

The Presbyterian Church at
Shrewsbury
352 Sycamore Avenue,
Shrewsbury, NJ 07702

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The Towne Crier

Reflections from Tom

We have just finished, with Transfiguration Sunday, the Christian Season of Epiphany, a season that focused in Scripture and worship on the glory and mystery of Jesus. His “appearing”, like the Wondrous Star. His divine nature. Somehow, that all comes to an abrupt change with the Season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 14th. Valentine’s Day!



But it is an important change, when, in following along with the Gospel of Mark, we begin to look at the cost to Jesus of his Messiahship, and the cost to those who follow Jesus of their (our) discipleship, at his humanity and our own.

From Ashes to Easter

Easter Sunday, April 1st, is the culmination of a time of reflection, perhaps life or lifestyle change, consideration of what is truly important in human life, and commitment to faith that changes lives. The “ashes” symbol simply reminds us that we are humble when we realize we share with all persons on this earth a sense of frailty and of yearning for lasting meaning in our days.

So, this year, try to think of Easter as more than a stand-alone Christian holiday. It is a faith journey, from Ashes to Easter. It is a

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Sunday Worship

- Sunday Worship
10:30 AM
- Sunday School
10:30 AM
- Coffee Hour
11:45 AM

The Presbyterian Church at Shrewsbury

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Church Staff

Interim Pastor

Dr. Thomas E. Robinson

Director of Christian

Education

Sherri Adler

Director of Music Ministries

Reid Masters

Bell Choir Director

Robyn Ioviero

Director of Youth Choir

Pat Dunphy

Office Administrator

Billie McNally

Sexton

Frank Harvey

journey that we share with each other, with all generations, and with all the world. It is faith that brings new life out of the ashes.

With you on the Journey,



Rev. Tom



Community

Visiting Nurse Association Health Group is inviting members of the community to join our team of Hospice volunteers.

Discover the Joy of being a Hospice Volunteer

If you have a warm heart, a listening ear, and the gift of compassion, you can make a difference in the life of a Hospice patient or family member. VNA Health Group is inviting individuals interested in becoming Hospice volunteers to join our team in Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean Counties.

There are many rewards and opportunities available to Hospice volunteers though home visitation, companionship, administrative support, pet therapy, or any alternative therapies (i.e. Reiki, Meditation.). We are also seeking volunteers interested in providing support calls to our patients and family members from our offices in Holmdel or Toms River. Training will be provided by members of the Hospice team.

Please call Pauline De Palma, BSW (732) 224-6933 or email your contact information: pauline.depalma@vnahg.org

For more information about VNAHG volunteer services visit www.vnahg.org

I have enclosed a flyer for you to kindly post on your bulletin board. Thank you for your help and if you have any questions or are interested in hosting a Hospice volunteer training course at your location, please feel free to call me at 732-224-6933.

Pauline De Palma, BSW | Director, Volunteer Services
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www.vnahg.org



February Birthdays

Brylin B
Joyce D
Melissa Gi
Michael G
Jack Ma
Doug M
Kellie Hi
Erin O'
Abigail W
Ginny Z



February Anniversaries

Johanna and Bob C
Bonnie and John T
Jose & Judy D

Session

Summary of Session Meeting

1/16/18

Each month the Session of the church meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Below you will find a summary of what was discussed at our meeting in January. If you have any questions please let me know.

- Clerk Gretchen O' [redacted] reported that most annual reports have been sent into church office in preparation of January 28 Congregational Meeting.
- Rich V [redacted] reported that the Deacons have a great group of people and he is appreciative of all the hard work they have done. Deacons are thankful for the support they received all year long from Frank Harvey, our sexton, and Tom Van Duyne, our former church administrator.
- Heather P [redacted] reported that Presbyterian Women are planning a Service Auction and Dinner on March 10. This will be a fundraiser. The Men's Group has agreed to coordinate dinner for the event. The next PW board meeting is Thursday 1/18.
- David A [redacted] reported for the Personnel Committee that they have been advertising the church office administrator job.
- David A [redacted] presented a 2018 budget which was prepared by the P&A committee. The budget was voted on and approved by Session and will be presented at the Congregational Meeting on January 28.
- David A [redacted] presented a motion on behalf of P&A to waive the policy for fund distribution from the endowment fund to allow 100% of the distributions in 2018 to go toward the church operating budget. The motion was voted on and approved by Session.
- Kay H [redacted], on behalf of the Worship committee, presented a motion that April 29 be the date for the next Women's Service. Also she presented a motion that communion be served at the Ash Wednesday service on February 14. Both motions were voted on and approved by Session.
- Kay also mentioned that Worship will be replacing the large bulletin board outside the church office because it's very old and falling apart. There was a conversation

about allowing various committees to use the bulletin board at different times during the year.

- Rich V [redacted] asked about the sign in booklet at the sanctuary. There was discussion about what the procedure is and what it should be. There were visitor cards which have run out and Sherri A [redacted] offered to order more.
- Reverend Tom wants the Elder changeover process to be adjusted so that new officers are elected in January, trained/ordained/installed in February, and start their service in March of each year. The next officer training session will be Saturday, February 3.
- Trish A [redacted] reported for Presbytery that the next meeting will be February 27 in Manasquan. Carl W [redacted] Stated Clerk, is leaving and an interim will replace him. The Vitality Grant check, for our Autism Spectrum Inclusiveness Initiative, was presented by Moderator Sue S [redacted] from Mission Council at the January 14th Worship Service.
- Elder Gretchen O' [redacted] shared that Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Red Bank uses a 3 ring binder as a signup process which is passed around their sanctuary during worship service so that people who may not have access to email/internet can easily sign up for church events.
- Reverend Tom reported that he had a busy month including the Christmas pageant, multiple Christmas Eve services, college night, a baptismal renewal service, and more. He encouraged everyone to invite friends to church, as this is the best way to help our congregation grow. There will be a New Member gathering with Session on January 28, before worship service. Next week he is meeting with Carolyn Eyerman from Love Inc.
- A motion was voted on and approved by Session regarding the question of hiring a church member for the office manager position. Session thoroughly discussed and affirmed the personnel committee's policy that the position only be filled by a non-member due to the confidential nature of the position.

Gretchen O' [redacted]
Clerk of Session

Worship

Hearts, Flowers, and Ashes!?!

Hey, have you looked at the calendar for February yet? This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day are on the same day. How weird is this? Let's take a closer look at it.

Ash Wednesday, as we know it, is the start of Lent, a time for sacrifice, reflection, and looking at death. The word Lent comes from an ancient German word meaning "springtime". Lent is a time when, through reflection and action, we can be reborn into new life. Christians receive ashes on Ash Wednesday in the shape of the cross on their foreheads symbolizing Christ's death on the cross. Christ, the perfect human being in His last act of love, sacrificed his life for us, taking on the sins of the world, dying that we might be saved from our sins and then, through His resurrection at Easter, have eternal life.

As Christians during Lent we have traditionally been called to sacrifice some pleasure, mirroring His sacrifice. We are called to put earthly, physical pleasures aside, to examine the spiritual. In doing so we are called to examine our relationships, with ourselves, our fellow humans, and with God. Lent strips away all our earthly distractions. It's work. We are called to face our shortcomings, our sin, something that we often have a hard time doing.

Valentine's Day, on the other hand, is all about the chocolate, flowers, and jewelry – lovely, physical things in life that we value and strive for. It's about love as we know it. It's about giving things as symbols of our love. God's love, however, goes beyond our love. It's about giving of ourselves. His is a most perfect love – love that transcends ours. His is a love that is endless, forgiving, and creative - a love that is inclusive and freely given to all. So where's the connection between these two seemingly totally opposite days?

The recent movement to do something good during Lent, in addition to and/or instead of giving something up, gives us a clue. Through Lent we can go beyond the chocolate, flowers, and jewelry. We can go beyond the physical into the spiritual. By recognizing our shortcomings, and actively taking steps to go beyond them, we can

move more closely to following Christ and as a result, become closer to the perfect love of God. In going beyond the physical to the spiritual, we can start to bring about God's more perfect love here on earth.

This year we'll have a concrete way to do this. During each Sunday in Lent, you'll receive a Lent Action Card along with your bulletin. You'll be invited to think about the Lent theme for the week and write on your card how you can go beyond any shortcoming, any sin in this area, to live more in line with God's love. These cards can then be brought to church on the following Sunday. All cards for the week will be collected as part of worship and placed on our gnarly cross in the front of the sanctuary. As Christ took on the sins of the world, our cross will symbolically take on our sins. During our Maundy Thursday service the cross will then be carried out of the sanctuary as the crucified Christ took the sins of the world upon Himself, showing us God's most perfect love - dying that we might then, through His Resurrection, have eternal life with Him and our Father in heaven.

So, maybe it isn't so weird that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day are on the same day this year after all.

Chris K [redacted]
Worship Committee



STEWARDSHIP

ARE YOU
~~WHAT YOUR CHURCH IS~~ DOING WITH YOUR TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE?

Let's start the year with some good news: for the year just passed, church income ever so slightly exceeded the budget, and for that we should all be thankful. Thankful - but modest – the budget, after all, reflected the recent trend of decreasing pledge income. The trend continues, with pledges for 2018 down from 2017. Exuberant displays of high fives and chest bumping would be excessive. Still, for a mainline Protestant church, we're doing quite well. This is a healthy church – because of what you do and who you are. Feel good about that! But the trend is the trend, and is a caution, a call to action, a challenge to who we are.

A trendline is a projection of past performance, not a look into the future – *unless we choose it*.

Decline may be a current condition, but it doesn't have to be a death sentence. These are challenging times for many institutions, challenging times for anyone reading this, for any member of this church, for any resident of this country or this earth. We read that a lot – sometimes wrapped in a discussion of church

finances and mission, sometimes in a froth of politics, sometimes in jeremiads on the fate of the Giants, or of the earth. It's probably true that for as long as there's been a written word, someone has written and the rest of us have read: these are challenging times. It seems to be part of the deal. No doubt the first time it was written, in cuneiform or hieroglyphs, it was memorializing ancient oral tradition.



How we respond to the challenge – the one right in front of us right now - that's the real challenge. It's always there, with another waiting (or not waiting, but pushing forward and insisting) right behind.

Allow me to catalog some of the ways that I deal with challenges:

- I ignore them, hoping they'll go away

- I stomp my feet and whine, hoping to attract attention from someone who will make them go away
- I sulk, and maybe pout
- I resign myself to doom, and do nothing beyond, maybe, castigating myself and others for doing nothing and consigning us to oblivion. I curse God for abandoning me
- I make a lame attempt, making a show of it, so as to look like I'm doing something, and when no one is looking, I slip away
- I tell someone about it, earnestly, so that they can make it go away
- I harangue someone about it, assigning blame to him or her
- I harangue others about it, enlisting them in my effort to assign blame
- if forced, backed into a corner, I might try to negotiate, sometimes trying to make a bargain with God to take care it
- I indulge in foxhole prayer. Which is useless
- and lastly, I sometimes face the problem squarely, and put my time, talents, and treasure to work. I might even approach others, and explain the situation, and enroll them in the effort. I might pray, asking for the strength and wisdom required to take on the challenge, and the serenity to accept human frailties and perfidy and courage and integrity, and to accept the outcome as well
- [Add your items here]

At an event honoring the first anniversary of the Women's March, a speaker (my daughter, as it happens) reflected on the March, on the last year, on what it all meant to her. She said "a very political movement became a very personal movement for me and millions of other people, and the personal transformation that so many women and men across the country are feeling is what is going to sustain us."

She added "I'm sure many of you feel the same way I did ... that I've really been hiding in plain sight for my whole life, and thinking that my opinions, my emotions, had to be secondary because I had to worry about everybody else. That's what I was born into. And that's over."

"Don't wait," she said, there's no White Knight coming to save us. "Nobody's coming – whatever you think is out there," pointing to her heart, she said, "it's in here. If you're waiting for somebody else to do something – take action."

The context of the Women's March is a framework for understanding the challenges we face, and how we face them. And why. It's up to us. It's who we are. And the thing is – in my list above, it's only when I choose that last item, and face the challenge squarely, that I have any self-respect, or can look at myself in the mirror, or, if you will, think of myself as a Christian.

-- from elder Ted De [redacted]



Presbyterian Women

PW Service Auction & Men's Group Dinner

Saturday, March 10, 2018

Fellowship Hall

5:30 – 8:30 pm

Please join us for a delicious dinner prepared by the Men's Group, followed by Presbyterian Women's auction of services and talents provided by church members.

(Note that the Men's Group receives the proceeds from the dinner, and PW receives the proceeds from the Service Auction.)

A **Service Auction** is an event where people from the church offer their services and talents for other people to purchase. Items to be auctioned could include recreational opportunities, transportation offers, homemade food, and crafted items.

Agenda

½ hour to review auction items and mingle
1 hour for dinner, prepared & served by the Men's Group
1 ½ hours for the Service Auction

Here are some items offered at PW's recent Service Auctions:

Art & Music: music lessons, watercolor painting, art lessons, hand painted slate

Recreation & Entertainment: beach club day, fishing trip, dance lessons, yoga sessions

Services: yard work, airport transportation, babysitting, tutoring, help organizing

Homemade/Decorating/Fashion: floral arrangement, gift basket, handmade pillow

Food: soup, lasagna, muffins, pies, cookies, cake, dinner for two

Please consider your talents and offer our community the opportunity to benefit from your specialties. Each person has something they do well and can share with others!

Simply **fill out a "commitment form"** (see below) **by March 1 to offer your service/talent.** Completed commitment forms can be placed in the locked mailbox outside the church house office. Blank commitment forms can be found in the marked envelope on the PW bulletin board across from the church house kitchen.

If you would like to participate and need a ride, we are happy to arrange a car-pool.

For more information, contact Heather P [redacted], Gretchen O [redacted], or Bonnie T [redacted]

**PW Service Auction
March 10, 2018
Commitment Form**

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Description of Service/Talent:

_____ Number of times you are offering this Service/Talent

\$_____ Approximate Value of Service/Talent

\$_____ Suggested Starting Bid

Please return by March 1

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FEBRUARY NEWS

TOUCHDOWN FOR JESUS

Join us for our annual *Touchdown for Jesus* event Sunday School on February 4th. Kids...wear your favorite team uniform, jersey or t-shirt! We'll play lots of games and learn about being on Jesus's team!

PW COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Presbyterian Women's organization is offering 2 Scholarships to graduating Seniors attending college in the Fall of 2018. The amount of each Scholarship is \$250 each. The students must submit a 400 word essay answering several questions presented by PW. You can pick up an application in the Christian Ed office. Deadline is March 15, 2018. Please contact Chris Weighell with any questions.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

Our 3 Confirmation students and 3 chaperones will be attending the Camp Johnsonburg Confirmation Retreat the weekend on March 16th – 18th. Confirmands from all over NJ will be coming together to share their faith experiences and enjoying some traditional camp activities. Please pray for safe travels!

YOUTH CHOIR

Youth Choir rehearsals start again on Sunday, February 4th, 12 – 12:30 PM, upstairs in CE. Join Miss Pat, Youth Choir Director, every Sunday till Palm Sunday on March 25th. The children will be singing two songs for that Service. For 1st Graders & up...contact Pat Dunphy with any questions.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 2/ Penny Hi
- 2/ Brylin B
- 2/ Erin O





February Serving Schedules

Date	Coffee Fellowship	Date	Flowers	Date	Deacons
4	Boy Scouts	4	Gretchen O' [redacted]	4	Team A
11	Worship	11	Margaret B [redacted]	11	Team B
14		14		14	TBA
18	CE	18	Nancy and Rich V [redacted]	18	Team C
25	Church and Society	25	Doreen P [redacted]	25	Team D
Date	Candle Lighters	Date	Elders		
4	Catrice C [redacted]	4	Kirsten S [redacted] and Joyce D [redacted]		
11	James T [redacted]	11	Ken G [redacted]		
14		14	Patricia A [redacted] and Gretchen O [redacted]		
18	Holly S [redacted]	18	Chris K [redacted]		
25	Brielle C [redacted]	25	Ted D [redacted]		