

Those (summer) Times

Summer
2020

Vol 91

of Halcott

Above: Lettuce & arugula started indoors 3/10/20; planted out under row cover 4/10/20. Ready to eat 5/25/20

Editors: Innes Kasanof; Peg DiBenedetto; Judy DiBenedetto; Carrie Bradley Neves; Art: Nina Kasanof

Covid in the City

by *Christine Cheshire*

We all stayed in
But could stay thin
When Covid came to town.
We watched CNN
Again and again
When Covid came around.
Sadly, the numbers grew
We lost loved ones we knew
As an unwelcomed virus
besieged me and you.
The political game
Was set aflame
Fingers pointed each day
Who knew what, when, and who?
Fauci detailed the spate
Things didn't look great
Cuomo gave us an update

Prayers are needed for the healthcare crew.
We learned phrases like social distance and

N95 mask

Six feet apart and stand on the "X" they asked
Telemedicine and cabin fever were quite the
task!

Oh, when would Covid be through?

Grocery stores ran dry

Toilet paper and Lysol were not ours to buy

Our nation was coming unglued.

The disease left us in a vex

Didn't know what would come next
Covid sure was one formidable dude

Businesses shut down

Schools closed in every town

Internet graduations were set for June
Isolation overcame the kids

On-line homework is what they did
As they bid sports and proms adieu



Nurses and doctors became ill
Overwhelmed and too much to deal
Covid ruled with no fanfare nor frill
So, herd immunity is what we had to do
Virtual funerals and meetings from afar

The new normal is where we are
As Covid wreaked havoc through and through
Will my fortune still be here?
From my window, the food lines are so clear
It's hard to be brave, my dear
And yet so easy to feel blue
Cares Act and small business loans
I heard the pot of money ran low
Will I survive this economic blow?
Or will my doors be shut down?
1918 looms large
Its lessons hit water like a barge
No full speed ahead will we charge
Reflection and appreciation abound.

Instead, I spend more time with nature these
days
Lots of hobbies, books, and games
A new appreciation for pause and delay
And I listen for each refreshing sound
My family shall escape with our health in tact
We have each other's back
Good-bye Covid, you hack
Please don't ever return to my town!

Margaretville Central School, Class of 2020

A big bonus to helping with *The Times of Halcott* is the opportunity to sit down with local folks to learn more about their lives and contributions to our little spot on the map. Recently, I had the happy occasion to visit with Lanore Miller, a caring, hard-working, community-minded individual who has been a dear friend to my family for many years. No doubt everyone in Halcott is familiar with Lanore's outstanding service as our Town's mail carrier, but it was her role as Margaretville

Central School's Senior Class Co-Advisor , particularly in the midst of this very different kind of school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, that provided all of us a closer look at how the end of high school is shaping up for the Class of 2020 at MCS.

JD: How did you become a class advisor?

LM: (Laughter) The MCS bylaws stipulate that each class is to have two advisors. One is to be an MCS staff member, the other a parent. Halcott resident and MCS Guidance Secretary Stacey Johnson agreed to be one advisor and I volunteered to serve as the parent member. (Stacey's son Kevin and Lanore's son Billy are both part of the class of 2020. Basically, anyone who knows Lanore is well aware that volunteerism comes naturally to her. Over the years she has played key roles in a lot of activities that benefit local kids including pee wee soccer, T-ball, Little league, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and the MCS Booster Club in which, among other things, she served as scorekeeper for soccer, basketball and baseball.)

JD: What are the duties of the class advisors?

LM: We oversee the Class of 2020's activities each year beginning back in their Freshman year and culminating with graduation. For example, we help the kids set up class meetings about once a month and we lend a hand with fundraising projects. Fundraising activities are very important because they finance what the class wants to do for big events such as the Prom, Senior Appreciation Day and graduation., to name a few. Furthermore, a big goal of fundraising is to earn enough money to finance a senior trip so there is no cost to the kids and chaperones going.

JD: How many Seniors in the Class of 2020?

Any from Halcott?

LM: There are 23 seniors this year. Four, including Tucker Hohn, Kevin Johnson, Billy Miller, and Kansas Shamro are from Halcott, live nearby or have ties here. Several kids from this class will be going on to college, two are heading into the military and a few are taking some time off.

JD: How did the school year change after the school was closed due to the virus, particularly for the seniors?

LM: Some things, such as classwork, continued on but in another fashion such as through distance learning rather than face to face classroom instruction. This could be challenging especially for those students without reliable internet/cell access. Regents tests were cancelled. As long as kids finish their Regents coursework with passing grades, they will receive Regents diplomas. For those hoping to raise test scores, the SAT's couldn't be retaken.

When colleges closed, some students missed out on college visits they still hoped to make.

Understandably, many typical but special events for senior students outside the classroom had to be scrapped. This year's

prom with its "Roaring 20's" theme, Senior Appreciation Day trip, and senior trip to Florida were also cancelled.

JD: Your son Billy has been a multi-sport star athlete at MCS. What has happened with athletics?

LM: We had finished basketball season and were only about 10 days into spring sports practices when the school closed. Unfortunately, this meant the seniors missed this final season with their spring sports

teammates. The Big M Awards and Athletic banquet had to be cancelled so we hope to piggyback athletic awards onto graduation. As Boosters, our objective is that no one is forgotten. It's just a matter of when and how awards can be given out. To that end, the club is working on goody bags to present to the athletes to fill the void of the cancelled banquet. A special memento reading, "COACH ME & I will learn, CHALLENGE ME & I will grow, BELIEVE IN ME & I will win" is planned to be included in the bags.

Census 2020 Please Respond!

The census is used to determine how much federal aid we are allotted, so it is in our best interest to have every Halcott home, full-time and seasonal reported. For seasonals:

For any property you own but only use part of the time, follow these instructions:

- 1. Visit www.my2020census.gov**
- 2. Enter the Census ID or address for this secondary property**
- 3. Enter "0" for the number of people living at this property**
- 4. Hit Next, and when a "soft error" occurs, click Next again**
- 5. Select "No" when asked to confirm no person lives at this property**
- 6. Select primary reason – Seasonal (most likely)**
- 7. Complete!**

Following these instructions ensures all properties are counted!

For more information go to 2020census.gov

JD: What about a graduation ceremony this year?

LM: As of now, it's still up in the air. We do know that there will be some sort of ceremony on Saturday, June 27th at 1:30 pm but the

details remain fuzzy pending further developments. Because attendance at whatever type of ceremony we are able to have will be limited there are plans for a livestream of the ceremony via Facebook or a web link. As information becomes available it will be on the MCS Facebook page or MCS website.

On a positive note, community support for the graduates has been wonderful. Funds were raised to make a large banner for each graduate with his or her name and picture on it. These banners are proudly displayed along Main Street in Margaretville. In addition, MTC and the M-ARK Project are teaming up with videographer Jessica Vecchione to do short individual interviews of the grads, class advisors and school administrators. The interviews and other pictures as well as drone footage of the school grounds will be put together as a short documentary for the class. *Update from Lanore: "We are planning a Senior Parade for the kids on Saturday June 13 to present them their caps n gowns under their banners in town then traveling through Arkville n Fleischmanns if all goes as planned."*

JD: As you look back, what are some of your favorite memories of being a co-advisor for the Class of 2020?

LM: I really enjoyed this group. These kids tend to look out for one another and their mood has been good through all of the changes recently. I loved the way last year's Junior Prom came off so well after all of the initial difficulties we had. It ended up being a fun, memorable event. Also, I will always remember Stacey and I cooking LOTS of food in crockpots to bring for the snack shack fundraisers at the games. That was a lot of work but so much fun!

Thank you, Lanore and Stacey, for your tireless work for our local kids and a big

Halcott congratulations to the MCS Class of 2020. Best wishes to all of you as you move on to the next chapter of your lives! **JD**

Bobolinks are Back!

It's heartening to see and hear the distinctive bobolink birds back in Halcott! For several years, they could be found in various fields around town; most commonly on the old airstrip field between the Rauter's and the Kasanof's. Then for a year or two they seemed to be nowhere, were hard to find, and seemed to be gone from much of the Catskills. This year they're back! In multiple fields, including the airstrip field, the distinctive black and white little torpedoes are dipping through the air, perched in shrubbery, and up on the utility lines as they burble their unique and bubbly R2D2 music.

The females construct ground nests in hayfields. Males mate with several females and females mate with multiple males; nests typically have genetically differing offspring. Males help their mates feed the voracious young, therefore males are assisting with multiple nests, which keeps them in constant motion finding insects and other invertebrates to bring back to the nestlings.

Nestlings leave the nests before they are fledged and hide in the thick grass, finding their own insects for about 2 weeks before taking flight. On a special day when the young have fledged, sometimes you can see a field full of black and white bodies bouncing up and down in a beautiful display. If you are lucky. Bobolink populations have declined 80%, mainly from loss of hayfields in which to breed. But they also face pressure from the hay cutting itself, which, with early cutting, takes place before the nesting and fledging cycle is complete. A population might have up to hundreds of nests in a field, only to be wiped



*Drawing found
on Yahoo's
clipart page.*

in Canada.

It's a tricky thing to manage a hayfield to accommodate their unique nesting and fledging behavior. Conventional advice is to mow the fields after the bobolinks have nested and fledged - perhaps a month later than a first cut. Very kindly, our local farmer has agreed to cut our field a bit later than usual this year, because the bobolinks are back in town. Bobolinks provide a special show. Watch and listen for it, and enjoy! **PD**

Halcott Airport Redux

Alan Reynolds

In response to questions raised in a recent issue of *The Times of Halcott* I consulted with Bill Johnson, whose dad Earl Johnson along with my dad Ward Reynolds, operated the original airport in Halcott. We had each listened to stories about the proposed expansion, although that happened before either of us were born.

It seems that a number of hotels and boarding houses in the area at that time (late 1940s I suspect) had asked about possible air passenger service from New York City to this area and Earl and Ward started to look at that possibility. Since both of them had grown up

out with early cutting. A National Audubon Society map shows just a small section of New York State and Michigan as the last of the breeding grounds in the US; most breeding now occurs

in Halcott and hunted all their lives they knew instinctively that the ridge that runs from behind Garold Johnson's farm (today Karen and Jim Rauter's) down to Stanley Kelly's farm (running along the hill that is behind the Margaritis house) was fairly level and high enough that if they could get the wheels off the ground an airplane would already be several hundred feet in the air. That was an admirable feature of any airport. They hired a local surveyor Lawrence Weber from Arkville to survey the area to be considered. Their objective was to build a runway long enough to accommodate a DC3 which is what they planned to operate, and to provide space for a hangar as well as an operations building. Mr. Weber estimated that approximately 25,000 yards of material would have to be moved to accomplish the task. Although that seems to be a relatively small about of dirt to handle for a job that size, further verifying the good choice for a location, Earl and Ward were not optimistic about being able to raise enough money to complete the work.

In addition to that there did seem to be a necessity to partner, to a certain extent, with some of the various hotels to make the plans come together. There were apparently several hotel owners who wanted to have influence in the airport and the air service. No consensus was ever reached on how to divide that control. As a result of those problems the expansion never went past the planning stages.

High Drama, Low Drama

This is the tableau that greeted me at sunrise one morning a week or so ago, just after the last snow in mid May, the beginning,

finally, of a long-delayed spring, on a bright, sort of frosty, sort of misty morning:

- a 2-cubic-feet bag of earthworm castings lying unopened next to the garden fence,
- a pretty big worm, not a night crawler, but impressive, oozing itself across the bag of castings, enjoying the dew there,
- and a robin perched on the fence, watching the worm.

I think you can see where I'm going with this. If not an illustration of the cycle of life, certainly a still life of symbiosis. The earthworm, teeny-tiny tubular master of masticating magic into the soil; the farmer plus nursery owner plus client, tending, gathering up, bagging, and buying the worms'

afterthoughts, black gold; the robin, robust, red-breasted fantastic forager, feasting on the worm as ever it turns.

Let's work backwards.

The robin is one of our most common locals.

Stunning, stoic, the definitive early bird,

harbinger of spring, small flocks filling our fields and lawns, gorgeous singer at sunset. Something about the paint of their feathering, their plump, muscular build, their steady flight, the ever-curious look of their white eye rings, makes them seem just so solid. Rock solid. Rockin' solid. Rockin' robin. Implacable. Not flighty even when in flight.

And what about that steady eye? Along with worms, robins fill their steady diet with caterpillars and other invertebrates, larvae, and berries and other fruits. But earthworms are their ideal food. Worms are good sources of fat for energy – the same need for fat brings the chickadees and company to the sunflower seeds

in our feeders, but have you ever seen a robin there? – as well as a variety of vitamins and minerals, including calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, and copper. Worth the wait, and their weight.

I love watching robins hunt for worms. And before I began writing this, I had always assumed it was all in their ears. I imagined them acutely tuned to subterranean music ... at dawn, tiny stirrings: a solo oboe. In a light rain, a string quartet; and after a downpour, something like opera, or Ravel's *Bolero*: first a pulse, then a beat, then silent voices paradoxically building and building until our red-breasted harpists, tympanists, instinctively stroke, beat their beaks into wet ground and come up full ... crescendo, *glissando*.

But it turns out, it's the eyes that have it. Sight is the most active sense in the robin's worm-finding arsenal. They see the smallest movement of the tail end of a worm above ground. They see the smallest changes in the soil and grass as the worm wiggles just below the surface. And because like most songbirds, robins are monocular, meaning their eyes move independently, they can cock their head to see things on all sides. While they do have sensitive hearing and the vibrations they feel in their feet also assist their hunt, sight is the most important sense guiding the intent hoppings, the freeze-tag run and halt, and the awe-inspiring accuracy we can only look upon with our ordinary human eyes.

"Good morning," I said to the duo. "Isn't it?"

"I love early morning," said the robin. "I love the soft light. I love to find a high branch and salute the rising sun. And then I get down to business. I get my feet wet. I surf the rolling tides of grasses and swells of wildflowers. The



smell is intoxicating and I hear other birds, I mingle with the bees and feel tiny pulses in the earth beneath beneath my feet. But then I see a flash, like a diamond chip on the bottom of a rushing stream. A minute movement of a worm's tail, left eye or right; all truth, the perfect shot, comes with that flash. A swing, a tug or two, and the worm is mine."

The worm coughed uncomfortably. Perhaps regretting the ambitious climb up to the exposed belly of that bag. Or perhaps accepting, and imagining getting to fly in the belly of a bird on the way to its next form in the ground.

"I wish you could see what I see," said the worm." Well, I wish I could make you understand. I am blind, but I can sense light and dark. When the seasons change or the sunlight or shadows of a day vary, I know. I don't have a nose, but I breathe. I don't have ears, but I can sense vibrations. I know I'm not pretty, but I love the strength in my coiled, muscular body. You've probably heard I will grow into two new worms if I'm cut in half, but that's only half true; the part with my head might grow a new tail, but the tail part will die. I live for four to eight years, and while I am a hermaphrodite, I don't seek, only accidentally encounter, and then reproduce. When I die, I return to the soil. My burrows look like crude lace. Sometimes I

feel like I could dig to the center of the earth, into the fiery core, to the other side of the planet ... there is so much magic underground. I know there are not many with my skills, who can perceive what I get to perceive. I wish I could make you understand."

The robin watched the worm, and I could tell she understood. A sense of their communication rang in my ears like a tiny morning bell, a solo oboe.

High drama, low drama ... there is so much to be learned from our miraculous song-filled high flyers and our lowest, mutest creatures. And that bag of castings? In addition to earthworms breaking up the soil to allow room for air and water, their castings, the end product of their digestion, improves soil structure and fills it with nutrients. The castings feed healthy microorganisms, help water retention, and suppress disease. It is the worms' gift, their legacy, their research, their book of life, a rich addition to everything they move through.

The relationship between a pretty bird, a crawling thing glistening in the morning sun, a bag of compost, and the humble gardener taking it all in, is so small and so big. It is a matter of whether that worm

GOOD NEWS!

TIP LEADS TO UNPRECEDENTED 16.4-CENT PER GALLON CUT IN HALCOTT GROUP PROPANE PRICE

A Halcott propane user told us a competitor to Suburban quoted propane for him at \$1.63.5. Pressed to compete, Suburban then revised its proposed price from continuing the existing \$1.799 to match the competing price instead.

\$1.635 per gallon is now the rate that Suburban should be extending to all Halcott Suburban customers.

Pre-buy contracts offering higher prices should be considered carefully in relation to our newly cut price. Suburban has extended their "friends and family" offer to reward existing customers with 35 free gallons when they refer new residential propane customers.

If you have issues. or questions or new recruits, please contact me via email.

Alan Adelson
alanadelson@gmail.com

will be eaten for breakfast, bitten in half to grow again, or sleep forever in deep earth. Or spared, which it was that morning, when the

robin flapped off to check out something on the horizon on the opposite side of the hayfield. It's a matter of diving in or taking flight. A matter of trying to understand and even match the intricate intent of the natural and human world around us, or letting go. A matter of seeing as far as we can see. **CBN**

Town Emergency Email List

Our new Deputy Town Clerk Jamie Vogler is updating the town email list. The list is not only used to send out information such as the agenda for monthly town board meetings, but is also important in emergencies. During Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, email was often the only way to reach people. If you do not now receive messages from our town supervisor Alan White and wish to be included in the town email list, please send your request to Jamie Vogler at voglerj@yahoo.com

Pam Kelly's Gatherings

[Editor's Note: Thanks to the faithful diligence of Pam Kelly, we have some news on some of our Halcotters. She has written the following]

I spoke with Virgil Streeter last week. He and Janelle are hanging in there. He is 91 years old. I also talked to Virgil's niece, Eileen Harris who is in contact with Megan who bought Virgil's house last year.

Yesterday, I talked to Ellen Ballard Todd. She and her husband, Norma's brother, Waldo live near Buffalo. Ellen grew up in Turk Hollow. Her brother was Millard Ballard. Don't know if you remember him. Her mom, Bessie was a hard-working woman. Ellen's dad died around 1950. Their original house burned when she was a kid and they lived in the big house (gone now) across the road from the Halcott Post Office

(where Virgil Streeter and Janelle now live when they are not down south.) When my grandfather, Roy Johnson built their new house and they moved back up to Turk Hollow. They had a dairy farm, one of the many and lived just past Kratochvil's. Ellen reminisced about her summer job at the little laundromat in Elk Creek when she was a teen. Her aunt Mildred (Ballard) Kelly and aunt Bee ran it. It was laundry from the local camps. Kids from the cities spent their summers in the Catskills. Ellen's job was to iron all the camp kids' clothes. She worked 5 days a week and received \$18 for the week. She also remembers babysitting the Kelly kids, the 6 children of Odell and Mary Kelly's. They were the grandchildren of Mildred. Ellen and her sister earned \$7 for the week of babysitting.

Summers at Peet's Boarding House

Many of you are familiar with the lovingly restored farmhouse on County Route 3 that belongs to Sybil and Paul Margaritis. The Maples, as it is known, has quite a rich history. Sybil's grandparents, Blanche and Jim Peet ran a boarding house there and for a while before that, it was the Halcott Town Hall.

Pam sent a picture to *The Times of Halcott* accompanied by the following notes: These wonderful people are as follows: left to right, Norma Todd Kelly, Blanche, Jim (kneeling), Helen Kelly Finch, Lena Haynes

Johnson, Bessie Ballard (not sure of maiden name, maybe Mead) her daughter, Ellen Ballard (later married Norma's brother, Waldo Todd) Bessie and Ellen lived in Turk Hollow. The adorable Beagle is my uncle Earl Johnson's. The dog



would beg at the back door of the kitchen and Blanche would give him a piece of her homemade pie!! He'd enjoy that and be on his way. (Lucky dog!) the date this picture was developed was Sept. 1957.

They all were employed at The Maples that summer. My mother, Lena Johnson did laundry and pulled it out to the clothes line in a little red wagon.

They waited on tables. Each table would be set with table clothe, salt, pepper, etc. then the boarders would come and sit at the table and the girls would carry the food to the tables.

Norma said she was so shy and afraid to wait on table, but she forced herself to. One morning at breakfast, a boarder complained that the yolk in the egg had been broken and he didn't like it that way. She carried the plate out to the kitchen and told Jim. In a stern voice Jim said to her, "You take that right back out and tell him he has to eat it the way it is." She was mortified, but relieved when Jim began laughing, and she realized he was just joking. Jim fried him another egg and she took it to the boarder, and I guess he was happy with that one.

My mom really enjoyed the whole crew. I wish I'd quizzed her more about it. I went to my grandma Neva Johnson's during the day while my mother worked at Peet's. Norma's kids, Jerry and Janice stayed with Amos and Edith Avery during the day as child care. They lived right next door to my grandparents, Roy and Neva Johnson. Jerry, Janice and I played during the day. I remember the wonderful stone walls in back we'd climb on. Jerry remembers Amos and Edith being very nice to them. While there he remembers eating saltine crackers broken up in a glass of milk.

I remember Edith Avery bringing out a tray of goodies for us kids as a snack. The one item that made me drool was toasted coconut covered marshmallows. I had never seen such decadence in all of my 7 years. When it was my turn to pick from the tray I chose the marshmallow treat and thought I was in heaven. It made quite an impression, it was 63 years ago!

Amos and Edith Avery were the step parents of Jack Lucas. His wife, Harriet was Pete Ballard's sister and grew up in Fleischmanns or Halcott. Their kids were about my age, Scott and Patty. I remember the Lucas family having a beautiful new Buick. They also had a crazy acting dog named "Sputnik." It was the age of the Russian spaceship of the same name. It seemed to fit him well.

Amos and Edith (Edith didn't drive) had a Jeep Willies that they drove to Florida each winter. Not exactly a luxury ride!
Ed Apology: Pam has written more about the Maples, but too many time-sensitive articles pushed her story to the Autumn issue. Please stay tuned!

PASSAGES

This spring Greg Finch retired from the Halcott Highway Department after a long career as driver, plower, mower and more. Greg had quadruple by-pass surgery in February. He reports that he is recovering nicely and "loves retirement!" We thank you, Greg for your many years of service. **IK**

Valley Victory!

Margaretville Central School is proud to announce Kevin Johnson as the Class of 2020 Valedictorian. Kevin is the son of Ted and Stacey Johnson of Halcott Center, NY. In June, Kevin will receive a Regents diploma with Advanced Designation with Honors and Mastery in Science. Kevin is the Class of 2020



President and has been a member of the National Junior Honor Society and is a current member of the National Honor Society. He has participated in the Science Research Symposium at Margaretville Central and is a member of the Varsity Basketball, Varsity

Soccer, and Varsity Baseball teams. Kevin has been recognized multiple times for his outstanding academics and athleticism. Most recently, he was honored as Delaware All-Star Academic Varsity Basketball Player. He plans to attend RPI in the Fall and graduate from college with a degree in Civil Engineering. Furthering his career, he hopes to work at Titan Drilling Corp. Kevin says that his most memorable times of high school will be from making memories with friends and family every single day. He gives the advice to just living life to the fullest. He quotes Sylvester Stallone, "It's not about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward."

Patty Kelder reminded us that Kevin Johnson joins a Halcott tradition of valedictorians including Patty (1972), Rob German (1989), Sasha Kasanof (1991), Vanya Kasanof (1994), and Julian Rauter (2016?). *[Ed note: Must be the water.]* We congratulate Kevin on upholding Halcott's reputation.

New Arrivals!

Whoever thought that the median age of

Halcott is increasing as more and more retirees discover the beauty of our valley? There's growth at the other end of life as well! Patty Kelder (who helps fill our pages faithfully) also brought to our attention that we have a whole new bunch of babies. She writes: "This is all I have (partly from what Jamie Vogler found on Facebook) for the known babies in or connected to Halcott over the last six months.

Baby girl, Quinn, born to Suzanna DiBenedetto and Keith on November 19th, 2019;

Baby girl, Paisley, born to Ashley and Nicky Bouton in February 2020;

Twin boys, Taet and Everett, born to Christi Gavette and Erick Hinkley on February 5th 2020;

Baby girl, Isabella, born to Katherine and Alan Balcom on April 9th, 2020

Baby girl, Ari Jade, born to Kate and Kane DiBenedetto in mid April 2020

Andy Kelder's baby grandson, Booker, born to Nichole and Luke Ford on May 22nd 2020"

Have we missed any?

Below: Ari Jade with her proud parents. We welcome pictures from all proud parents!



The Times of the Halcott United Methodist Church

Summer 2020 *Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*



Pandemic Fallout

The church building has been closed to public worship for three months. Yet ministry happens. Thank you for financial support, heartfelt prayers and visits to our Facebook page. To better help us “be the church” to our neighbors, please make us aware of needs.

Special thanks to Todd’s Greenhouse for both growing and planting the flowers that brighten the church and Grange Hall.

Being Prepared

Spring’s been colder during this pandemic, so we’re still feeding the birds. The stars? A pair of cardinals, five pairs of rose breasted grosbeaks, a red bellied woodpecker and an indigo bunting *plus* a Baltimore oriole which tasted the suet, perched longingly above the sunflower feeder and flew off. Quick! What to feed him from our challenged larder? Homemade grape jelly? Nope. One of the last oranges? Hmm. Out went one orange section and a little grape juice we wouldn’t need for communion. The day went by. The offering went untouched. Was it too late to lure him back?

Places in scripture mention lost opportunities for lack of preparation or forethought: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (I Peter 3:15) “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people . . .” (Galatians 6:10) Let our kind acts be intentional and ongoing rather than random. Remember to smile. Say “Have a

blessed day” or “Thank God”. Notice needs.

Sometimes we get a second chance. A couple of days later the oriole returned for breakfast, bringing *two friends!*

From the Pastor’s Pen

Well, it’s been interesting for the past few months, huh? As I speak to people through Facebook, I have consciously avoided talking about the Covid 19 issues we have all been dealing with. I figured I would be just one more voice droning about the whole thing. However, what has been happening in the past week or two has me concerned. Have we, as a collective group, chosen to feel confused? Unsure of what is happening to ourselves, our loved one, our friends? Confused about what will happen next? Have we chosen to feel apprehension? Are we unsure of what the next day will bring? Or have we chosen fear? Fear of a virus, fear of catching it, fear of the next report that comes out?

Ok, take a breath – a deep, relaxing breath. You know what I have chosen to feel? Joy. That’s right, joy. I have decided that I am going to put my trust in the Lord and feel God comforting arms wrapped around me. How can I do that? Easy, I turned off the TV. I don’t want to hear the gloom and doom that is constantly being aired by the media. Every news item, the daily updates, even every commercial deals with, mentions, offers solutions to your fears about this pandemic. I decided it’s not worth it! Not worth my losing my calmness, my peace, my joy. There is a song by the Christian group, For King and

Country, called “Joy”. Some of the lyrics go like this, “Lately, I’ve been reeling watching the nightly news. Can’t seem to find the rhythm, just want to sing the blues. Feel like a song that never stops. Feels like it’s never gonna stop.” Sounds about right, doesn’t it? How true those lyrics are. When I watch TV, it feels like it’s never going to stop. But just like the next part of the song, “I’ve gotta get the fire back in my bones. Hear my prayer tonight. I’m singing to the sky. Give me strength to raise my voice, let me testify. The time has come to make a choice. And I choose joy.” And guess what, I choose joy. And you can too!

You can choose joy today, tomorrow, each day – choose joy! As the group also sings, “Though I walk through the valley in the shadow of night, with you by my side, I’m stepping into the light.” The Lord is right there, next to you, protecting you, loving you. When you choose joy, you are showing God just how

much you trust and love God.

Now, don’t get me wrong, I’m not naive. I stay home. I conduct worship services on Facebook, I attend meetings on Zoom, and when I must go out, I wear a mask. However, I choose joy! I choose to feel joy. When I start feeling tense, apprehensive, frightened – I pray. I pray for peace, love, and joy!

So, choose joy! I know it has been a wonderful way for me to greet each day!

I would also like to invite you to join me in worshiping the Lord on Facebook. I can be found on my personal page, Deborah Bosland Judisky, or on the Halcott United Methodist Church page. You can watch any time that is convenient for you. A new message is added each Sunday morning. In the meantime, stay safe, stay well, choose joy.

God bless.

Pastor Debb Judisky

Summer 2020

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