

THE SPIRE

February 2021

The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, NJ • 140 Mountain Avenue • Westfield, NJ 07090

SAVE THE DATE for the HSMT!

When: June 28—July 1 Where: Locally

While the specific details of what the HSMT will look like this year are still being worked out we ask that you save the dates! We are in the process of exploring COVID safe local mission opportunities that will make for a unique trip and experience while still including some of the same feelings and aspects of a traditional HSMT! We ask that if you are interested you hold the dates as more details will be shared as they become available.

In other PCW Youth news February is our youth missions fundraiser “Youth Rebuilding Hope”. This is a month that we take the opportunity to share all of the amazing impacts youth missions have on our students, volunteers, and communities we serve. We do this in the hopes that we can continue to be blessed with contributions to fund these activities. Stay tuned as we share the ways our raised funds have enabled us to run youth mission differently this year; and how you can impact those missions as we move forward!

Prelude to *In Good Company*

This Lent we invite you on a road trip of the soul.

The Psalms of Ascent were sung by generations of Israelites and Jews as they made pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the three high festivals of their faith. These songs were literally the “soundtrack” for the journey, and as we imagine Jesus and his followers leaving Galilee for Jerusalem, wandering through the wilderness, and literally hiking up to Jerusalem from the Jericho road to celebrate the Passover feast before his arrest and crucifixion, these were their songs. Jesus and the disciples would have sung them at the top of their lungs, over and over. They are a direct link from our ancient faith to the one we follow.

No matter where you are on life’s spiritual journey there is a place here for you. No matter if you are already connected with us, or just stumbling into our church community, there is a place here for you. Here are some of the ways you can participate: (1) joining us for worship each week; (2) in Bible studies on Sunday’s and Tuesday afternoons; (3) prayer groups; and (4) opportunities for private devotion.

This Lent we are traveling together, hearing – sometime singing – studying and reflecting on some of the deepest sayings about God and our relationship to the divine; this Lent, you are *In Good Company*.

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Faith Formation

With the beginning of Lent, Faith Formation will be offering a number of educational and faith developing opportunities for all. Starting on Ash Wednesday, a weekly email will be sent with ideas to help everyone engage in the Lenten Journey through scripture, videos, activities and music. We will coordinate the Psalms of Ascent with a variety of Lenten symbols to help make the season more meaningful and personal.

Beginning February 7th, we will have Zoom Sunday school for children at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning! We will sing, talk about the Lent materials that will be emailed, and leave the kids with an activity to do while they participate in the Facebook live church service with their families.

We are also looking forward to the continuation of the Adult Bible study on Sundays and Tuesdays with The Rev. Tom Kort.

We will also have two other ongoing projects during Lent. The first is a chance to come to the Parish House to get a heart or cross to decorate or just sign and hang on one of trees on the lawn.

The second is a video project where we are asking all members of the church to submit a picture of themselves with a sign to celebrate Easter. There will be opportunities to come to the church to have your picture taken outside so that we can add your photo to the video celebration. More information on dates and times to come.

TIME OUT FOR PARENTS (T.O.P.S)

Time Out for Parents will begin registration for the 2021-22 school year this March. New information will be available by contacting mkdanskin@comcast.net.

Children aged 20 - 28 months may attend one or two mornings a week. The cost will be approximately \$45/day. Classes will be small and follow all the CDC guidelines to keep everyone safe from the virus.



Book Discussion Groups

Theology Discussion Group

We invite you to join us for our next discussion Monday, February 1, 7:30 - 8:30pm as we read and reflect on Chapter 10 of Thomas Merton's "No Man Is an Island". On Monday, February 15, 7:30 - 8:30pm, we will reflect on Chapter 11. If you would like more information, please contact Alan Smith, 917-239-1667, or alandsmith518@gmail.com.

Lunch and a Book

Lunch and a Book will reconvene on Friday, March 12th from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m on Zoom to discuss Pulitzer Prize Finalist, "The Dutch House" by Anne Patchett. Everyone is welcome to participate! We have read some great books this year and had wonderful conversations. If you want to read ahead, our May book will be "The Moor's Account" by Laila Lalami, another Pulitzer Prize Finalist. If you have any questions or want to sign up to get the Zoom information, please contact Lisa Black, lmb.blacklaw@gmail.com. You can participate by video or phone.

Clerk's Corner

Highlights of the January 12, 2021 Session Meeting

There was a lot of Clerk's correspondence, but the highlight was writing a thank you note to the Miles Hodsdon Vernon Foundation. Agape had submitted a grant request and received \$41,000 from them. The next Elizabeth Presbytery meeting is Tuesday, 2/16/21, via Zoom. Jeremy said that going forward PCW needs to participate and take a more active role as we transition to the new Presbytery. New Jersey is moving from 7 to 4 presbyteries. The Union County churches in Elizabeth Presbytery are joining with Newark Presbytery and most of the churches from the Palisades Presbytery to form the "Northeast" Presbytery. A new name will be chosen. Former Elders can attend Presbytery meetings. Please contact Jeremy if you are interested in attending.

The Moderator's Report included the following items for Session to be working on:

Clarifying Our Identity- Jeremy presented the "Living Our Vision: The Why, the How, and the What that Drives Us" document. This will set the standards for how ministries really function and will help with decision making, clarity and setting Commission priorities. He tied the "why, how and what" into "Who We Are" and our culture of "Invite, Grow and Serve". Each Commission has a role in making encounters with God for everyone. Martha Kieczkowski suggested asking the question "If we succeed what will we look like in 5 years?" All Commissions were asked to review their vision statements at their next meeting. Barbara McLaughlan and Nancy Smith shared Worship Commission's experience in reviewing their vision statement.

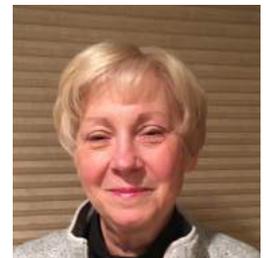
Engaging People and the Database- Relationship building should be so easy that people find a place quickly. Our current data base needs to be evaluated to see if it will meet our growing needs or whether we need to search for alternative systems. There needs to be conversation as a team to establish systems, data bases and organizational structure to provide outcomes. The goals are to (1) more easily connect with people- we need to be able to target communication with specific people- not just to everyone; (2) more easily collect people's contact information and connect with them and (3) make it as easy as possible to contact people and connect on a regular basis.

Leadership Development- Jeremy said that it is important to develop people on the Commissions to function at a high level- not just as Deacons or Elders. We need to focus on (1) volunteer management; (2) leadership development; and (3) succession planning within our ministries.

The Congregational Nominating Committee (CNC) is meeting and is accepting nominations either electronically or by using the form in the January Spire. The slate of names will be presented, and the candidates will be voted on at the March Congregational Meeting.

The Session voted to approve the "Youth Rebuilding Hope" fundraiser in February. Look for more information coming soon on this.

—Pam Shaw, Acting Clerk of Session



Ash Wednesday is February 17.

Barbara Ringk Puts the Spotlight on Parkinson's Disease

Since 1999, Barbara Ringk has been facilitating monthly meetings for The Parkinson's Support Group here at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield. The outbreak of COVID-19 early last year, and the stay-at-home orders issued in March 2019, required a drastic revamp of how the group would/could meet and stay connected with Barbara and each other. Through assistance from ParkinsonAlliance.org, Barbara moved to an online platform, and now conducts weekly meetings on Zoom. Not only has she maintained her relationships with those who regularly came to the monthly meetings, this virtual community has flourished because individuals and couples who live too far away to attend in person are able to join the online meetings.

For more than 20 years, it has been Barbara's mission to keep the monthly meetings interesting, relevant, and informative. Shifting to a weekly format could have made these goals even more tricky. Every Monday afternoon at 1:30pm, she needs to be ready to go "On Air" with her audience for 90-minutes! Not one to be easily daunted by a challenge, Barbara has been busy arranging guest speakers for the meetings, designing events and activities, and providing the most current information on Parkinson's to the group. Some of the highlights include:

- Tim Hague, Sr., a Parkinson's Disease advocate and a patient himself, who competed with his son in *Amazing Race Canada* 5 years ago and WON!! Tim has started a multi-faceted wellness center called "U-Turn" whose goals are to slow the disease and ultimately eliminate it from life. Tim's inspirational presentation discussed his experiences in the competition along with his book Perseverance.
- As the election season of 2020 was heating up, Barbara invited two candidates running for the 7th District Congressional seat, Congressman Tom Malinowski and State Senator Thomas Kean, Jr., to spend time presenting their positions on various issues, and answering questions from people with Parkinson's and their caregivers.
- Barbara invited one of the caregivers – a published author of poetry – to read some selections from her third book.
- Always mindful of the need to educate her audience about symptoms, side effects, and new treatments, Barbara frequently invites specialists in myriad of fields to meet with her group. One such discussion featured Dr. Barry Tannen, a Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Eyecare Professional, who addressed how Parkinson's affects vision.
- Jean White, Director of Health and Wellness and Active Older Adults at the Westfield Area Y, helped launch and leads the Delay the Disease Parkinson's Exercise Program there. Through Barbara's requests, Jean attends the online meetings almost weekly, and provides 30-45 minutes of exercise for the group.
- Keeping Parkinson's patients active is essential to keeping them mobile. Barbara's ongoing search for relevant topics and presenters led her to David Tamaki, Director of Advancement for the New Jersey Ballet, who offers free weekly dance classes to individuals with Parkinson's. He was able to join the group online, gave a sample dance lesson, and keeps Barbara informed of his weekly class schedule so she can share it with the group.
- In past years, the December Parkinson's Meeting always offered a luncheon in Assembly Hall and the Kindergarten children of The Presbyterian Nursery School & Kindergarten presented a short concert of holiday songs. At the end of the afternoon, students offered a handmade holiday card to each adult attendee. December 2019 could be nothing like that, but Barbara was determined to make the holidays as cheery and bright as she could.

Rallying her Presbyterian Women's Circle members, she asked them to bake enough cookies for all her group members who live locally. She coordinated with Jenn Collum, the PNS&K Director, to get an adequate supply of Christmas cards along with a video of the children singing their songs. Gathering the cookies and cards, she set off in "elf" mode, delivering cookies and cards to as many in the group as she could. The following Monday when everyone logged onto Zoom, they had their cards and cookies, and saw the video of the children singing. Certainly, it was a much different Holiday Party than in the past, but a festive one nonetheless.



Barbara is always providing information about on-line classes, how to participate in clinical research studies, what people with Parkinson's should know about COVID-19, how to sign up for the vaccine, etc. At PCW, we have many people who share their gifts and talents with others. Barbara Ringk is one example of what can be accomplished when we share. She is a blessing to our church, and to the people with Parkinson's Disease and their caregivers.

—Diane Hansen & Josh McMahon

Faith Formation Adult Bible Study for February & LENT

EPIPHANY BIBLE STUDY: "FAITH IN FULL-EPIPHANY"

All are welcome to join Tom Kort who is leading the "Faith in Full- Epiphany" Bible study on Sundays at 11:00 am and Tuesdays at 4:00 pm. Tom has thoughtful discussion questions and fun stories from his many years of serving as a Pastor. The preaching and Bible study verses are:

| Date | Scripture |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1/31/21 and 2/2/21 | Mark 1: 21-28 |
| 2/7/21 and 2/9/21 | Mark 1: 29-39 |
| 2/14/21 and 2/16/21 | Mark 9:2-9 |

LENT BIBLE STUDY: "FAITH RISING/ SONGS FOR PILGRIMS"

You are next invited to continue with Bible study during Lent with Tom Kort leading. We will be studying the "Psalms of Ascent". They are also called pilgrim songs. There are 15 psalms (120-134) that each begin with the title "A Song of Ascents". Jerusalem is situated on a high hill. These psalms were sung by Hebrew worshipers on their way up to Jerusalem to attend one of the three main annual Jewish festivals. According to some traditions, the Jewish priests also sang some of these Songs of Ascent as they walked up the steps to the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples would have sung these psalms on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

The 15 psalms will be divided between the sermons and the Adult Bible studies. The Bible study classes will be on Sundays at 11:00 am and Tuesdays at 4:00 pm. The schedule is

| Date | Scripture | Title |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2/21/21 & 2/23/21 | Psalm 123 | Mercy Me |
| 2/28/21 & 3/2/21 | Psalm 121 | Blessed to Bless |
| 3/7/21 & 3/9/21 | Psalm 124 | Free as a Bird |
| 3/14/21 & 3/16/21 | Psalm 126 | Whatever Happened to Joy? |
| 3/21/21 & 3/23/21 | Psalm 128 | The Good Life |
| 3/28/21 & 3/30/21 | Psalm 129 | Faith Like a Ferret |
| 4/4/21 (Easter) & 4/6/21 | | NO BIBLE STUDY |
| 4/11/21 & 4/13/21 | | Evidence for the Resurrection |

Please register through the eblast or Church Office to receive the Zoom invitation.

Youth

We have missed meeting youth in person, but continue to pray for God's love and presence in their lives. As soon as it is safe to gather, and the weather is warmer, we will resume some favorite programs like Breakfast Club and Fellowship events.

This fall, we had a great time gathering for socially distanced fun and fellowship together. We had s'mores fire pit nights, an outdoor movie night, and a college fire pit reunion. Our Youth helped create beautiful designs and messages on the lawn of the church for "Be the Light Westfield."

UPDATES:

In Fall of 2021, both the current freshman and 8th graders will be combined to make one class. Confirmation is an important time for youth to grow in their faith, and community with each other and their leaders. This pivotal year for the faith development for our youth cannot be replicated in a virtual world. We look forward to walking with our youth as they learn more about, and grow their relationship with God and each other this fall.

We are looking into possible plans for a High School Mission Trip. Stay tuned!

Please join us for Middle School Zoom Sunday School with Bill Cook and High School Zoom Sunday School with Lisa Black at 11:00am on Sunday mornings.

Weedy Workers

Weedy Workers will resume work on the church grounds in March and we can't wait to see you back on the church campus. If you want to be part of this weekly weedy worker group, please contact Lisa Black, imb.blacklaw@gmail.com to be notified of when work will resume. We have plans for a plant sale/exchange in the spring and continue to keep our grounds beautiful and welcoming. If you have a rake or a trowel or a desire to garden, this is the group for you!

NJ Festival Orchestra to Present *New Beginnings* Virtual Concert

Stars from both the Broadway stage and international opera houses as well as dancers from Dance Theatre of Harlem return to NJFO this February to present *New Beginnings*, a unique musical experience to celebrate of the arrival of 2021. A winter wonderland of renowned tenor fare, dazzling holiday classics and Broadway favorites, this NJFO made-for-television streamed video special is set to usher in new times ahead with warmth and cheer.

"Covid-19 temporarily kept our audience and orchestra apart in December," explained NJFO Music Director David Wroe. "So we have created a 'best of' Holiday season presentation - a hybrid Three Holiday Tenors and the Broadway classics traditionally offered to the largest audience of our season on New Year's Eve."

New Beginnings, a one-hour made-for-television streamed video special staged exclusively for this production, will be released in February. Safely filmed at the Ward Mansion in Westfield, this must-watch streaming event captures all the magic of a live performance and promises a treat for the whole family – and it comes free of charge thanks to generous support from NJ State Council on the Arts, The Westfield Foundation and NJFO patrons Jerome and Helene Dreskin.

Look for the free video link on www.njfestivalorchestra.org. For more information, contact NJFO by email at patronservices@njfestivalorchestra.org or call (908) 232-9400.



Happy Birthday



Feb 1

Jane Annis
Georgeanne McMahon
Cailly Simpson
Vlad Marhefka

Feb 2

Mary Pope
Linda Morse
Kelly Lama
Kelly Lapham
Joshua Schwartz

Feb 3

Bill Fredericks
Tisha Klofta
Jennifer Wilner

Feb 4

Penny Johnson
Catherine Matera
Connor Burslem

Feb 5

Marianne Bredlau
Eric Demers

Feb 6

Lynn Gerckens
Michael Stravach
Ella Johnson

Feb 7

Barbara Ramsden-Nary
Jeff Marino

Feb 8

Darlene Husch
Trudy Cederqvist
Jessica Weaver
Jack Luerssen
Samantha Falzone

Feb 9

Clint Factor

Feb 10

Kim Taylor
Renee Donatelli
angelica Diacheysn
Jessica Bungerz

Feb 11

Amanda Paden
Dustin Paden
Jason Paden

Feb 12

Connie Muirhead
Chris Brown
Michael Ince
Maria Weldon
Benton Cummings

Feb 13

Tay Miller
Stanley Donatelli
Holly Grom
Tim Grom

Feb 14

Ralph Maines
Tom Howland
Evan Trott

Feb 15

Sienna Murphy

Feb 16

Tom Phelan
Pam Kolb
David Hewit
Randall Speir
Laura Marhefka
Simon Wang

Feb 17

Jet Taylor

Feb 18

Cathy LaMond
Jacob Klofta
Robert Fallo

Feb 19

Jeanmarie Keenan
Fiona Quinlan

Feb 20

Peggy Smith
Brenda Eickemeyer
Griffin Embry
Will Murtishaw

Feb 21

Jim Pinkin
Katie Fleschle
Susan Cunningham
Jeannine Hyman
Christian Grom
Andrew Zanfagna

Feb 22

Bill Ainslie Jr
Joe Sobala
Joe Swingle
Cheri Pate
Christopher Gerckens
Christian Burgdorf
Sarah Pavleszek

Feb 23

Michael Devaney
Philip Zanfagna
Aiden Carlucci

Feb 24

Jack Leone

Feb 25

Barbara Hannah
Donald Kolterjahn
Pam Brug-Panton
Matt Dailey
Joanne Kinsella
Matt Stierhoff

Feb 26

Inger Andreassen
Nancy Hevert
Lee Perry
Robin Ince
Adam Dix
Matthew Beke

Feb 27

Emily Howell
Kevin Stock
Kelly Vasel

Feb 28

Ellen Foster
Chris Lum
Alex DuMont
Henry Brown



*If you don't see your
birthday listed,
please contact the
church office.
We will be happy to add
your name to the monthly
birthday list!*



140 Mountain Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY MORNINGS 10AM!

ONLINE

YouTube and FB

Sunday School Online

3yrs - 5th grade

Adults

Questers
Serendipity

Do you have news to share?

If you have great news to share with PCW such as, an engagement, anniversary, adoption, baptism, birth, etc., please email a picture and a short paragraph to spire@westfieldpc.org to be featured!

We'd love to celebrate with you!

CONTACT US

westfieldpc.org | wired4worship.com

908.233.0301 | Office Hours: Monday- Friday, 9am- 5pm



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Mary Danskin, Director - 908-654-5157

Time Out for Parents - T.O.P.S.

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