First Congregational Church 2017 Lenten Film Series
Theme: Returning Repairing Restoring

- All films are free and are screened each Friday* evening in Lent.
  *Exception – Friday, March 31 has been moved to Thursday, March 30

- Pot Luck: 6:30 pm in the Founders’ Room

- Films: 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary, followed by a discussion.

If you have questions or comments, or request child care, please contact Jerry White (719.471.8215).

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017
Scripture: Genesis 1 & 2 excerpts
Sermon: Dysfunctional family? Is there such a thing as original sin/fall/debt?

THE LUNCHBOX
The most successful fast delivery system in the world (the dabbawalas of Mumbai, the envy of Fed Ex and Amazon) serves as the catalyst for a long distance friendship that evolves into a reflection on and a sharing of “loneliness, memories, regrets, fears and even small joys.” Triggered by a delivery error (said to occur with a frequency of about 1 in 8,000,000) a man and woman are connected through food and carefully crafted notes. “Only a few times in my life have I wanted to re-watch a movie right away. Ritesh Batra’s first feature, “The Lunchbox” (2013) hooked me within the first act. Imagine the life you live, when a short note of a few lines becomes your daily thrill. Here, we follow the quiet lives of disconnected people reaching across the urban noise of Mumbai, reaching for anyone who would listen. Centering around food, it is a seamless fusion of Satyajit Ray and Nora Ephron, with hints of Akira Kurosawa. Overall, it reminds me that as our cities get more crowded, we get more lonely.” [Omar Mozaffar on RobertEbert.com]
(Directed by Ritesh Batra, 2013, 104 min, Hindi and English with English subtitles)

HARD BOILED CHICKEN
“In true hard-boiled detective style, a rooster tries to find the thief of the egg that was stolen from his chicken. Soon all traces point towards the farmer…”
(Directed by Arjan Wilschut, 2005, 5 min, no dialog)
FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2017
Scripture: Job 1: 1-21
Sermon: Good and Evil/pain, Dualism - devil and divine

MOONLIGHT
This film has a screenplay by an alum of the Telluride Film Festival Student Program, Barry Jenkins and is based on a play by 2013 MacArthur Fellow Tarell McCraney. They grew up at the same time in the same poverty and drug burdened Miami neighborhood. They did not know each other then, but have come together now to create a film of great power, semi-autobiographical, and instilled with all the poetry the cinema can create. It has been nominated for 8 Oscars!

“Moonlight is both a disarmingly, at times almost unbearably personal film and an urgent social document, a hard look at American reality and a poem written in light, music and vivid human faces. The stanzas consist of three chapters in the life of Chiron, played as a wide-eyed boy by Alex Hibbert, as a brooding adolescent by Ashton Sanders and as a mostly grown man by Trevante Rhodes. The nature and meaning of manhood is one of Mr. Jenkins’s chief concerns. How tough are you supposed to be? How cruel? How tender? How brave? And how are you supposed to learn?”
[A.O. Scott, NYT]
(Directed by Barry Jenkins, 2018, 110 min, English)

CHASING DREAM
This is a superbly relaxing abstract film made for the Dutch recorder quartet Brisk for use in their theater show.
(Directed by Oerd Van Cuijleborg, 2005, 7 min, no dialog)

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2017
Scripture: Matthew 26: 57-68, 27:11-26
Sermon: Jesus on Trial - by High priest and Pilate

MERCHANTS OF DOUBT
“And by that destiny to perform an act, Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come…” says Antonio in the The Tempest; William Shakespeare, anticipating today’s events centuries ago, as did writers Naomi Oreske and Erik
Conway in 2010 and filmmaker Robert Kenner in 2014. We have (hopefully) achieved the apogee of the American media fueled con artist endeavors; we’ll have a look at the historical thread of charismatic, silver tongued pundits and pseudo scientists from the tobacco industry through to today’s climate change deniers in this tightly scripted and visually compelling documentary.

“… the misdirection practiced by tobacco lobbyists and climate-change deniers represents a fraud perpetrated on the American public — one that has dramatically slowed the cause of progress on important issues by sowing confusion, even when no confusion actually exists in the scientific community. As we are continually reminded, the goal is never to win the debate (impossible), but rather to create and sustain the very illusion of a debate, so as to frustrate and delay public action as long as possible.”
[Justin Chang, Variety]

Special (uncredited) guest appearance – Vladimir Putin and Rex Tillerson
(Directed by Robert Kenner, 2014, 96 min, English)

**BUTTER LAMP**
2014 Oscar nominee, this live action short illuminates the contrast between illusion and reality from a Tibetan perspective.
(Directed by Wei Hu, 2014, 15 min, Tibetan with English Subtitles)

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**FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2017**
Scripture: TBD, Matthew 27 excerpts
Sermon: Did Jesus have to die? Violent atonement? Why violence and bloodshed/sacrifice

**LOVE IS STRANGE**
“Directed by Ira Sachs and co-written by Sachs and Mauricio Zacharias [this film] has the confidence in its beautiful and emotional story to tell it simply. It's about many things: growing old, New York real estate, family, work, friendships...but what it is really about is love. Love is not strange at all. It is what we do, if we are lucky. ... In movies it's the details that often bring transcendence—everyday moments illuminated by profundity or grace. Filmmakers discover them by observing how people listen to one another, the way they talk and touch, the pauses that settle unexpectedly between them, the silent private moments. It's a courageous film that's willing to sit in those moments instead of underlining them or
hurrying past them, hoping we get the shorthand. "Love is Strange" is a patient film. The emotions it unleashes are enormous. [Sheila O’Malley, RogerEbert.com]

With John Lithgow and Alfred Molina – won the AARP award for “Best Grownup Love Story”.
(Directed by Ira Sachs, 2014, 94 min, New York English)

**BOOGALOO AND GRAHAM**
Another in the series of FCC Lenten chicken-related short films….
(Directed by Michael Lennox, 2014, 14 min, English)

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**THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017** – **NOTE CHANGE OF DAY TO THURSDAY**

Scripture: Matthew 27 excerpts
Sermon: Jesus on Death Row Or Jesus, Dead Man Walking

**DEAD MAN WALKING**
Trials, Conviction, Condemnation, Death by Execution, Forgiveness and Redemption are at the center of our current experience of the Christian narrative. In this film, Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon lead us to further reflect on these themes; we can consider how they inform our Lenten focus.

“After seeing "Dead Man Walking," I paused outside the screening to jot a final line on my notes: ‘This film ennobles filmmaking.’ That is exactly what it does. It demonstrates how a movie can confront a grave and controversial issue in our society and see it fairly, from all sides, not take any shortcuts, and move the audience to a great emotional experience without unfair manipulation. What is remarkable is that the film is also all the other things a movie should be: absorbing, surprising, technically superb and worth talking about for a long time afterward.” [Roger Ebert]

Received 3 Oscar nominations (Best Actor, Best Director and Best Music) and a win for Susan Sarandon (Best Actress).
(Directed by Tim Robbins, 1992, 122 min. English)

**PIPER**
Our bird-themed films continue with this Oscar nominated short film on seeking opportunity in the face of risk.
(Directed by Alan Barillaro, 2016, 6 min, no dialog)
FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2017
Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11
Sermon: Palm and Passion

THE BIG HEAT
What better film genre to fit into the Lenten theme than a classic Film Noir? Good and evil struggle with and against each other, morphing one into the other, all with the overlay of the German Expressionist cinema aesthetic. We’ll hear some great lines: “somebody’s going to pay… because he forgot to kill me;” “I guess a scar isn’t so bad. Not if it's only on one side... I can always go through life sideways.” And many more just as memorable. Bosley Crowther (NYT), writing on the occasion of the premier of the film in 1953, observes: “Mr. Lang can direct a film. He has put his mind to it, in this instance, and he has brought forth a hot one with a sting.”
(Directed by Fritz Lang. 1953, 90 min, English)

THE GUNFIGHTER
A saloon in the Old West, a gunslinger swaggers through the swinging doors and… truth and disclosure ensue in this genre busting film.
(Directed by Eric Kissack, 2014, 9 min, English)

APRIL 14, 2017 – GOOD FRIDAY
Theme: The Rising Dead (Jesus triumphs over death; the kingdom has come)

FIRE AT SEA
In this powerful documentary the story of the refugee crisis is turned inside out, from a story of a relatively few gaining access in large countries to tens of thousands arriving on the tiny (8 sq. mi.) Italian island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean – closer to Tunisia than Italy. Director Gianfranco Rosi lived on the island for a year, and acted as his own cameraman. Carefully filming both the desperation of the new arrivals and the island residents holding on to their peaceful way of life, he provides us with a look at the crisis that transcends journalism with a mastery of documentary cinema that amplifies reality.

“This searching documentary about the European immigration crisis focuses on the Sicilian island of Lampedusa, where thousands of people arrive each year from Africa and the Middle East en route to the continent. Director Gianfranco Rosi divides his
narrative between a 12-year-old boy who lives on the island, enjoying a bucolic childhood of slingshots and firecrackers, and the rescue teams that risk life and limb to save imperiled boats at sea (according to the movie, some 15,000 people have died trying to reach Lampedusa in the past 20 years). Though conceived as a humanitarian statement, the movie wouldn't be as memorable or challenging without its quotidian aspect—when a local woman putters around her kitchen cooking as the radio brings news of 34 people lost at sea, you wonder at her emotional detachment before relating it to your own.”

[J.R. Jones, Chicago Reader]
Oscar nominee - Best Documentary Feature
(Directed by Gianfranco Rosi, 2016, 114 min, Italian and English)

VENT
A violent wind, a man’s struggle to cope and a surprising discovery about who is in control.
(Directed by Erik vanSchaaik, 2004, 5 min, no dialog)