

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.

March 2025



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From the Pastor's Nook:

Embracing Lent: A Season of Reflection, Renewal, and Justice

As we enter the season of Lent, we often hear words like repentance, sacrifice, and fasting. Traditionally, Lent is seen as a 40-day journey of self-examination leading to Easter. But what if we approached Lent not just as a time of personal reflection but also as an invitation to renew our commitment to justice, compassion, and community?

For many Presbyterians, Lent is less about individual guilt and more about collective transformation. Yes, we reflect on our shortcomings, but we do so in light of God's grace, which calls us to action. What would it mean to "give up" indifference and instead "take on" practices of love, generosity, and solidarity?

Lent as a Call to Justice

When Jesus fasted in the wilderness, he was not just resisting temptation—he was preparing for a ministry that would challenge systems of oppression. He proclaimed good news to the poor, liberation for the oppressed, and a kingdom that upended the status quo. Lent is not simply about giving up chocolate or coffee; it is about creating space for God to reshape our hearts so we can participate in the work of justice.

This year, our Lenten journey can be about more than personal discipline. What if we used these 40 days to engage with our neighbors in need? To examine the ways systemic injustices shape our world? To practice a kind of fasting that makes room for generosity and reconciliation? Isaiah 58 reminds us that the fast God desires is one that "looses the chains of injustice" and "sets the oppressed free."

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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

A DEACONS MINISTRY IS RE-BORN

Deacons are God's gift to the church. They are often called the hands and feet of the congregation as their special calling is one which is connectional and supportive in nature.

As the Book of Order puts it, "The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress."

Traditionally, deacons are people persons. For deacons, their biggest tool in this ministry is their presence and communication.

The other aspect of service in the role of deacons is to help the pastor in the preparation of certain elements of worship. Assisting in the preparation of communion or in changing paraments worship or seasonal decorations is a way of serving the congregation by providing a welcoming and inviting environment for worship.

On Sunday February 23rd, we were fortunate to attend to the rebirth of the deacons ministry in our church. Previously ordained deacons who have been re-installed are: Jean Cavanagh, Barbara Martin, Laura Fallon and Maureen Sansone. Newly ordained and installed deacons: Sheri Myers, Jessica Pond, Tracy Dein. These seven individuals have offered to serve us, this particular body of Christ, in various ways.

I ask that you pray for them in their ministries as we find a new path as deacons in a post-CoVid setting. I also encourage you to thank them as well. Shortly, you will begin seeing the fruits of their callings to service. Some of those items might happen in worship, around the church building or in your own personal lives.

On the following page, look for pictures from this wonderful day of worship and celebration!

Let us rejoice and be glad in their ministry!

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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

A DEACONS MINISTRY IS RE-BORN



FAITH FORMATION

By Pastor Wade Pond

Lent Is Upon Us

The season of Lent is a time where we recognize that Jesus is slowly making his way towards the cross. Making his way towards the cross means that he is also making his way closer to death each day...and Jesus knows it. Maybe that is why the season of Lent can be so meaningful to some of us. Just as Jesus knows that each day brings him closer to his earthly death, when we think about it, so are we. We are making that journey every day ourselves. For some of us, death is the complete loss of our earthly selves. But death sometimes means that we loss something else. This perspective allows us to see the fully human Jesus and the full mortality of ourselves.

Death happens in various ways. The death of family and friends...those are losses. The deaths related to tragedies in our community and in our world....losses. Changes in our health condition, our lifestyle, our job...death...loss. And what do we do when we experience death and loss?

We grieve.

This Lent, you are all invited on a journey of looking at grief through the lens of Lent. A Lenten devotional compiled by Presbyterian Outlook Editor, Reverend Terri Ott, will be our guide as we navigate the stages of grief. As described by Reverend Ott:

“Our human condition is awash in grief because we are mortal. Yet we are a resurrection people. There is life to be lived both within the grief and beyond it — a horizon of hope toward which we cast our eyes.”

Let that horizon of hope be our steering wheel this Lenten season. Copies of the devotion will be made electronically so that you may download and read it on your favorite device. If you wish to have a paper copy, please contact the office to have a coy printed for you.

Blessings to you this season and all seasons!



WORSHIP NOTES

March 2nd—The first Sunday worship of the month where we offer communion at the Lord's Table. Anyone is welcome to receive communion at the Lord's table even if you are not a member. And if you do not wish to receive communion, you are welcome to come and receive a blessing from Pastor Wade.

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- **March 5th marks the beginning of the Lenten season. In worship, it is a time of contemplation as we connect the mortality of Jesus to our own mortality.**
- **The color for the season of Lent is purple. As part of this holy season, we will have some distinct worship opportunities:**
- Wednesday March 5th (Ash Wednesday) - Drop in at the church from 9 AM to 2 PM. Anyone and everyone from the community may receive the imposition of ashes in the sanctuary and may strong as long or as little as they desire in a time of prayerful approach as gentle music plays.

Sunday April 13th—Palm Sunday

Thursday April 17th, 7 PM—Maundy Thursday

Sunday April 20th—Easter Sunday worship with communion

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LITURGIST SCHEDULE

We give thanks for all of those individuals who help to lead worship on any given Sunday. It is a gift to the congregation and to Pastor Wade to see the willingness of others to serve God's people.

March 2nd—Niaja Mowatt

March 9th—Lynn Burke

March 16th—Sheri Myers

March 23th—Niaja Mowatt

March 30th—Laura Fallon

Serving as a liturgist is a gift to the church. You don't have to be a bible expert, a linguist, or have a seminary degree to serve as a liturgist. A liturgist has a heart to help and lead others. Remember that Moses was called to lead and speak in front of people despite his difficulties speaking: "How then should Pharaoh heed me—who gets tongue-tied!" ([Exod. 6:12](#)). Moses has already pointed this issue out a few chapters earlier, protesting that he has "never been a man of words" and is "slow of speech and slow of tongue." Scholars believe that Moses was afflicted with the challenge of stuttering. Look how he turned out with God's help!

If you have questions about serving as liturgist, talk to Pastor Wade. It is a joy to those explore the calling to serve.

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



March 2025

4...Emily Moder
 4... Joan Sommermyer
 4... Hillary Zucker
 4... Jessica Pond
 5... Allison Paalz
 8... Frank Sansone
 8... Monica Van Houten
 22... Denise 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. The next meeting is March 17th. Any member of the church is welcome to attend.

Find our website and social media links!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

Facebook/YouTube/Instagram

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

<https://youtube.com/>

@presbyterianchurchofsweeth1401

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

National Days of March

1... Peanut Butter Lover's Day
 4... Sons Day
 6... Oreo Cookie Day
 11... Johnny Appleseed Day
 12... Girl Scout Day
 17... St. Patrick's Day
 19... Chocolate Caramel Day
 20... First Day of Spring
 24... Cheese Steak Day
 29... Vietnam War Veterans Day
 30... Take a Walk in the Park Day

STEWARDSHIP AND GIVING

PER CAPITA 2025—\$42.09 per church member

Paying per capita is similar to

- contributing one's dish to a potluck meal
- paying to be connected to the Internet
- paying for the benefit of utilities, such as electricity, water, and telephone
- pitching in with other passengers to pay for gasoline for a road trip
- participating in community supported agriculture (CSA) or a similar co-op

What is per capita?

The official definition: "Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the [mid councils] to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians" (GA Minutes, Part I, 1995).

In essence: Per capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to

the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PC(USA)'s system of government, so every Presbyterian is asked to share the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system.

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Who pays per capita, and how much?

Congregations (through their sessions) pay an annual amount of money per church member — per capita apportionment — to their presbyteries. The annual per capita amount is a combined request from a congregation's presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly — based on their respective budgets for the coming year. A presbytery's per capita rate depends on its geographical location and size, its mission needs, and the needs of the respective synod. The 2025 cost of the Presbytery of Long Island's membership is \$42.09. This apportionment is applied to each member of each church in the entire presbytery.

Even if the church member does not pay their own per capita, the church is responsible for that payment and those funds are paid out of the church's reserve funds.

As a member of the church, we ask for you to joyfully and faithfully pay your per capita funds for 2025. This will go a long way towards helping the church to reduce the financial stress for the fiscal year!

STEWARDSHIP AND GIVING

PROPERTY SALE UPDATE

During the month of February, the Presbytery of Long Island voted unanimously to permit the sale of the property to Suffolk County.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CHURCH?

The county will then complete their process in navigating the completion of the property acquisition. We are thankful to have Jim Reiser as our attorney helping us to navigate this complex process.

WHAT'S NEXT

At this point, most of the remaining process now is a waiting period until we receive the funds for the sale.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE UPDATES



MISSION & MORE

One Great Hour of Sharing

Join with Presbyterians worldwide in sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world, through **"One Great Hour of Sharing"**.

Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to **"One Great Hour of Sharing"** supports efforts to relieve hunger through the **Presbyterian Hunger Program**, promote development through the **Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People**, and assist in areas of disaster through **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**. All three programs work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need; their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

-36% of each donation supports the **Presbyterian Hunger Program**, which is committed to ending hunger globally.

-32% of each donation supports **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**, which is committed to helping others repair from disaster during and beyond the initial aftermath globally.

-32% of each donation supports **Self-Development of People**, which is committed to helping communities around the world gain the skills they need to improve their communities.

Special Offering envelopes for **"One Great Hour of Sharing"** will be made available during this Lenten season-March 5th through April 20th.

Thanks to the heartfelt gifts given by so many, **"One Great Hour of Sharing"** currently supports projects in over 100 countries.

If We All Do A Little, It Adds Up To A Lot!

MISSION & MORE

“Food: A Lifeline Against Hunger”



Overwhelming food insecurity is occurring in many communities. Our local pantries are being drained of their food resources. The Mission Team would like to THANK everyone who so generously donated food items in February.

When these food donations were recently delivered to the Huntington Community Food Council, the staff was beyond excited and so grateful to receive so much food. We were told that their supplies are running very low and that they are in dire need of **non-perishables**. *For the Mission Team's March Focus ("Feed the Need") we are asking our congregation to continue to bring in canned soup, rice, canned vegetables, pasta, cereal and pasta sauce. Your donations will assist the Huntington Community Food Council in serving the 300 clients that depend on this ministry twice a week. Please consider using the weekly sales at local grocery stores to generously pick up some extra supplies. Thank you in advance for your generosity of spirit.*

Together, WE can Give Hunger the Boot!



Prayer Corner



The Power of Prayer in Our Church Community

Dear Church Family,

As we journey together in faith, one of the greatest gifts we share is the power of prayer. Prayer connects us to God, strengthens our relationships with one another, and reminds us that we are never alone. Whether spoken aloud in worship, whispered in the quiet of our hearts, or shared in the fellowship of a small group, prayer is a vital part of our spiritual life.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Paul encourages us to “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” These words remind us that prayer is not just for times of trouble but for every moment of our lives. Through prayer, we find gratitude in blessings, comfort in sorrow, and guidance in uncertainty.

As a church, we are committed to deepening our prayer life. We invite you to participate in our weekly prayer circle where we lift up the concerns of our congregation, our community, and the world. If you have a prayer request, please share it with us—we are here to support one another in faith.

May we continue to seek God in prayer, trusting that He listens, answers, and walks with us every step of the way.

Grace and peace,

Find our website and social media links!

www.sweethollowpresby.org

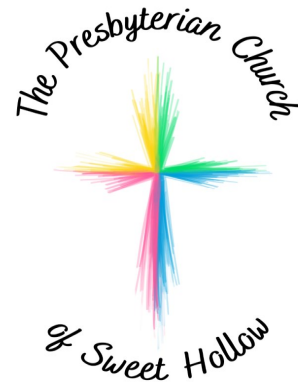
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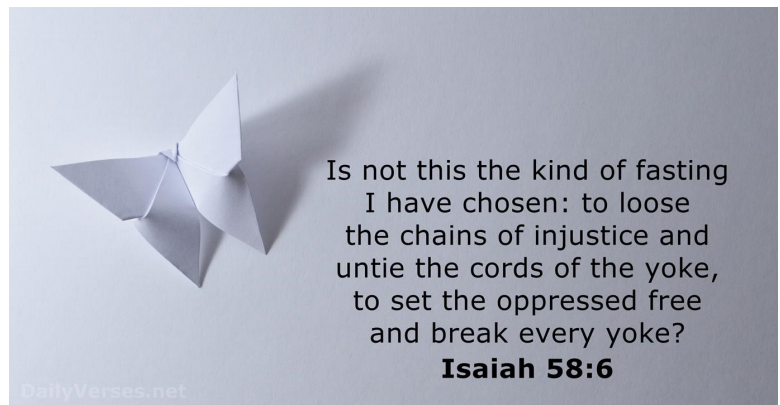
FROM THE PASTOR'S NOOK (Cont'd from front page)

A Journey Toward Resurrection

Lent is not an end in itself; it leads us to Easter, to the promise of resurrection and renewal. It reminds us that even in the wilderness, God is present. Even in seasons of struggle, new life is possible.

This season, let's journey together—not just through acts of personal reflection, but through acts of radical love. Let's make Lent not only a time of looking inward but also a time of looking outward, seeking Christ in the faces of those around us.

May this Lent be a time of transformation for us all.



Bell Ringer Delivery: To have your copy of the Bell Ringer delivered by paper rather than email, please call the office, e-mail <pcshsecretary@hotmail.com> or Pastor Wade.

Apr. Bell Ringer Submissions: Due by Mar. 25

Email to Jessica Pond: 8kidscallmemom@gmail.com