



I can't help but continue to reflect on the darkness and devastation of Ash Wednesday. My heart continues to ache and a picture keeps flashing through my mind. Perhaps you saw it, too. A picture of two women crying out, holding each other, and at least one of the women with ashes across her forehead. It's clear that morning she attended some sort of service where she was reminded that from dust she came and to dust she shall return. Never in her wildest dreams or nightmares, I'm sure, did she consider she would be reminded in such a horrifying way just how soon some return to the dust from whence they came.

In our funeral liturgy, part of one of the opening prayers reads, "O Lord, let us know our end and the number of our days, that we may learn how fleeting life is."

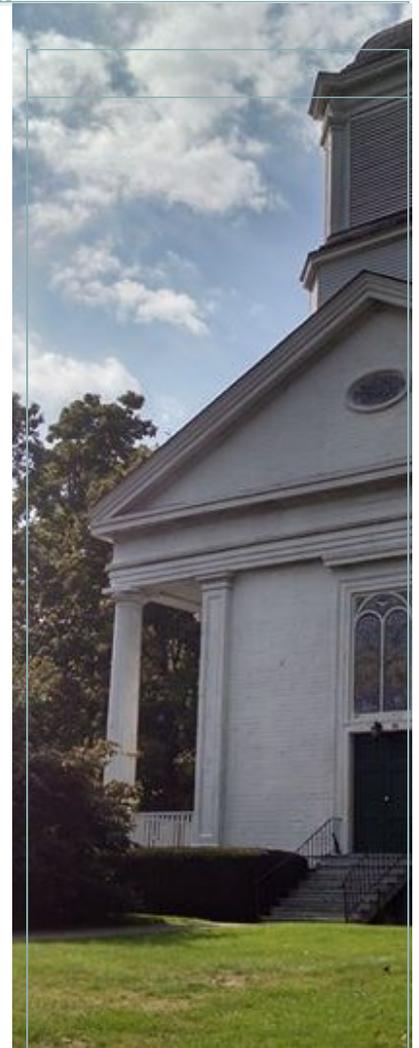
It is adapted from Psalm 39:4, "Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is." The psalm goes on, "You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing in your sight. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath."

If these events from around our nation remind us of anything, it is how fleeting life is, that we truly don't know the number or measure of our days. In fact, they might be shorter than we ever imagined or dreamed them to be, they might be but just a mere breath. This stark, dark reminder on Ash Wednesday is certainly a haunting one.

However, if nothing else, maybe we can find the urgency that is needed from this, that this life is fleeting, we don't know the number of our days, but while we are here we should make the most of it. While we are here, we should let the fire God has ignited in our hearts burn fully. We should take advantage of every day to truly follow after this one who we belong to both in life and in death. May we recognize the wrongs we have done, perhaps the ways we've been complicit in the violence that really does make some lives more fleeting than others. May we turn from our ways and speak out the good news of the gospel. May we be Christ's light in the dark world.

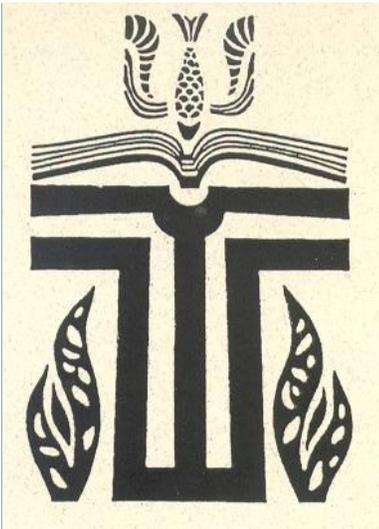
This is the message and the hope of Lent. We are to reflect on just this, how fleeting life is, that we have come from dust and to dust we shall return. This reflection time is in hopes that we turn from our wayward ways back to God and as Psalm 39 continues, "And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you" we are to live into the resurrection hope.

May we find strength for the journey in these words by Thomas Aquinas: Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, Which no unworthy affection may drag downward; Give me an unconquered heart, Which no tribulation can wear out; Give me an upright heart, Which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. Bestow on me also, O Lord my God, Understanding to know you, Diligence to seek you, Wisdom to find you, And a faithfulness that may finally embrace you; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



### **Good News Gazette**

First Presbyterian  
Church of  
Chester, NY  
94-96 Main Street  
Chester, NY 10918



## LENTEN LUNCH BAG DEVOTIONALS

We will continue our 6 week Lenten Lunch Bag Devotionals through March 28th. We meet in a classroom in the CE building for devotionals starting at 12pm followed by a bag lunch in the library. All are welcome.

## Deacons Corner

At our February meeting we said goodbye to our out going moderator Okey Barrett and to Edna Babcock . We are thankful for their service.

We welcomed three new Deacons, Vanessa Magyar, Jerry Sutherland, and Jean Barrett, who will be taking over as moderator. Helen Braidotti was voted in as assistant to the moderator, taking over when the moderator is not available.

Our year ahead will be a busy one. We will be selling books

again at the Roast Beef Dinner. We set up and serve communion once a month.

Our Food Pantry is going strong and family numbers have remained steady. At Christmas participating families were given a reusable bag and some fresh fruit for their use and enjoyment.

A heartfelt thanks to all who give their time unloading the truck, stocking the shelves, and preparing the food for distribution.

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS)

Through this longstanding, ecumenical effort, Presbyterians share God's love through ministries that provide relief to those affected by disasters, food for the hungry, and support toward the self-development of poor and oppressed communities.

### **Story of Impact – Empowering Women to Farm:**

Supporting OGHS provides assistance to organizations like Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (ARUWE), a partner of the Presbyterian Hunger Program. With support and land rights training from ARUWE, Najjuma, a 56-year-old widow in Uganda, was able to keep her property.

Najjuma was farming the 8-acre farm to grow food for the three children and eight orphaned grandchildren in her care. Without the land, she would have no means to support these children.

When Najjuma's in-laws ordered her to leave the land her husband had inherited, she was able to work with ARUWE to appeal for help through local governance structures.

Your support of OGHS helps women like Najjuma and her family keep what little they have so they might continue living, farming, and thriving.

There are some coin fish banks on the back table in the sanctuary. Typically, they are given to the children of the church to help collect for OGHS but we invite anyone and everyone who would like to take a bank to collect for the next month to do so. Please try to return your filled banks by March 25<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday) when we take our second collection and make our offering for OGHS.

## NEW T-SHIRTS

There has been some chatter about the hopes of new church t-shirts. Some of you still have the ones from many years ago but we hope to get new shirts for everyone. These will be great to wear not just for our various church events (Roast Beef Dinners, Chicken BBQ, Kiwanis Road Race, etc...) but also just around town for everyone to see. We are currently in the process of coming up with a few designs and we will share them with you shortly. It would be great to know how many are interested and if you are interested in just a t-shirt or possibly a long sleeve shirt or sweatshirt as well. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for anyone who is interested. An estimated number count will help us better determine what the price might be for the various options.

## LOOKING AHEAD

March 4 – Communion Sunday, Guest Preacher – Rev Russ Duncan, Deacons meeting following worship

March 5 – Bible Study at 10 Main St. 10 am, Music and Worship meeting 1pm

March 7 - Lenten Lunch Bag Devotionals

March 11 – Session meeting following worship

March 12 - Bible Study at 10 Main St. 10 am

March 14 – Lenten Lunch Bag Devotionals

March 18 – Roast Beef Dinner meeting following worship

March 19 – Bible Study at 10 Main St. 10 am, Tentative Food Pantry Truck Delivery

March 20 – Women’s Council Meeting 1pm

March 21 – Lenten Lunch Bag Devotionals

March 22 – Food Pantry Distribution 4-7pm

March 25 – Second offering for One Great Hour of Sharing

March 26 - Bible Study at 10 Main St. 10 am

March 28 – Lenten Lunch Bag Devotionals

Reminder that our Roast Beef Dinner is April 14<sup>th</sup> (not in March). Please mark this on your calendars now. We hope you can join us in helping with the dinner or joining in the meal!

*If you have an article or announcement you would like to have in the next newsletter, please have it into the church office by March 19th.*

If you are in need of pastoral care, please contact our pastor at the church office number (845-469-4877).

### March Second Offering

Our second offering for March 25<sup>th</sup>, Palm Sunday, will be for One Great Hour of Sharing.

Write your blessed name, O Lord,

Upon my heart,

There to remain so indelibly engraven,

That no prosperity,

No adversity,

Shall ever move me from your love.

Be to me a strong tower of defense,

A comforter in tribulation,

A deliverer in distress,

A very present help in trouble,

And a guide to heaven

Through the many temptations and dangers of this life. Amen

Thomas a Kempis

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