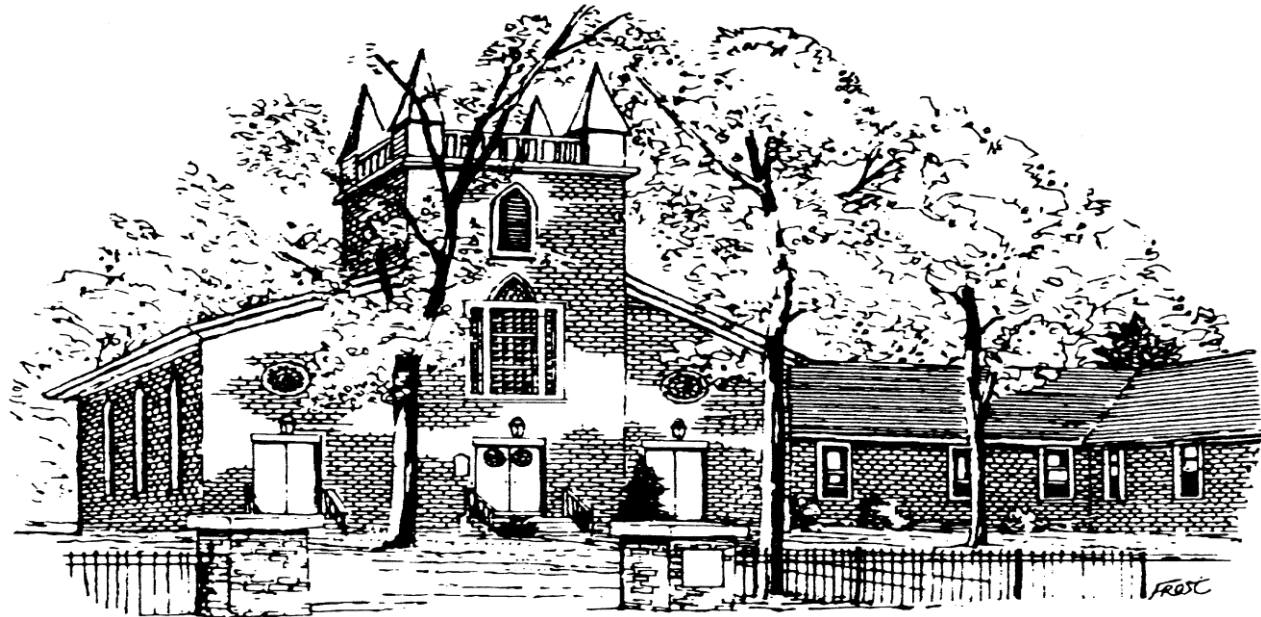


CHURCH STREET JOURNAL

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ROCKAWAY

May/June 2023



Pastor's Reflection

In April and May, we often hear the expression April showers bring May flowers. Now, whether this expression always holds true or not, it means that even after long periods of adversity, good times will follow. After the time of contemplation and reflection on Jesus' journey to the cross during Lent, we enter a season of Eastertide. Easter season does not last only week. Contrary to those who might attend church on Easter but not during the following weeks feel and understand, Easter is a season to be celebrated with joy and vigor all the way through Pentecost which this year lands on Memorial Day weekend. What does it mean when we celebrate with gladness this year all through the months of April and May?

In Acts 2:42-47, one of the lectionary texts for April 30th, we find a snapshot of how the early church conducted themselves in community. These early Christians listened to the apostles' teachings. They were a learning church, always lending their ear to hear what God might be saying to them through the apostles. They ate together in the literal breaking of bread and fellowship. When we think of breaking of bread, we often understand it to be communion. But for the early church, breaking of bread was the meal they ate together. The early church prayed for each other and were in wonder of God's grace and wisdom. Worship happened, sharing happened, things happened. Gladness and happiness consumed their lives despite the struggles and everydayness they encountered.

We as a church follow in the footsteps of the early church and the apostles. It turns out that our call after the resurrection and during the celebration of Eastertide is the same. In fact, we have many examples of how we are living our lives similarly to the early Christians in Acts. We offer three different opportunities on a given week to learn more about God's Word, our call as Christians, and how to live a righteous life. Sunday School, Monday Bible Study, and Tuesday Bible Study offer three distinct ways of learning and teaching together as Christians. In Sunday School, we read and reflect through weekly lessons provided by *The Presbyterian Outlook*, focusing this month on exactly this, how we respond to Jesus' Resurrection. Monday Study involves learning of a new spiritual practice we can implement in our lives each week. And lastly, Tuesday Study will be continuing its close look at Acts chapter by chapter, beginning again with Saul's Conversion.

Beyond Bible Study, we continue to have our Community Cup on select Friday nights where we come together with the community through fellowship, food, games, and laughter. This offering is for all ages as we come closer together as a body of Christ seeking to learn more from our community. The monthly breakfasts on the last Saturday of the month, sponsored by our community partner RiseUp, provide further opportunity for food and fellowship.

As you can see, our church life is quite similar to the early Christians. We also worship on Sundays weekly, where we come together in corporate prayer. Our Monday study just got done reflecting on prayer, specifically walking prayer and how we can pray to God in many different ways. My task for us this Eastertide is to reflect on how we as a church community exemplify living out a Christian life together. What do we do well? What might we be lacking?

Our Session, Deacons, and various other church leaders came together for our Spring leadership retreat. In this retreat we learned what it meant to improv as church leaders and how to employ discernment in this season of our church's lives. With that being said, we looked closely at our church's mission statement, *Growing in Faith, Love, and Community*, to break down specifically what about each our church is growing in.

Our Session is going to continue to evaluate our Mission Statement and vision as well as all the projects, study opportunities, and outreach we are involved in as we live out Eastertide. My ask for you is to join or show up to a church event you have never gone to before. Maybe that's a bible study or the Community Cup. Try someway new to fellowship, pray and worship among your siblings in Christ here and those we reach in our Rockaway community. Also, think of those new ways we can reach out and grow in faith, love, and community. Share those ideas with others as we reflect on implementing and experimenting with new ways to wonder in God's grace and share this Good News with others. Be well and live into the goodness of Eastertide.

Blessings, Pastor Ryon



A Note from our Music Director, Krista Sweer

The music program at the First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway helped lead the congregation in worship throughout Lent and Holy Week. Both handbell choirs, the choir, and several soloists provided music that enhanced the liturgy and brightened the services. The new microphones and audio system allowed those who join-in over zoom or Facebook Live to hear the music clearer. We are looking forward to more excellent music on Music Appreciation Sunday, June 18th.

Special music soloists/small groups are needed for summer worship June 25-September 3. If you or anyone you know sings or plays an instrument, we would love to have you! There will be a sign-up sheet in the entryway, or you can email Krista at kristasweer@gmail.com.

PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT

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.

Our Per Capita helps make things happen in the Presbytery of the Highlands

Our 2023 Per Capita Apportionment: Per Member is \$42.50

Our total apportionment is \$7,437.50 for 2023

We have currently collected a total of \$2,421.50

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

Our giving makes a big difference!

Spotlight on Christian Education



The Christian Education Committee is made up of the following members: Donna Van Duyne, Chair, Lillian Blair, Kathy Siegrist, Carol Lutcza, Chris Laccitiello, Chris Harrington, and Barbie Restaino.

The Christian Education Committee works hard to provide educational opportunities for our congregation. When you hear “Christian Education” one immediately thinks of Sunday School. This is just one of many programs that CE oversees. Sunday School includes Sunday morning class for

grades K-6, Confirmation Class, and Adult Bible Study. There are currently 3 Adult Education Opportunities: Sunday Morning Bible Study, Monday evening Bible Study and Tuesday morning Bible Study.

CE also oversees the Nursery School, PCCNS, and has a liaison, Lillian Blair on their board. In addition, CE oversees Youth Group, the Library, and Camp Johnsonburg scholarships. One of the largest projects under CE is Vacation Bible School. This year VBS will be held from June 26th – June 30th. This year's theme is "Hero Hotline" The committee utilizes many volunteers from the congregation to make this a success.



Vacation Bible School
June 26th-30th
9AM-12 Noon
Ages 5-7th grade.
\$25 per child or \$60 per family
First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway
(973) 627-1059
office@fpcrockaway.org

Please join us for VBS this year. It is a fun filled event for all!
We need both adult and youth volunteers for VBS. Please contact either Barbie Restaino or Karen Basile if you want to volunteer. There are many different areas you can help with! Registration forms for children who want to attend VBS are available now on our Facebook page!

Would you be able to donate any of the supplies listed below for Vacation Bible School? (I will add to this list weekly!)

Model Magic
Empty Cereal boxes

Needed:

Crayola Markers
Large pieces of Cardboard

Summer Responding to Climate Change Study

As a Matthew 25 Congregation, we are continuing to learn about and become more informed on the numerous ways in which the current events of our world cause us to respond in action as Christians. As you will remember, last year we did an Anti-Racism Study, exploring the ways we as Christians can be informed, respond to, and claim responsibility for how prejudice and discrimination have and continue to be an explicit part of our Nation and World.

This Year, we will similarly look at Climate Change, how human action has negatively affected our environment, how we can become informed in a hopeful way, and how we can practically respond as a congregation and Christ's Church. I invite you to join me in this study and endeavor beginning in June, with our Monday and Tuesday Bible Studies. I invite our Sunday School adult participants to join as well as Sunday School takes a break in the summer months (Last Sunday School will be June 18). Below are the dates and times as well as book info. Send Pastor Ryon an email (ryon@fpcrockaway.org) to register for a group and more info!

Responding to Climate Change published by Christian Century.

(Available by email as a PDF to read on your electronic device or to print)

<https://www.christiancentury.org/free-guide-climate-change>

Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World by Katherine Hayhoe (Buy on Amazon or other distributors)

Mondays at 7 PM (June 12 & 19: July 3, 10, 24 & 31: August 7 & 14)

Location TBD (Let Pastor Ryon know if you would like to host)

Tuesday at 10:00 AM (June 13 & 20: July 11 & 25: August 1, 8, 15 & 22)

Via Zoom



What's Been Happening Around First Pres. Church

The Flagpole is dedicated The new flagpole, in memory of Dave Philhower, has been erected and the flag is flying. A special ceremony was held on March 18th to formally dedicate the flagpole. The Boy Scouts provided an honor guard, and the event was attended by family members as well as church members.



Stephen Ministry takes a pause and leaders are thanked during Fellowship time



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



***Vacation Bible School Volunteers
Greeters
Technology Support***

***Coffee Hour Hosts
Liturgists
Choir Members
Committee Members
Church Street Journal contributors***

Easter Meals Provided

The Outreach committee prepared 70 Easter meals to people in the community as well as some church members. Ham, sweet potatoes, macaroni and cheese, with treats for dessert were provided and hopefully brightened the day for those who received.



The Shed is Up! Rich Basile and Larry Siegrist erected the new church shed. A smaller version of the old shed, this new shed will hold garbage and recycling.



Church Leadership Training

After a weather-related postponement, the leadership of our church gathered in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, April 15th for a day-long training/retreat. Under the leadership of Pastor Ryon and Presbytery resource staff-stated clerk, Rev. Steve Shussett, the group enjoyed a day of fellowship and learning about improvisation, discernment, and our church mission statement with a promise of continued learning and growth!



A Poem by Carl Kline:

God's Groove

*God's Groove
Greater than Parker, Miles, and Coltrane
Smooth...*

*I want to hitch a ride
On your Groove, God
On your Cosmic Coattail
To fly with you
And shoot across the sky
Across the universe and back*

*Eclipse the Apollo Chariot Myth
And hurtle past
Somersaulting silhouettes of discord
That rise up from and
Are thrown back down to Earth
Inserting Grace in their place*

*God's Groove lets me dance to my own rhythm
Tied like a tail on His Kite
Kissing the sky as fly
And reach for rainbows to fling down to Earth
For the living to
Get it, Get God, Get Love*



**Youth Group Reunion:
Saturday May 20th
1pm-4pm**

**Congregational Luncheon:
Sunday May 21st
Following worship**

Blood Drive: July 30th

**Vacation Bible School:
June 26th-30th
9am-12 Noon**

**Community Cup:
6pm-9pm
May 26th, June 16th & 30th**

Get out of the house for conversation, games or just relax!

**Rise UP and FPCR Community Breakfast:
8:00am-11am
May 27
June 24**

Come Hungry and Hopeful!



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 – directorpcns@gmail.com