

January & February 2024



Church Street Journal

First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway



Pastor's Reflection



I am beginning a new daily devotional as part of my morning routine. This devotional by the author Kate Bowler is aptly named *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day!* Now, the author is not suggesting that we have a day that is both beautiful and terrible, but she is acknowledging the fact that, especially lately, it seems that our days are made up of both highs and lows, the beautiful and the terrible. These days with what we see on the news and with what might be happening in our everyday lives, we feel bombarded with anxiety, of school shootings, viruses, getting old, and natural disasters.

But we are also hit with unexpected serendipity, a beautiful sunset, the hug of a close friend, the reconnection with a long-lost friend, or the simple joy of enjoying each other's company on a Sunday morning.

Kate Bowler sets out to acknowledge our anxieties but also set the dial back, to make us also aware of the joy that we witness every day and might miss if the largeness of our looming worries drags us down. What kind of anxiety are you facing? But also, what joy do you have in your life that you might be missing? This year we enter an early Lenten Season. Lent is an appropriate time to contemplate our worries, or misdeeds, and mistakes, but it must not be without joy. The old narrative of Lent being a joyless, self-sacrificing time is not true to the Gospel and the joy of Jesus that we experience in the hope of the resurrection. What is special about Lent is that even in the desert, there are sunrises, there are blooming cacti, and oasis. Slowing down, stripping down to the necessary activity to reflect and calm down is what Lent is all about. With Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday coinciding we are given the opportunity to be reminded both of God's love for us and our human mortality.

This year, we will have several opportunities to reflect both on the beautiful and the terrible for the Lenten Season. Our Lenten Lunches will be returning, which is an excellent opportunity to forge relationships with members of the other ecumenical churches. Every Friday at 12 PM from February 16th to March 22nd. This will be a wonderful opportunity to be reminded of the joy that can be found in lent, unexpected blessings found in fellowship. We also will have a Tuesday Zoom Lenten Study on the book *Third Day* by Tom Berlin. We will explore how Jesus' resurrection changed the very lives of people in the New Testament and draw from their experiences and perspectives. Our Lenten Devotional for the congregation and to reflect on during Adult Sunday School is titled *Local Pilgrim* and is all about reflecting on the beautiful and the mundane in our own community. You can find more details about all our upcoming happenings in the newsletter. Until then I pray a blessing that you might remain hopeful, and aware in all that comes your way as we seek to be disciples of Jesus, even in the difficult moments.

*Blessings,
Rev. Ryan*

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

March 1

Lenten Lunch - 12:00 - 1st Presbyterian Church of Rockaway

March 8

Lenten Lunch - 12:00 - St. Simon the Apostle

March 9

Deacons & Elders Training—
Fellowship Hall from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

March 15

Lenten Lunch - 12:00 - St. Cecilia

March 15

Community Cup—6-9 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

March 20

Session Meeting 7 p.m.

March 22

Lenten Lunch - 12:00 - Teabo UMC

March 23

Rise-Up / FPCR Community Breakfast - 8 - 11 a.m.

March 24

Palm Sunday - Hot Cross Buns during Coffee Hour

March 28

Maundy Thursday Svc. - 7pm Sanctuary

March 29

Ecumenical Good Friday Svc. - 12p.m. at UMC of the Rockaways

March 29

Good Friday Service - 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

March 31

Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m. with a light breakfast to follow.

March 31

Easter Sunday Svc. - 10:30 a.m. (No Sunday School)

Website:

www.fpcrockaway.org

Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43847971726>

In the Spotlight

Committee News

Wrapping up 2023 and entering the new year, it has been one busy time for our *Church and Committees*. *Congregational Care*, organized a beautiful *Holiday Luncheon and Tricky Tray* that was a big hit as always. The *Outreach Committee* has been connecting and staying active with the community for our blood drive, backpack project, the *Outreach Sunday* speakers from *Family Promise*, a presentation & donation to *Jersey Battered Woman's Services (JBWS)* to help the victims of domestic violence, as well as continuing to have our *Rise-Up / FPCR Community Breakfasts* which are held the last Saturday of each month. *Friday Community Cup* get togethers are a big hit, members from our church and the community gather to play various games, share some light snacks and beverages and enjoy a night of fellowship with special friends. Not to mention, *Reverend Ryon* performing our *Ash Wednesday* service. Everyone in the congregation is invited to join us for any of these activities. It is a great way to reach out to members of our community and show them that *First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway* continues to be alive and active in the community!



Souper Bowl Sunday

FPCR held the annual Souper Bowl Sunday soup sale as we do ever Super Bowl Sunday!! As in the past, Lisa DiBonaventura, Debbie Garriss and several other members of the church cooked up a variety of soups for the fundraiser.

This year, the proceeds from our fundraiser will be going to Lennon's House, a local non-profit that we help support which provides day programs and learning activities for adults with special needs. Right now, they are raising funds for a 12-passenger van so that they can provide the program to those who do not have transportation.

Many came out for a variety of soups for 6 dollars a container or 10 dollars for 2!! Thank you for everyone that supported the event!



Sara Circle Committee Project

Sara Circle is collecting items to make up special care baskets for Family Promise of Morris County. Anyone wishing to help, there will be a box in Fellowship Hall to place your donated items. We are collecting cleaning supplies, health & hygiene supplies, and also dog care items.

Some suggestions of possible donations are listed below, there is a star next to the items that they are especially in need of.

The Sara Circle Committee thanks you in advance for your generous support for this outreach.

Cleaning Supplies

*Paper Towels
*Plastic Garbage Bags
Brooms & Mops
Disinfecting Spray
Windex
13 gal. Garbage Cans
Laundry Detergent
Dish Detergent
Dish Washer tabs
Sponges
Sanitizing Wipes

Health & Hygiene Supplies

*Toilet Paper
*Shampoo & Conditioner
Band aids
Wash Cloths
Tissues, Reg. & Pocket
Mouthwash, small travel size
Hand Sanitizer
Body Lotion
Hand Soap
Body Wash
Men's & Women's Razors

Dog Care Supplies

*Dry Food
Canned Food
*Treats
Collars & Leashes
Toys
Coats
Water Bowls
Dishes
Beds
Poop Pick-up Bags

Food Closet Donations

All nonperishable items are always welcome, but this month the items needed the most are:

Crackers Pasta
Canned Fruit Pasta Sauce
Coffee



See Linda Kirby for questions on how you can help. Also the following is a link to the Rockaway Food Closet Facebook page with all of their information. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091853865086>

Disaster Preparedness Fair

FPCR sponsored a Disaster Preparedness Fair lead by Laurie Moore in Fellowship Hall from 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday, February 10th. People came to check out the tables with information and talk to people about disaster preparedness including the American Red Cross, Rockaway Fire and Police Departments, and the Morris County Sheriff's Department.



Responding to Climate Change Study

Matthew 25 Peacemaking Newsletter February 2024 Climate Change and Systemic Poverty

In 2019, The Presbyterian Church (USA) initiated the Matthew 25 movement, which focuses on Matthew 25: 31-46, the parable of the sheep and goats wherein Jesus calls us to take care of “**the least of them,**” our brothers and sisters in need. The PCUSA identified three major goals for churches to focus on: **Building congregational vitality, Dismantling structural racism, and Eradicating systemic poverty.** Session unanimously voted to have our congregation become a Matthew 25 Church. For more information, go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

In this newsletter the Matthew 25 group will focus on **eradicating systemic poverty** and what will be the two greatest causes of poverty in the 21st century:

1. Climate change caused by the burning of fossil fuels.
2. The growing attempts by some in Congress and the corporate world to cut funding for addressing climate change, programs which protect our health and services that provide economic security for people in need.

Climate Change:

The burning of fossil fuels over the centuries has greatly increased the amount of carbon dioxide, a known greenhouse gas, in the atmosphere, trapping the sun's heat and raising the average global temperature. In the book Pastor Ryon shared with us in our climate change study this summer, **Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World**, author Katherine Hayhoe, makes a very strong case for these conclusions. Man-made climate change is greatly contributing to the stronger hurricanes, erratic weather patterns, excessive rain and snow which has resulted in severe flooding, and droughts which have created unprecedented wildfires that are having worldwide impacts on our health and safety. Climate change is already causing a rapid melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers, resulting in a steady rise in sea level. Unless meaningful corrective action is taken soon, climate change will make large areas of the earth, including major cities, uninhabitable, creating millions of refugees fleeing these areas and causing the deaths of many others. The growing evidence shows that if the average global temperature continues to rise, one billion people may eventually perish from human-caused climate change and people in poverty, or as Jesus put it, “the least of them,” would feel the worst effects. Richer nations such as the United States, will bear most of the blame for the deaths. This disaster has already started, with extensive wildfires in places like Maui, and unprecedented floods worldwide, killing many and making people climate refugees in their own countries, thereby reducing them to poverty. It will only get worse if no action is taken. **Failure to take meaningful action on climate change would be a clear violation of Matthew 25 where Jesus Christ calls us to take care of our brothers and sisters in need – “the least of them.” If we do not take action on climate change, all of us will eventually be reduced to extreme poverty and become “the least of them.”**

Attempts to cut funding for addressing climate change and programs that protect our citizens:

Unfortunately, there are a number of people in Congress and leaders in corporations who are calling for cuts to federal programs which protect the environment, address climate change, provide health care and food to people in need and guarantee financial security for senior citizens. These programs are saving lives and protecting our health, safety and financial security. Without government support, many would fall deeper into poverty and experience illness. The increasing disasters caused by climate change are already forcing more people into poverty, making these programs all the more necessary. **Cutting these life-saving programs, as some in Congress advocate, would be a clear violation of Matthew 25 where Jesus Christ calls us to take care of our brothers and sisters in need – “the least of them.”**

There is the very real danger that if nothing is done to address climate change, and if programs that protect the health, safety and financial security of our citizens are cut or eliminated, the negative forces described above will eventually converge to create a “perfect storm,” threatening the collapse of our human civilization and causing massive loss of life.

Responding to Climate Change Study *(continued)*

However, there is still time to prevent these disasters. In her book, Katherine Hayhoe offers viable solutions and hope for a sustainable and prosperous world if we all work together. I urge you to read Katherine's book and explore her website: <https://www.katharinehayhoe.com/> Please take these actions to help save the planet and our civilization:

Contact President Biden, Senator Corey Booker, Senator Robert Menendez, and Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill and ask them to do the following:

Take additional strong action on climate change to save our civilization and the planet.
Expand programs which provide food for people in need, health care and financial security for senior citizens and oppose cuts to these programs.

President Joe Biden

Call: White House Comment Line: 202 456-1111: Tue-Thu 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, EST
Email: www.whitehouse.gov/contact

Senator Corey Booker

Call: Newark NJ Office: (973) 639-8700 or Washington DC Capitol Switchboard: 202 224-3121
Email: <https://www.booker.senate.gov/contact/write-to-cory>

Senator Robert Mendendez

Call: Jersey City Office: (973) 645-3030 or Washington DC Capitol Switchboard: 202 224-3121
Email: <https://www.menendez.senate.gov/contact/email>

Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill

Call: Parsippany Office: (973) 526-5668 or Washington DC Capitol Switchboard: 202 224-3121
Email: https://sherrill.house.gov/address_authentication?form=/contact/email-me

If you want to learn more about the Matthew 25 Peacemaking Team or become a member, please contact David Mortensen at dmortnj@hotmail.com or 862 812-2324.

Please share this newsletter with your families and friends.

Thank you,

Your Matthew 25 Peacemaking Team:

Rev. Ryon Herin
David Mortensen
Carl Kline
Laurie Morse
Donna Van Dyke
Allyson Anello
Barbie Restaino

Welcome New Elders



New Elders for 3 Yr. Terms

Dan Cassidy - 1st Term

Vivian Santos - 1st Term

Lillian Argueta - 1st Term

Serving Elders

Lillian Argueta

Lillian Blair – Church Treasurer & Finance Committee

Dan Cassidy – Outreach Committee Chair

Debbie Harrington – Outreach Committee

Joe Martinoni – Worship Comm Chair & Personnel Comm.

Laurie Morse – Outreach Committee

Barbie Restaino – Worship Committee & CE Comm.

Kathy Shuey – Congregational Care Committee

Kathy Siegrist – Christian Ed. Committee

Vivian Santos

Rich Basile – Finance Comm. Chair & Property Comm

Carol Lutcza – Personnel Comm. Chair & CE Comm.

Pat Budis – Property / Cemetery Committee Chair

Linda Urwin – Congregational Committee Chair

Donna VanDuyne – CE Committee Chair, Nominating Committee Chair

Deacons

Lisa DiBonaventura

Debbie Garris

Alison Molinaro

Vicki Philhower

Linda Sunderman

Linda Urwin

Barbara Weinberg

FPCR Community Cup



At First Presbyterian Church, 35 Church Street in Rockaway.

On the following Friday's from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM:

March 15th



Community Cup is a place to get together for games, snacks, hot & cold beverages, conversations, and making new connections! We will also have a new computer and printer cart available for community use.

We hope to see you there!

Donate Your Used Eyeglasses



Did you know you can donate your used eyeglasses to the local Lions Club to be recycled so others can see better? Karen DeChristopher is collecting used eyeglasses for the needy and dropping them off at the local Lions Club drop-off boxes so the glasses can be recycled and given out to those in need.

A box is located in the Narthex to put all types of used eyeglasses and sunglasses, prescription and non-prescription, for children and adults are accepted, including exceptionally strong or weak prescriptions. Reading glasses are also useful for those who perform close-up tasks while at work. Sunglasses are needed for people living near the equator, especially those with cataracts.

It is only through kindness of donors like you that we can offer the gift of sight to those in need.

Lenten Luncheons and a Good Friday Service

Our Lenten Lunches have resumed. Every Friday in Lent, one of the Ecumenical churches will serve lunch in our Fellowship Hall at 12:00 PM, followed by a short service at 12:30 PM, which will be led by their pastor.

*Our church will serve and lead on March 1st and our Congregational Care Committee will aid, setup, and serve refreshments every Friday.

We welcome everyone to join us on Fridays at 12:00 PM as we enjoy some good food, a time of fellowship and worship with friends from our community.

The list of participating ecumenical churches and dates of the lunches follow:

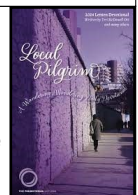
- ◆ February 16th - Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
- ◆ February 23rd - United Methodist Church of the Rockaways
- ◆ March 1st - *First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway
- ◆ March 8th - St. Simon the Apostle Roman Catholic Church
- ◆ March 15th - St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church
- ◆ March 22nd - Teabo United Methodist Church
- ◆ March 29th - **Good Friday Service** at 12:00PM at the United Methodist Church of the Rockaways, located at 1 Hoagland Avenue in Rockaway.



Lenten Studies

Sunday School Class at 9:15AM:

Our morning Sunday School class held in the Barnabas King Room will be discussing the devotions for the previous week each Sunday during Lent. The Lenten Devotionals (*Local Pilgrim*) are available in the Narthex.



Tuesday Lenten Bible Study at 9:30AM via Zoom:

Our regular 9:30 Tuesday Morning bible study during Lent, we will be reading and discussing The Third Day: *Living the Resurrection* by Tom Berlin with Mark A. Miller. Please see Pastor Ryon if you need help ordering a copy or need the Zoom link.

Per Capita Apportionment 2024

The apportionment of the First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway for ecclesiastical expenses for the next fiscal year is based upon the membership of our church as reported to the last General Assembly. This Per Capita helps make things happen in the Presbytery of the Highlands.

There was no increase this year, so the Per Capita Apportionment Per Member is \$42.50.

Our total apportionment is \$6,927.50 for 2024.

If you are able to give for two that would help those who cannot afford to give!

Our giving makes a big difference!

Volunteers Needed in the New Year

- 1) One, we are looking are looking for church members to assist people in our community with job applications, assistance programs, etc. through the new Computer Cart Ministry that is available during our Rise-Up Breakfasts and Community Cups. The volunteers will need some computer knowledge and will be responsible for maintaining and bringing out/putting away the cart.
- 2) We are also hoping to have a Family Service once a month starting in the new year. This service will focus around a meal so we are looking for volunteers to help with preparing a small kid-friendly meal and those who would be willing to help prepare simple kid-engaging activities for the family worship.



Please see Pastor Ryon if you are interested in either of these endeavors.

Annual Spring Easter Basket Drive

Once again we will be assembling Easter baskets for those children within our community in need. Beginning now through March 10th, we are asking the congregation for help us by donating wrapped candy, small toys and small craft kits to fill the baskets

A collection box for donations will be placed in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

See Debbie Garris or Debbie Harrington if you have any questions.

EASTER
basket drive



Quarter Tube

The quarters that are put in the Quarter Tube in the front of the sanctuary are used for the Mission work of our church. Simply place your quarters in the tube so we can further our mission work.



Poem By Carl Kline**Shine Your Light**

*Shine your light
Till
You Get it right
Then
Take your bones
On down the road
And
Spread the word
Until it's heard
Then Zippity-do-da
Along your way
And
Share with others
This Wonderful Day*

SHOP RITE GIFT CARDS!!

When you purchase Shop Rite gift cards from our church, the church receives 5% of the cost of the gift card. (There is no extra cost to you).



We have been selling Shop Rite Gift Cards at the church for many years. The profits we receive have been used to pay for programs/projects in our church. We all need to eat! It is a 'win win' for our church.

If you have any questions or are interested in purchasing ShopRite gift cards, please contact Pat Budis at (201) 230-2286. You can pick them up from Pat or she will even deliver them to you.

GIVING TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROCKAWAY

Go to our website Giving page at <https://fpcrockaway.org/giving>.
Select the "Donate" button and give electronically or you can mail your donation to:

First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway
35 Church Street
Rockaway, NJ 07866



Rise-Up and FPCR Community Breakfast

8:00AM-11AM

March 23rd

April 27th

Come Hungry and Hopeful!**Elders and Deacons Training and Retreat**

March 9th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM with Lunch around Noon in Fellowship Hall

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROCKAWAY**Has worship services in the sanctuary, via Zoom and on Facebook.
The Zoom information and link follows:**

Join Zoom Worship (login beginning at 10:30 AM EST)

Phone in: (mobile or home phone) +1 929 205 6099 US

Meeting ID: 468 322 0487 Passcode: **FPCR2021**

One tap mobile: +16465588656,,4683220487#,,, *67022253#

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4683220487?pwd=OHBUb2V4RmJVMGF2U3VEVEFLMWNjUT09>****We hope you will join us!****First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway
35 Church Street. Rockaway, NJ 067866-3027
(973) 627-1059**Reverend Ryon Herin
ryon@fpcrockaway.orgE-mail – office@fpcrockaway.orgWebsite – www.fpcrockaway.org

Sunday School 9:15 – 10:15 am

Sunday Morning Worship Service 10:30 am

Office Hours 9:00 am – 12:30 pm Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday

Krista Sweer, Music Minister

Scott Lovenberg, Cemetery Sexton

Karen Basile, Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Church Co-op Nursery School (PCCNS)
(973) 586-3665Cheryl Piscopo – Director
E-mail – directorpccns@gmail.com