



THE TOWER

*First Presbyterian Church
37 Church Mall
Springfield, NJ 07081
www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.com*

VOL. 72 NO. 08

APRIL 2020

No matter where we are, whether we are worshiping in our beautiful church or confined to our homes, the Glory of the Easter Story is with us all. Every single day!



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all church and outside group activities in the Parish House, Church and Chapel are cancelled until further notice.

For those with access to the internet, please enjoy the video postings created by Pastor Rhonda that can be found on the church Facebook page: Springfield Presbyterian Church and on our website: SpringfieldPresbyterian.org

Much thought and creativity is being gathered, as well as expanding our use of technology to reach our church family and friends. We hope you feel the sense of community and the infinite love of Christ as we share God's message to you!

Live Streaming during Holy Week is as follows:

Palm Sunday 10:15am Holy Thursday 4pm Good Friday 1pm Easter Sunday 10:15am

Instructions for each service will be posted on our website and Facebook page. Copies of the services will be added to both by 5pm each evening.

MINISTRIES OF CARE AND COMPASSION

Living under a statewide “Stay at Home” directive can be a bit nerve-racking. Help yourself by helping others. Yes, we can each work on a jigsaw puzzle, color in our adult coloring books, try our hand at a “paint by numbers” piece of art, and bake to our heart’s content. But we can also use some of our time at home to assist our church family and community by accepting a “care task” that will minister to the needs of the sick and vulnerable. Here are some ideas on how you can “care” for others during this health crisis:

- Our Deacons have been doing a wonderful job of staying in touch with many of our members who are at risk for getting ill with COVID19. But they would love assistance from you in communicating with our shut-ins and our elderly members who are prone to experience loneliness without others living with them. If you could “adopt” a member or two for the next couple of months and stay in touch with them—by phone, email, text message or snail mail—it would be wonderful. If you need help with this, contact a Deacon, Linda Jurczak or Pastor Rhonda.
- The Atlantic Health System has asked for donations of homemade face masks for distribution at their areas hospitals. If you would be interested in sewing face masks, the instructions and virtual instructions can be found at the site below. (Use control click to follow the link.) If you receive the Tower only in print form, you can call the church office and speak to Linda Jurczak or Pastor Rhonda for verbal instructions. Let the office know you are making these face masks and Pastor Rhonda will set up a system for drop off and pick up.

<https://www.atlantichealth.org/patients-visitors/donate-volunteer/donate-supplies-covid-19.html>

- The Food Bank and Food Pantries are very busy. If you have food items you would like to donate to help feed hungry families, please drop them off at the church M-F from 9am to noon. Please let us know you are coming, drop the food at the Parish House door and ring the doorbell. Once you have left, we will collect the items. If you can’t leave your home and want to contribute food items, let us know and we’ll find a way to pick them up from you. *If you need food, please let us know and we will assist you in getting food onto your shelves.*
- The Blood Bank is in critical need of blood donations. If you are able to donate, please call toll free 1-800-933-2566 or visit nybloodcenter.org to set up an appointment. The Scotch Plains blood bank has cancelled blood drives during the health crisis, but there is still a need for blood.
- The Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has recalled its mission co-workers from around the world back to their places of residence in America. Some of these mission co-workers sold homes, left churches where they served as pastors, and have no place of residence to return to. Please pray for these mission co-workers that they will make their way safely back to our shores and that they will find a place to make “home” until they can return to their stations overseas. This is a reminder of just how global this pandemic really is!

CAMP JOHNSONBURG SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are available to any youth members (ages 6-18) interested in attending Camp Johnsonburg, an accredited Christian youth camp this summer. This scholarship is made available to all children and grandchildren of our members. If interested, please speak to Kristin Reubling-Jass.

Details about the camp can be found on their website: www.campjburg.org



Faith Matters **A Message from Pastor Rhonda—April 2020**

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart.... We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. (2 Cor. 4:1, 8-10)

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I sit to write this letter, I am mindful that our nation and the world around us is feeling *afflicted, crushed, perplexed and persecuted*, to use the Apostle Paul's words, but not destroyed. These are words of empathy and assurance that we can take to heart in the midst of the most challenging health crisis of the past century. Yes, there was the AIDS virus, Ebola, SARS and MERS, but those threats primarily afflicted one group of people or were purged far more quickly than COVID19.

- Among all those adjectives that Paul used to describe our emotional and spiritual state, I wish he also spoke a word about fear and anxiety. Because it is fear that grips our souls today, and anxiety that has us snapping at our partners and losing focus while working from home. For some of us, especially those who fit into the age group known of "older adult," social distancing feels a bit more like social isolation—and we're only 2 weeks into a temporary way of life that could stretch on for another 5 weeks or more.

We need to find ways to mitigate the fear and dampen the anxiety.

Earlier this year, I saw the movie *Harriet* (the story of Harriet Tubman, runaway slave and abolitionist). Just before Harriet takes her desperate flight to freedom, not knowing what lay ahead for her nor whom she could trust on her journey to a life without shackles, she visits her pastor for some guidance and encouragement. Pastor Green tells her, in no uncertain terms, "Harriet, fear is the enemy."

That is still true today. Fear is the enemy. Not each other. And this fear can lead to depression, dread, emotional paralysis and doubts about whether to trust in God's constant and abiding presence during a time of crisis. "Where are you, Lord?" we may wonder. So, how do we cope? The late Rev. William Sloane Coffin, former pastor of NYC's Riverside Church, said this of fear: "If your heart is full of fear you won't seek

truth, you'll seek security. If your heart is full of love, it will have a liberating effect on the mind." Pastor Coffin spoke of filling our hearts with Christian compassion and ardor—giving of ourselves to others in need rather than focusing solely upon our own particular situation in life.

Eileen Linder, former Deputy General Secretary of the National Council of Churches and Presbyterian Pastor, tells of visiting war-torn Sarajevo years ago and staying in a hotel "that was very much the worse for wear." She spoke of the signage in that hotel being in 3 languages: Slavic, Bad French, and Even Worse English. As she passed a "dilapidated swimming pool filled with bomb rubble," she read a sign on the wall that said, *No swim without a savior* (meaning *lifeguard*). "Good advice I thought and still think. No swimming without a savior and—no pandemic without one either."

We know that Easter this year will be unlike any Easter before it. There may still be ham on the table. But there will be fewer seats around that table. Fewer Easter baskets, too. And there will be a virtual celebration of Easter hope rather than the in-person experience of brass and the choir's grand alleluias!

But we also come to Easter with faith in a Savior who rises against any and all threats to life. Hear again the wisdom of Pastor Coffin, "The world now is too dangerous for anything but truth and too small for anything but love." Paul was right—faith is a matter of the heart. May we not lose heart. Yours in Christ,

Pastor Rhonda

WORSHIP NOTES

We are very uncertain about when we will be able to gather in our beautiful sanctuary again for weekly worship. While we are hoping it will be sooner than later, we will offer "virtual worship" in the meantime. Pastors Rhonda and Dave will lead a live service on Sundays at 10:15, and that worship will be taped and uploaded to our website (www.springfieldpresbyterian.org) and our Facebook page later in the day. Since we don't have WiFi in our sanctuary as yet, it limits our options for live broadcasts. At current, we are using Zoom, a conferencing app. But the sound and visual quality are not wonderful. We will work on other options and do our best to get the word out ahead of each Sunday worship as to what format we will be using. Please be patient with us. This is a learning curve for us all!

STEWARDSHIP

We know that, for those of you who may be out of work during this pandemic, your budget may be stretched to the limit. Please know that we certainly understand if you cannot maintain your pledge at the level you committed to for 2020. If you are still able to give, however, perhaps even at a slightly higher level than you had pledged, we ask that you prayerfully consider maintaining or even increasing your contribution. Because we have not worshipped "in house" the past couple of Sundays, our giving has been substantially curtailed. And since the Stock Market has taken a significant nosedive, it is not a good time to be turning to our endowment and selling some stock for income beyond the interest earned in 2019. We are grateful for every and any gift. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

LEADER TRAINING

While the PC(USA)'s *Book of Order* requires yearly training for our church leaders, the current *Stay at Home* orders make it difficult to fulfill this obligation at the current time. We'll get it on the calendar later this year. Until then, please pray for your Elders, Deacons and Trustees as they try to lead the church from their homes.

FORGIVENESS STUDY

We began a Lenten study on Forgiveness earlier this month. COVID19 prevented our completing the study. But if you have a copy of the book at home, please keep reading on. There are study questions at the back of the book that you can use for your home devotions.

APRIL 2020

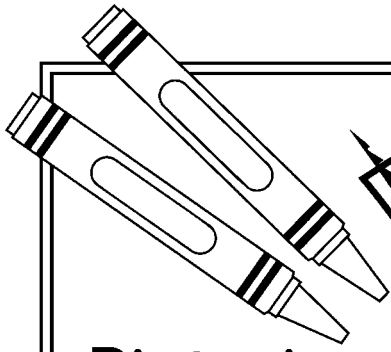


- 7th – Rodney Shiners
- 9th – Colleen Scott
- 13th - Doreen DeRenzo
- 15th - Russell Helsel
- 16th - Ernestine Gierman – Celebrating her 107th!
- 21st – Daniel Priest
- 23rd - Jean Zabelski – Celebrating her 100th!
- 24th - Douglas Leite
- 26th - Gladys Reed *and* Beatrice Roth
- 27th - Walter Ivankow
- 28th - Thomas Clark
- 29th - Carissa Clark
- 30th – Millie Huska

WE ARE HAPPY TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAYS OF ALL OUR CHURCH FAMILY! IF YOUR BIRTHDAY IS NOT INCLUDED IN OUR BIRTHDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AND PROVIDE MONTH AND DAY, AND WE'LL ADD YOU TO OUR LIST

PASTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

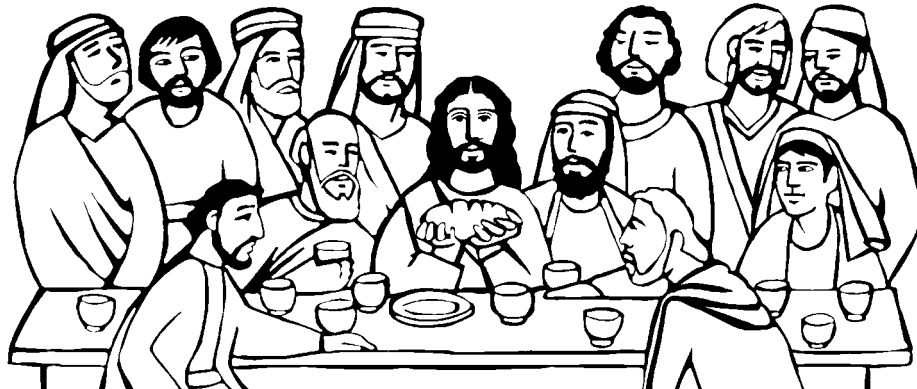
Pastor Rhonda can be reached at her personal email address: revrhon@aol.com. She can also be reached (by voice or text) on her cell phone at: 973-255-0846.



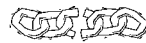
PUZZLE

Picturing the Lord's Supper

Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples as a symbol of the new covenant.



Directions: Use the picture clues to fill in key words from Luke 22:19-20, NIV.



And he took _____, gave _____ and _____ it, and gave



it to them, saying, "This is my _____ given for you; do this in



_____ of me." In the same way, after the supper he



took the cup, saying, "This _____ is the new _____ in my



blood, which is _____ out for you."

LUKE 22:19-20, NIV

Answer: bread, thanks, broke, body, remembrance, cup, covenant, poured



Please note: Once we resume our worship services in our sanctuary, and can secure floral orders again, we will be sure to include a dedication page in the bulletin and newsletter for those who participate. If you wish to contribute to the future display, please return this form with your check for \$15. We will combine your contributions to purchase flowering plants in celebration of being reunited.



NAME: _____

PHONE #: _____

IN MEMORY or HONOR OF (please circle one)

I will leave my plant(s) _____ I will take my plant(s) _____

Envelope # (if avail.) _____

Additional information _____

I am available to assist the Deacons with delivery of plants _____

THE FIRST CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT SPRINGFIELD
37 CHURCH MALL
SPRINGFIELD, NJ 07081

Place
Stamp
here

PLACE ADDRESS
LABEL HERE

“When This is Over” by Laura Kelly Fanucci

*"When this is over, may we never again take for granted:
A handshake with a stranger, full shelves at the store,
conversations with neighbors, a crowded theatre...*

*Friday night out, the taste of communion, a routine checkup,
the school rush each morning...*

*Coffee with a friend, the stadium roaring, each deep breath...
A boring Tuesday, Life itself.*

*When this ends, may we find that we have become
more like the people we wanted to be...
we were called to be...
we hoped to be and may we stay that way...
better for each other because of the worst."*