

Faith

The traditions that developed around these spring symbols helped explain the concept that God in the flesh took on death and came back to tell us there is life on the other side. What fantastic news!

This spring, be a witness to the good news that Christ is risen:

- Learn about the symbols and notice them when you are outdoors this season. Even better: plant some dogwoods and flowers in your yard and on the grounds of your church.
- Fashion a cross from cuttings of spring flowers. Invite others to help. Set it out in front of your church, or even your house, for

all to see.

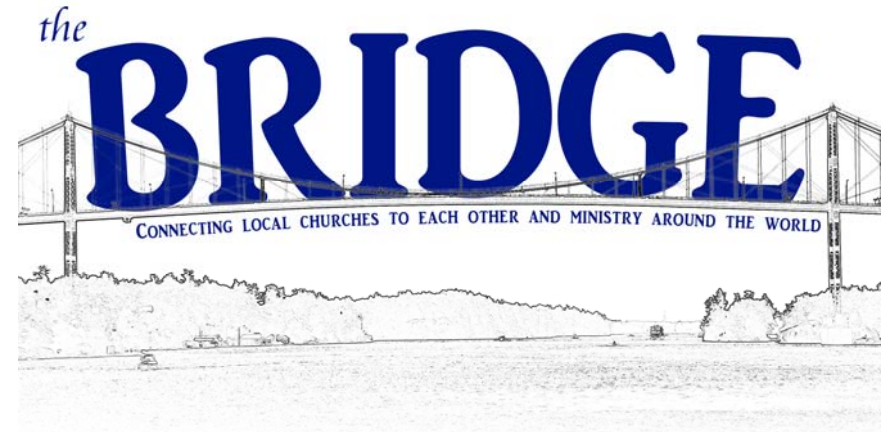
- Make (don't buy) a gift for someone who needs to be reminded of the love of God made known in the Risen Christ.
- Play. Not a video game or a phone app. Physically play. Move. Dance. Interestingly, the Irish jig and tap dancing have their roots in an early Saxon tradition called the "hop-egg." The purpose was to step among a dozen eggs as if walking the Stations of the Cross. This egg dance is likely the distant relative of hopscotch.

As Easter people, we don't have to look further than spring for an exclamation point to that affirmation.



*The **Bridge** is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world.*

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Eastertide: Looking beyond Easter Sunday

It's Easter season! Did you know that the past 40 days, starting Ash Wednesday and ending the day before Easter is considered Lenten season, a time where we reflect on the sacrifice, suffering, and death of Jesus?

On Easter Sunday we enter the Easter season, a 50-day long season that ends on Pentecost Sunday, which falls on May 20, this year. In this Easter season, we focus on the glory of our risen Lord, the power of the Resurrection, and the wor-

ship of our Lord and Savior.

This extended season gives us time to rejoice and experience what it means when we say Christ is risen. It's the season when we remember our baptisms and how through this sacrament we are, according to the liturgy, "incorporated into Christ's mighty acts of salvation." We also celebrate and ponder the birth of the Church and gifts of the Spirit (Pentecost), and how we are to live as faithful disciples of Christ.



Spring brings Birds, Bees, Flowers, and Faith

Editor's note: *this article was originally published on umc.org*

By the Rev. Mark Price

When the weather turns warmer and the grass grows greener, it's easier to

understand the promise of new life and renewed hope that Christians proclaim as "Easter people."

As we celebrate the Easter season, the 50 days after the Resurrection, we see



reminders all around us. So be sure to keep an eye out on your next spring stroll.

Birds

The robin, a very common bird in the U.S., has a red breast and a legend to explain it. Seems that once a gray robin flew to Christ's crown of thorns to draw out a thorn, and when it did, a drop of Christ's blood fell on its breast, leaving a stain forevermore.

Bees

It takes lots of buzzing bees to spread the pollen and make flowers grow. The honey these creatures create is a biblical symbol of God's favor. The Torah agrees, for it describes God's promised land again and again as "flowing with milk and honey."

Flowers

Long considered a symbol of hope and new life, the daffodil is one of the blooms most often connected to the

Resurrection. Tradition says that giving a gift of daffodils will ensure happiness for the receiver—but always give a bunch: a single bloom signals doom.

The flowering shrub known as the forsythia is what I call the Easter tree, because when its spidery branches are moving with the wind, they seem to be arms waving in praise of the season. According to tradition, forsythia means anticipation—an appropriate companion word for Resurrection.

It is said the dogwood tree used to grow straight and tall, but after it was used as a crucifix for Christ, God made it short and twisted with a thin trunk so it could never be used as a cross again. The dogwood bloom has four parts, each with a rusty red color on the end and a small hole, a reminder of where the nails were driven into the cross. The center stamens look like the crown of thorns.

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