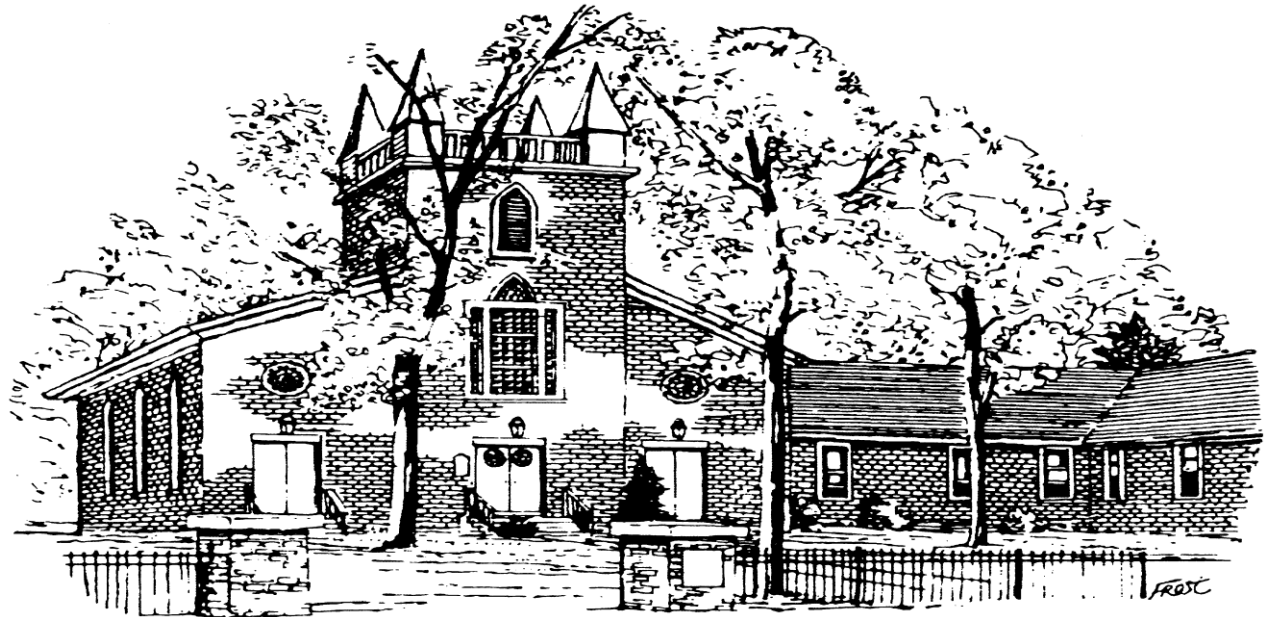


CHURCH STREET JOURNAL

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROCKAWAY

March/April 2023



Pastor's Reflection

Lent... We are Here. What do we do now? I began the start of Lent preaching, like most pastors, about Adam and Eve tempted in the garden by the serpent and Jesus being tested in the desert for 40 days by the tempter. Both passages seem strange yet familiar to us. We know what it is like to want what we do not have. To covet, yet we cannot imagine a time before covetousness was nowhere to be found. We cannot imagine how we could be like Jesus, resisting the tempter 3 times, giving up all the power and the glory in the world for solitude with God. Yet here we are on this Lenten journey. I urge you to start with the heart. The heart both physically and emotionally, is a critical system. Physically, the heart keeps us alive, it pumps the blood throughout the body to keep oxygen and nutrients flowing through our veins and into our tissues. A hardened heart is the result of unhealthy eating or a genetic condition. When heart muscles thicken, the heart can no longer pump properly, and blood flow is blocked. This is clinically called Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy.

Emotionally, we can also have a hardened heart. Years of decades of disappointment, and loss or disconnection to our wider neighbors can prevent our feelings from going out to others or even ourselves. Our emotional heart, therefore, focuses on the immediate, our own needs, because we do not have the energy to send the compassion flowing elsewhere.

We ended the first Sunday of Lent with worry stones shaped as hearts. These stones remind us to loosen our hearts grip even as we might tighten our grip on the stone. We need a metaphorical anchor point to grasp onto as we loosen our hearts grip.

Pastor's reflection, continued

This is because loosening makes us vulnerable. Yes, it allows us to show other a ministry of presence during good and bad times. But it also opens our own insecurities and worries. Will we have enough emotional blood flow for ourselves? The heart reminds us of who loved us first. Jesus, who was tested, tempted, and ultimately sacrificed his very life that we may know love abundantly. Even as our hearts might remain hardened, Jesus 'heart is always open to us. His heart is always open for us to cling and hold onto. We physically cling to our worry hearts as we spiritually cling to Christ this Lenten season.

This reminds me of the next step. The next step once we have opened our hearts and the veins have begun to flow again thanks to our gentle Savior, is to reach out. To reach out not only to God and the Spirit but also to others. After natural disasters, our first response is to reach out. This is also our response when it is fire or other community disaster. We know this through our own response as a church and a community, giving support through Rise Up to the family who lost their belongings and even a beloved dog to a fire in Lake Telemark. Reaching out is easy, it requires only an extended hand. We shake the hand of a neighbor; we embrace a close church friend. We might extend a wave to an acquaintance across the street. Yet, emotionally reaching out is more challenging. It requires vulnerability. It requires courage and trust. Trust not only towards who we are reaching out to but also towards ourselves and our own ability.

Openheartedness, however, is the beginning of blessings. When we loosen our grip and open our ears, we begin to be receptive to God's blessings. Not that they were not there all along. We just couldn't see them clearly with our hearts shut. When we do begin to see them, it is like cracking open a geode. Cracking open a geode and seeing the glorious amethyst crystals, the glory of our Redeemer. We begin to receive the truth disclosed not just as facts but a genuine encounter with the Christ of Holy Week, the Christ of Passion. When we do not resist, hard rock leads to soft radiant crystals. May we continually seek Jesus to transform us this Lenten journey as we continue to walk the path to the cross of Good Friday and the empty tomb of Easter morning.

*Blessings,
Pastor Ryan*



Welcome New Elders!



Debbie Harrington:

I'm very happy to again serve on session. I've been a member for over 25 years, my two children grew up in this church, attended Sunday school, went on mission projects, and became confirmed members. My mother was a member here and my brother and sister-in-law were married here at our church. Over the years, I've served on many committees, helped to teach Sunday school, and helped with vacation Bible school.

I recently became a grandmother and retired from teaching a few years ago. The future of this church is very important to me, and I am excited to see what God has planned for us in the coming years. Let's talk about it.

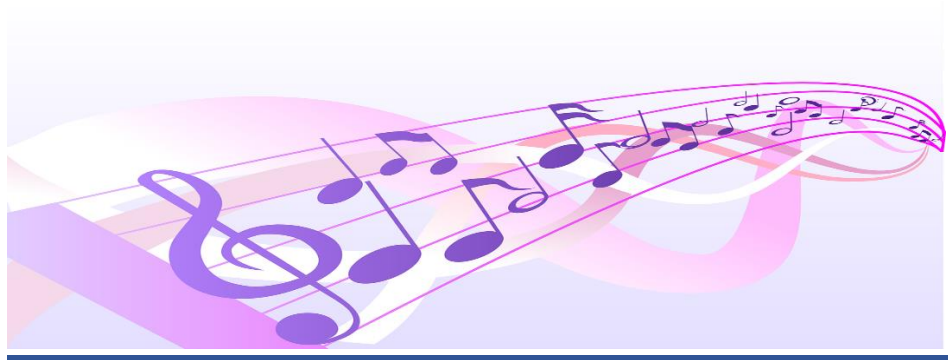


Barbie Restaino:

Barbie has been a member of FPCR for over 20 years and has served two terms as an Elder and 1 term as a Deacon. Her previous church in West Orange nurtured her from the time she was 4 years old and most of her training as an Elder and Deacon took place there starting as a high school youth rep on Session.

Most of her professional life was spent teaching math in public school with middle school children followed by 4th and 5th graders and then high school students.

She and her husband Michael have 2 wonderful daughters, Noelle and Allysa. They were both blessed to be nurtured as FPCR as well. She has enjoyed attending many bible study classes and working with our Christian Ed and Worship committees and is a parish leader. She has accepted another 3-year term working as an Elder with our leaders and for our congregation in serving our Lord and is thankful for this opportunity.

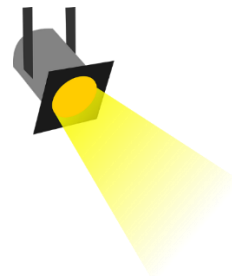


A Note from our Music Director, Krista Sweer

Thank you all for your kindness and encouragement as I settle in as the music director of FPCR. I am so grateful for the volunteers who have already reached out about providing special music for our services and hope to hear from more as we head into summer worship in a few months.

We have some special music planned throughout the Lenten Season, including the combined Maundy Thursday Service with Union Hill and Wharton United. If you are interested in getting involved with the choir or handbells, please let Kathy Siegrist or myself know. No experience needed, only a willingness to learn and serve.

Committee News:

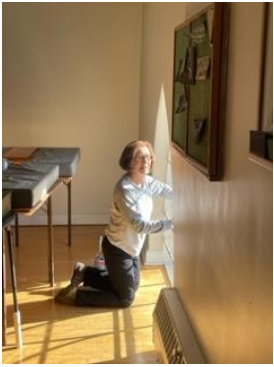


Spotlight on Property

The Property Committee is made up of the following members: Pat Budis, Mark Kuschke, Andrew Thomas, Rich Basile, Al Lutcza, Pete Hople. They are currently seeking a new Chair for the committee so if interested, please contact Pat Budis.

The Property Committee works hard to maintain our building and surrounding area. This involves constant updates and maintenance from changing light bulbs to painting to replacing furnace parts! Since the church does not have a paid maintenance person on staff, it relies on help from the congregation both monetarily and physically. The recent Capital Funds campaign enabled us to take on several urgent projects such as a new roof for the manse and new carpeting in the sanctuary. But the Property Committee also sponsors “church workdays” throughout the year so that members of the church can accomplish some of the smaller, yet equally important tasks. On Saturday, February 18th, a workday was held. 10 people attended and much was accomplished. Here are a few pictures of the everyone busy, at work!

Work Day!!!



Thank You!



And a special Thank you To Pat Budis!!!

Pat has recently announced her plans to step down after 25 years of leadership as the Chair of the Property Committee! We thank Pat for her faithful service and hard work. The committee is now in need of a new chair so please consider if this is a role you feel called to.

The Flagpole is up!!!

If you haven't noticed, the new flagpole, in memory of Dave Philhower, has been erected and the flag is flying. Thanks to Kathy Shuey for all her hard work in coordinating this project!! A special dedication ceremony will be held March 18th at 4:00 pm.





- Greeters**
- Coffee Hour Hosts**
- Liturgists**
- Choir Members**
- Technology Support**
- Chairperson of Property Committee**
- Members for History Committee**
- Church Street Journal contributors**

We have so many talented and created members here at First Pres Rockaway, please share your gift by submitting a poem, a reflection, a drawing, a photo, whatever inspires you! See Kathy Siegrist for more information.

Upcoming Events:

Lenten Luncheons Compassion to Serve

**Back by popular demand!!
Hosted by the Rockaway Ecumenical Group Churches
Come Fridays at 12PM for Worship, Food*, and Fellowship**

**March 10th : Rev. Jack DiMatteo
March 17th : Fr. Mateusz Darlak
March 24th : Rev. Rosario Quinones
March 31st : Rev. Carolyn McColly**

**First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway, Fellowship Hall
35 Church St. Rockaway, NJ**

..... We welcome all the community as we eat, reflect, and chat together this Lenten Season.

The First Lunch was held on February 24th and hosted by FPCR. It was well attended with over 80 people there. Karen DeChristopher, Dan Cassidy and the CCC provided an amazing meal and Pastor Ryon gave the reflection during the worship service. Here are some glimpses from the event!



Free Coffeehouse

COMMUNITY CUP

First Presbyterian Church, 35 Church St, Rockaway

Future dates

January 13th & 27th

February 17th

March 3rd, 17th & 31st

April 21st

May 5th & 19th

June 2nd & 16th

Community Cup is an opportunity to get out of the house, away from screens and have a conversation, play a game or just relax and enjoy a hot beverage



BE THERE OR BE SQUARE, 6-9PM

Sponsored by the Outreach Committee

Lenten Studies:

Monday Night Bible Study: Time: 7PM Place: The Manse. **We will be meeting the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Monday of every month**, beginning February 27th, we will study with the Lenten Devotionals that were provided to the whole congregation in the Narthex.

Tuesday Morning: Time: 9:30AM Via Zoom. We will be studying the book, *The Desert of Compassion: Devotions for the Lenten Journey*, by Rachel M. Srubas.

Sunday Morning Bible Study: 9:15 in the Barnabas King Room. We are also studying *The Desert of Compassion: Devotions for the Lenten Journey*, by Rachel M. Srubas.

Rise UP and FPCR Community Breakfast

8:00AM-11AM

March 25th

April 22nd

Come Hungry and Hopeful!

Elders, Deacons, Committee Chairs and Church Leaders Training

March 11, 2023

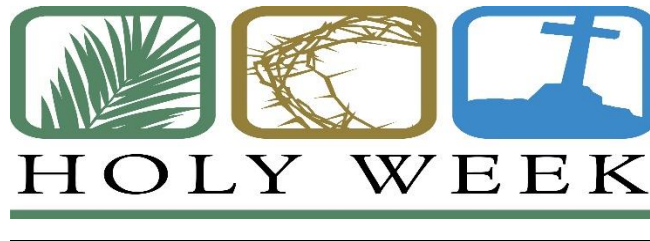
9:00 am – 3:00 pm Fellowship Hall

All church leaders are urged to attend this important event. The Rev. Dr. Steven Shussett, will lead one of the sessions on Discernment...



Steve Shussett is resource staff/stated clerk for the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey. In his ministry he has served four congregations in two denominations, three presbyteries, and at the General Assembly level in the Office of Spiritual Formation. A Pennsylvania native, he and his wife have two adult children
The day is sure to provide fellowship and learning for everyone!

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*Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm at First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway
35 Church St. Rockaway, NJ*

*Good Friday 7:00 pm at Wharton United Church
20 Church Street Wharton, NJ*

Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023
Worship at 10:30 in our sanctuary



Easter Services Sunday April 9th

Sunrise Service 6:30am on Cemetery Hill. Breakfast following in Fellowship Hall

Worship at 10:30 – Celebrate our Risen Lord together in the Sanctuary. Are you feeling creative? Would you like to contribute to the Church Street Journal? Consider contributing an article, a reflection, a poem, a drawing! Please contact Kathy Siegrist if you are so inspired!



Prayer requests...

Pray for those recovering from illness and surgery.

Pray for those who are battling cancer.

Pray for those who are grieving.

Pray for Ukraine.

Pray for the victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

Lord, hear all our prayers, spoken and unspoken. Amen

Do you have a prayer request that you would like kept confidential? Please contact Kathy Siegrist so that she can add your request to our confidential Prayer Chain.



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. (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. When we had to install a new boiler, we used this money to help pay the loan we had for the boiler. We all need to eat! It is a 'win win' for our church.

Contact Pat Budis if you have any questions 201-230-2286. You can pick them up from Pat or she will even deliver.



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>

First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway

35 Church Street

Rockaway, NJ 067866-3027

(973) 627-1059

Reverend Ryon Herin

ryon@fpcrockaway.org

E-mail – office@fpcrockaway.org

Website – 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

Robert Nichols, Cemetery Sexton

Karen Basile, Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Church Co-op Nursery School (PCCNS)

973-586-3665

Cheryl Piscopo – Director

E-mail – directorpccns@gmail.com
