

The Bell Ringer

Of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

No matter who you are or where you are on your life journey, you are welcome here.

April 2024



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From the Pastor's Nook:

Easter People

Did you see the picture, the cross, the "You Are Loved" Banner in the background?

As you may have noticed over the last couple of months, things have changed somewhat in the church. New people have arrived and have been attending regularly. Smorgasbord Sundays have been extremely well-attended.

I have been told that the worship services like Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday have been meaningful and thought provoking.

Easter Sunday was a particularly enthusiastic! We had 11 people participating in the choir to sing! Jessica did the children's message with a gaggle of children in worship. And 73 people attended in person which Frank Sansone told was the most in attendance since at least 2019 (Pre-Pandemic).



All of these items are signs of encouragement, signs of hope!

Inevitably, the question that comes up most frequently is 'WHY?'

I feel like the answer to that question is captured in this image.

Out of an abundance, overflowing, unending amount of love, God sent Jesus as the Messiah to walk on the earth with these broken, fractured shells that we call humanity. The banner with the words, "YOU ARE LOVED" proclaims the heart of the Christian faith.

John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son..."

1 John 4:8—"...God is love."

Matthew 22:39—"You must love your neighbor as you love yourself."

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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS...SMORGASBORD SUNDAYS

Have you ever been to a smorgasbord? A smorgasbord has Swedish origins and is a buffet style of meal that became popular following the 1939 World's Fair in New York!

Wikipedia informs us that a smorgasbord is typically a celebratory meal and guests can help themselves from a range of dishes laid out for their choice.

Through conversations with the session and the church growth team, we have decided to evolve the Fourth Sunday Fellowship into Smorgasbord Sundays! **But we need your help!!!!!!**

We want to make Smorgasbord Sundays about you!!!!

The evolution of this time of fellowship moves away from a model where one or two people bear the responsibility of providing refreshments for anyone attending. Instead, we are moving to a model where the community of faith comes together to provide refreshments!!!!

We would like to have you bring one dish, JUST ONE, to share with any of our worshipping neighbors on that Sunday!!!!

Why are we looking to change this model????

1. To encourage more people to participate in an event that is about food, fun and fellowship!
2. To have a consistent event on our calendar that we wish to share with others and to invite our neighbors, friends and family!!!!
3. To lessen the burden by sharing something together, communal. Many hands make light work.
4. Jesus gathered with many people, friends and strangers, around a meal.
5. To show off the favorite dishes that we would like to make and share with our church family!

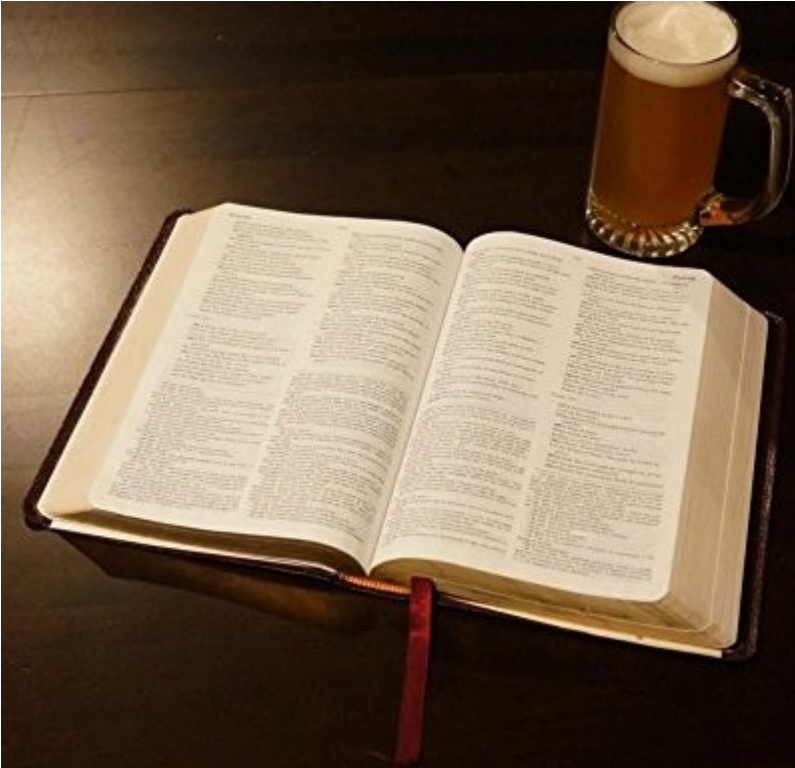
A substantial part of growing the church is about growing in relationship with one another. Food is one of the items that brings families of faith together and it is also something that brings guests into our collective presence.

Let us share a meal with one another in the fashion that Jesus would have shared a meal with friends and strangers!

Looking forward to our next Smorgasbord Sunday following worship on April 28th!!!!!!

FAITH FORMATION

Bible and a Brew w/Pastor Wade



If you have ever had a casual conversation over a beer or a glass of wine, raise your hand!

Starting on the first Tuesday in May, the 7th, Pastor Wade invites you to Applebee's in Farmingdale (in front of the Home Depot on Rt 110) for a bible and a brew conversation. This time is a great opportunity to talk over contemporary issues of faith and to freely ask question about life, church, faith and the intersection of all those items.

This is not a new concept. Martin Luther is credited with having said, "Beer is God's way of saying he wants us to be happy." The Eagle and Child pub in St. Giles, Oxford, England was a regular haunt where theologian authors J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis regularly gathered for friendship and conversation and a pint or two or three.

So bring your questions, concerns, doubts, curiosities and surprises to "Bible and a Brew w/Pastor Wade." Just let him know so that he can reserve enough seats.

The anticipated start time is around 7 PM. Pastor Wade has an affinity for lagers and his current favorite is Stella Artois.

FAITH FORMATION

Continued

Susurration and Joy by Carol Keil

“You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth before you; there’ll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands..... ”

Easter Sunday Worship concluded with the joyful chaos of our congregation singing You Shall Go Out with Joy/ The Trees of the Field, our voices repeating the single verse with increasing speed, accompanied by arms raised in vigorous clapping!

These words from Isaiah 55: 12-13 echo the spirit of the message found in Psalm 98:4, 7:

“ Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises,“.... “Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.”

Regarding those “clapping trees”: Did you know that the word “susurration” refers to the sound of leaves rustling in the wind?

Children’s author Glenys Nellist continues this theme, just in time for Earth Day (April 22), in her new book *Song of the Seasons**. (for children preschool to 8 years of age). Written in rhyme, the book explores the joys of each season with a sense of wonder and curiosity as it introduces the concept of all nature joining in songs of praise to the Creator. You can learn more about *Song of the Seasons*, including how to access at-home lesson resources and coloring pages to accompany your purchase of the book at glenysnellist.com

**Song of the Seasons* by Glenys Nellist, C.B. Canga, illustrator. Copyright 2024 Paraclete Press

BIBLE/BOOK STUDY

The church has been blessed with growth on a multitude of levels. With that blessing there are also needs to be met. One of those needs is for faith formation that goes beyond Sunday mornings and devotion readings. With our growth now comes the responsibility and opportunity to build our own faith and build it alongside other individuals. Be ready to receive the news of new faith formation opportunities beginning some time in May!!!!

If you are interested in being part of or leading a study, please contact Pastor Wade!!!

WORSHIP NOTES

The season of Easter begins on March 31st and continues through May 18th. The season of Easter is a time of a firm proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus and many of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus found in the gospels. The season ends as we celebrate the birth of the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (May 19th).

LITURGISTS WANTED

One of the beautiful aspects of protestant churches is in realizing that we are all participants and potential leaders in worship. Serving as a liturgist (worship leader) is not a large undertaking but is very meaningful for the pastor, the congregation and for yourself! Pastor Wade will guide you in the process and the congregation will show you grace. If you have any questions or interest, please contact Pastor Wade.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



**THE LITURGICAL COLOR OF APRIL IS WHITE IN OBSERVANCE OF
THE SEASON OF EASTER**

WORSHIP NOTES

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



BIBLE AND A BREW

Would you be interested in joining Pastor Wade for a beer and a discussion about the intersection of our faith and some current events? Look for BIBLE AND A BREW coming soon!!!



Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow

(631) 367 - 9249

www.sweethollowpresby.org

Rev. Wade Pond, Pastor

Jason Black, Director of Music Ministries

Lori Kevelos, Church Administrator

Jill Conroy, Treasurer

Beatrice Reiser, Clerk of Session

Elders: Ed Conroy

Melissa D'Angelo

Niaja Mowatt

Frank Sansone

Bea Reiser

April 2024

3.....April Fallon, Nate Pereira

5....Mary Reiser

8.... Courtney Schmitt

17...Doug Moder

20...Kaleb Pond

ANNIVERSARIES

28.....Barbara & Joe Moder

SESSION MEETING!

The session meets monthly, typically on the third Monday of each month at 8 PM. Most meetings occur via Zoom. In person meetings occur February/May/September/November. Our April meeting will be held on the 15th. Any member of the church is welcome to attend. Ask Pastor Wade for details.

Find our website and social media links!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

Facebook/YouTube/Instagram

<https://www.facebook.com/sweethollowpresby>

<https://youtube.com/>

[@presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401](https://www.youtube.com/@presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401)

<https://www.instagram.com/presbysweethollow>

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

A Challenge to Face, An Opportunity to Embrace

Part 2 Town Hall Meeting

Following worship on April 14th, all are invited to stick around after worship for a conversation with the session about the process of selling a portion of the church property. It is important to understand that this process is a lengthy process that steers us toward the idea of financial stability for the church.

The church has been the steward of more than 9 acres of land which encapsulates our church buildings, the garage, the great field and some woodland surrounding the church.

Due to our dwindling finances, the session has begun the process of pursuing a sale of some of the woodland property of the church as a way of attaining finances to regain that aforementioned financial stability.

This opportunity comes on the heels of other successful opportunities that have been engaged through the creativity, ingenuity and progressive ideas brought to the session. Our yearly deficit has been reduced by more than 70% over the last two and a half years.

However, session continues to look to lead and encourage you as our little church with a big heart continues in this season of growth.

1. The session encourages you to continue to give faithfully according to your pledge.
2. The session would also like to encourage you to pay the annual PER CAPITA payment for each church member.
3. Keep the church in mind as a recipient of extended giving prospects. Giving a small percentage of a will or an estate or a property sale to the church can yield substantial contributions that would continue to sustain the church far beyond the upcoming bicentennial anniversary in 2029!

There will be many steps in the discussion and consideration of the sale of church property. There will be more articles, more meetings with LI Presbytery, congregational town halls, and congregational meetings as part of this process. Questions are welcome. The upcoming town hall meeting on April 14th is the best place for those questions!

As your session, transparency in the process is something that we promise to you. Questions are welcome. In the vows that we took in our process of ordination, we look to lead you through this conversation with energy, intelligence, inspiration and love.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. Humbly and respectfully in faith, your session.

STEWARDSHIP AND STUFF

Why pay the Per Capita in 2024?

Sweet Hollow is required to pay the \$38.90 for ***every member*** on our rolls. Please consider paying your family's Per Capita dues sooner than later. If members do not earmark their per capita portion, we must take money from our budget to fulfill our responsibility towards the Presbyterian Church (USA). This payment ensures that we can easily use resources, borrow from the Presbytery office, and receive advice and support from the General Assembly.

Thank you for helping us meet OUR church's obligation of the
Individual Per Capita Apportionment of \$38.90 this year.
Thanks for using the [blue envelopes](#) earmarked for this--Jane Beller



MISSION & MORE

YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IS WELCOMED



The Mission Team would like to extend thanks to all members and friends that have supported this year’s assorted mission goals. We have decided that April will be our break month so everyone can re-group for our next missions: May—Healthy Food Drive, June—Cause for Paws, July through August--Giving the Tools to Discovery to carry us through the summer. You are continually welcome to place non-perishable food in the Sanctuary donation boxes.

***Thank you Sweet Hollow Congregation
The Little Church With a Big Heart’s
Mission Team***



Prayer Corner

by Carol Keil

Christ is risen; He is risen, He is risen, indeed! Alleluia.

In this season of Eastertide may we:

Rejoice in every blessing.

Look for the presence of Jesus in the world around us.

Pray with thanksgiving as signs of Spring surround us.

Help us to accept Peace by letting go of those things we cannot change.

Help us to pursue Peace by working to make the world a place of compassion and understanding.

Help us to find Peace in our relationships, in the simple act of listening and truly hearing.

We pray for Chris Boken; for her healing, strength, and comfort.

Healing prayers ascend for Denise Moder and Mildred Schmitt.

We pray with thanksgiving for the ministry of Reverend Wade Pond; for the dedication of our church officers; for our Church Administrator, Lorine Kevelos; for the many voices of the “drop-in choir” on Easter morning; for the Music Ministry of Jason Black; for the Prayer Circle ministry; for the support of our congregation given to Mission activities throughout the year.

Amen

Find our website and social media links!

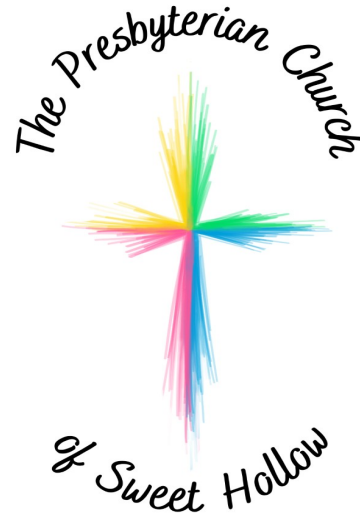
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From the Pastor's Nook (continued)

In these Gospel passages, we see how love is at the center of all of them. God so loved, God is love, love your neighbor. When we start to realize how the umbrella of love is the heart of all of scripture, we can then begin to understand how that encourages us into a relationship with God and one another.

When we come together in relationships with love as the focus, it becomes easier to understand how God will continue to bless us today and always.

Pastor Wade

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You will receive your copy faster, the pictures will be in color, it will save the cost of paper and toner, and it will reduce the time needed to print, collate and label your copy. It will also save the cost of postage if you are not in church to pick up your copy.