting To Think About:***

Marissa Schimmoeller teaches English at a high school in Ohio. She also happens to use a wheelchair. As you may expect, Schimmoeller was on edge returning to work after the horrifying shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High in Florida. "As the first students walked in, I began to feel the anxiety pooling in my stomach," she recollected from those first tense moments starting a new day.

But Schimmoeller was dreading one question specifically because she uses a wheelchair: "Mrs. Schimmoeller, what will we do if a shooter comes in your room? Inevitably, the question was asked.

"My stomach sank," Schimmoeller wrote in a Facebook post on Feb. 15. "I launched into my pre-planned speech about our plan of action." But then came the more difficult part of her answer, she noted — the part she'd especially been dreading. "I want you to know that I care deeply about each and every one of you and that I will do everything I can to protect you," she assured them. "But, being in a wheelchair, I will not be able to protect you the way an able-bodied teacher will."

She continued: "If there is a chance for you to escape, I want you to go. Do not worry about me. Your safety is my number one priority." That's when her students brought her to tears. "Slowly, quietly, as the words I had said sunk in, another student raised their hand," the teacher wrote in her post. "She said, 'Mrs. Schimmoeller, we already talked about it. If anything happens, we are going to carry you.'"

"I lost it," Schimmoeller concluded in her post, which has amassed more than 33,000 likes and nearly 19,000 shares as of publication. "With tears in my eyes as I type this, I want my friends and family to know that I understand that it is hard to find the good in the world, especially after a tragedy like the one that we have watched unfold, but there is good. True goodness. It was found in the hearts of my students today."

### **March Birthdays**

01 – Susan Keach Sweeney

05 – Jane Maher

29 – Bob Garner

02 – Les Luco

17 – Pat Previdi

29 – Noelle Ann Dunham

04 – Pat Dempsey

27 – Steve DiPaula

30 – Meg Oliver



## **Upcoming Events**

**“Undies Sunday”** – Sunday, March 11 – all sizes and kinds of new men’s underwear and socks are needed.

**Consistory** – Sunday, March 18

**Last Day for Easter Flower Orders** – Sunday, March 11 (*order slips will be in March 4 and March 11 bulletins*)

**Palm Sunday** – Sunday, March 25

**Maundy Thursday** – Thursday, March 29, 7:30 pm service

**Good Friday** – Friday, March 30, 7:30 pm service

**Easter** – Sunday, April 1



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### **Lectionary Readings**

(Day-Date; First Reading; Psalm; Second Reading; Gospel)

#### **Third Sunday in Lent** – March 4, 2018

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

#### **Fourth Sunday in Lent** – March 11, 2018

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

#### **Fifth Sunday in Lent** – March 18, 2018

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

#### **Palm / Passion Sunday** – March 25, 2018

PALM TEXTS: Mark 11:1-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29;

PASSION TEXTS: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11

#### **Maundy / Holy Thursday** – March 29, 2018

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

#### **Good Friday** – March 30, 2018

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42

## Prayer Concerns

### PLEASE REMEMBER OUR HOME-BOUND MEMBERS:

#### PRAYER CONCERNS IN THE CHURCH FAMILY:

Rev. Bev; Beverly Simpson recovering from knee replacement surgery.

#### PRAYER CONCERNS IN THE EXTENDED CHURCH FAMILY:

Bryan Holley's brother; Sue and Steve DiPaula's extended family; Central Atlantic Conference; residents and staff of Earl's Place.

#### PRAYER CONCERNS IN OUR REGION:

Dreamers facing uncertain futures and all undocumented residents; Baltimore gun violence; refugee families in Baltimore County; safety of law enforcement and first responders.

#### NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PRAYER CONCERNS:

Syria; victims, students, and families of Parkland, Florida, school shooting; all UCC disaster relief projects; earthquake victims in Taiwan; Puerto Rico; prayers for our country; families fearful of deportation; all U.S. military deployed and stateside; refugees seeking safety and compassionate care.