



# THE TOWER

*First Presbyterian Church*

*Sanctuary: 210 Morris Avenue*

*Office/Parish House: 37 Church Mall, Springfield, NJ 07081*

*Phone: 973-379-4320 Fax: 973-379-8883 website: www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.org*

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MARCH/APRIL 2024

## **Palm Sunday**

March 24<sup>th</sup> - 9am breakfast in the Parish House Dining Room, followed by a "Parade of Palms" to the church for the 10:15 am. Worship Service.



"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."  
Luke 22:15, NIV

**Wednesday of Holy Week** March 27<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:00pm – We gather for one final Soup and Bread Supper followed by a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

## **Maundy Thursday**

March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. **Tenebrae Service.** This service commemorates the sufferings and death of Christ, as the sanctuary lighting becomes dimmer. In recognition of the solemnity of this service, please leave the sanctuary and the building in reverent silence.

## **Good Friday**

The Sanctuary will be open from Noon-3:00pm for meditation, prayer, and music. Rev. Fois will lead occasional prayers as well as the passion narrative during this time. Anyone is welcome to attend at any time during these three hours. At 3:00pm, the Christ candle will be extinguished with the words, "It is Finished". The Sanctuary will remain in darkness until Easter morning.

## **Easter Sunday**

**March 31<sup>st</sup> - 9:00am** Sunday School Children enjoy an Easter Egg hunt on the Parish House front lawn followed by a light breakfast in the Chapel.

**10:15am** Resurrection Celebration with communion and brass ensemble.





## Lenten Soup & Bread Suppers

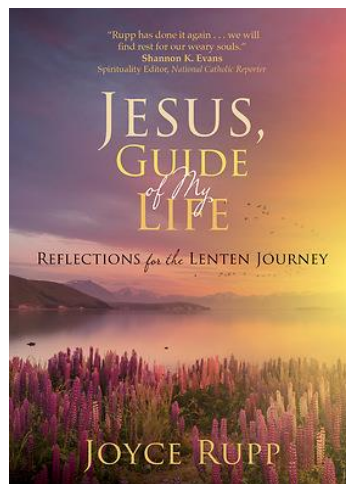
Throughout Lent, we will meet every Wednesday from 6:30 – 8pm for Soup & Bread, Prayers, and a short Bible Study through Holy Week. The bible study is based on the devotional guide, “Jesus, Guide My Life” by Sr. Joyce Rupp.

Participation is free, but we ask that you sign up to participate so we can calculate how much soup to make.

Volunteers are needed to prepare the soup (two varieties every Wednesday) and to help with the setup and cleanup.

Looking forward to sharing this time with you.

The Outreach committee, Heather Francis, Chair  
Rev. Jen and Pastor Roberto





Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As of this writing we are off to a wonderful start in Lent.

We had a terrific (and very well attended) Ash Wednesday/Valentines dinner followed by an Ash Wednesday service, where we sang, prayed and received ashes and small red hearts to carry with us for all of Lent.

Last week's Soup/Bread bible study was also very well attended. We shared food, fellowship, prayer and explored how 1 Corinthians 13 is a great guide for our Lenten journey.

As a pastor (bridge, interim or any kind) it is extremely gratifying and enlivening to see such enthusiasm, connection and potential growth so early in Lent. The challenge, as we all know, is to keep the enthusiasm, dedication and consistency for all 40 days (plus Sundays!). Like many things (spiritual and otherwise) we start out with good intentions and then we slip up, get distracted or worse, life hands us something that can throw us off track of our Lenten intentions.

If you've been to the Parish House recently during the day, or in your own gardens, you may have seen that the daffodils are courageously and ardently pushing up from the cold ground. With nighttime temps in the teens and 20's still, I find this fascinating and inspiring, especially given the amount of snow and cold we've had this winter. We've probably all witnessed seeing daffs or crocuses or even forsythia that, in spite of a dramatic turn of weather, keep blossoming and growing in spite of sometimes harsh conditions.

Perhaps this is a loving nudge from our loving Lord, to inspire us when we get distracted or weary on our Lenten journey.

We have 4 more weeks of meaningful soup/bread/bible studies (6:30-8PM on Wednesdays) which will include a special **Lord's Supper on March 27<sup>th</sup>**. This will be preceded by a **Palm Sunday breakfast and parade Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>**. **Maundy Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup>** we will have a special and rich service of **Tenebrae at 7:30 PM and Good Friday March 29<sup>th</sup>** the sanctuary will also be open from 12-3 for quiet prayers. The big finish will be **Easter Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup> that includes brass music** as well as an **Easter egg hunt and brunch for Sunday School students and their families**.

Even as the light and warmth increases, it doesn't rule out a final March snow storm, but regardless, may we, like the courageous daffodils, crocuses and forsythia have the strength and courage to stay the path of love that ends in joy, freedom, hope and redemption of us all.

Grace and Peace,

Rev Jen

## A Message from Pastor Roberto

### A Covenant of Love

*When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." (Genesis 9:17)*

In the beginning God created all that there is and called all of it good. A labor of love if you will. At the covenant with Noah, God promised to continue to love what God created and appointed a rainbow as a reminder.

This, my dear siblings, is the story of an everlasting commitment from God to all of creation. A covenant of love. Not because of anything we did, or didn't do, not because of what Noah did, his children did, or didn't do, but an undeserved, unmerited favor from God.

And isn't that, exactly what God's love is? A free outpouring of favor, of care, of compassion, of help, of guidance, of grace, a gratuitous gift, freely given, out of love.

God is not the absentee landlord that created a universe and then abandoned it to its own destiny, not a benevolent but absent-minded parent who forgets to feed her children, not a brutal tyrant ready to punish at the mere hint of a transgression.

God is love. The source of love, the author and perfecter of love. The supreme expression of love. And in the face of such overwhelming reality, all we can do is love God in return.

We can love God by talking to God. I find it difficult to conceive that we can love someone without talking to them. There must be some dialogue. Some sharing of information and ideas but also – most importantly – feelings, emotions.

We can also love God by sharing our silence. Sometimes sitting in silence, working the garden, washing dishes, or doing absolutely nothing in silence, without the distraction of the TV on or the radio, or chatter, can be a good way of saying to God: "I love you. I'm here. I am not chatty today. I just want to be with you."

Another way to love God is to hear and read God's stories. How God related to people and to creation in the past, and the Bible is a good place to find those stories. To read about the imperfect, deeply flawed, supremely human figures who struggled with their humanity and still were able to love God.

And a good, wonderful way to love God is to do what Jesus commanded when he was asked "which commandment is the first of all?" to which he replied, "to love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself."

We can love God with our words, with our silence, with our interest in the stories where God and people are the protagonists, and we can love God by loving creation. By loving what God has made in God's own image.

By loving the unloved and the unlovable. By loving the deeply gifted and the deeply flawed. By loving the ones like us and the ones unlike us. By loving the earth and committing to preserving our environment. By loving all that is good, and noble and pure and all that needs renewal and rebirth.

This Lenten Season, when the rain stops, look at the sky. Search for the rainbow. Remember that it is a circle where the covenant of love that God initiated for you and for all creation, has no beginning and no end, and then be reminded of the love that God craves from you.

*Let us pray: "God, show us your rainbow so that we can live out the covenant of love."*



MARCH 3 - LESLIE RICCIE  
 MARCH 4 - ROBBIE SMITH  
 MARCH 6- KEASHA BLAKE  
 MARCH 9 - STEVE KITSKO  
 MARCH 14 -ALIVIA CLARK

MARCH 18- EUNICE AMARABE  
 MARCH 21 - RICHARD DAMBRES  
 MARCH 27 - DELETA BLAKE  
 MARCH 29- CHARLES RUEBLING-JASS



**MEMBERS:** IF YOU DON'T SEE YOUR BIRTHDAY LISTED, PLEASE PROVIDE MONTH AND DATE TO THE OFFICE. WE ARE HAPPY TO CELEBRATE WITH ALL OF OUR MEMBERS!

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

A reminder to set your clocks ahead one hour before you retire for the evening on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>.



7<sup>th</sup> - Rodney Shinnars  
 13<sup>th</sup> - Doreen DeRenzo  
 21<sup>st</sup> - Daniel Priest  
 24<sup>th</sup> - Douglas Leite  
 25<sup>th</sup> - Seamus Priest  
 28<sup>th</sup> - Thomas Clark  
 29<sup>th</sup> - Carissa Clark



**No matter who you are,  
 or where you are in your life's journey,  
 you are welcome here.**







**EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM**

Each Easter Sunday, we enjoy the beautiful site of Easter Lilies displayed in the front of the church. In order to behold this beautiful site, our members and friends are invited to donate one or more plants at a cost of \$15.00 each. You may elect to take your plant after the Easter Worship Service, or donate it to our homebound friends. Please fill out the form below and return it with your check made payable to the church and send it to the Church Office. 37 Church Mall, Springfield, NJ 07081. (Please do not combine with other giving) All orders must be received in the office no later than Wednesday, March 20th. We look forward to another glorious display to celebrate the

resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ!



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY or HONOR OF (please circle one)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

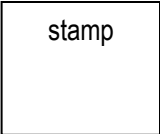
I will leave my plant(s) \_\_\_\_\_ I will take my plant(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Envelope # (if avail.) \_\_\_\_\_

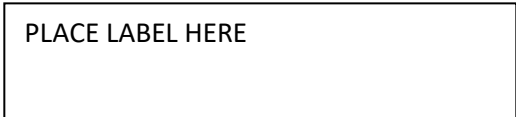
Additional information \_\_\_\_\_

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE**  
**CONGREGATION/CORPORATION**

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield will be held in the Church Sanctuary on Sunday, March 3, 2024, following the 10:15am Morning Worship Service.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive annual reports and any other business which may properly come before the meeting.

s/Rysonia (Dawn) Clarke, Clerk of Session