

The Good News Gazette

The First Presbyterian Church
94-96 Main Street Chester, NY 10918
July 2017

Practicing Sabbath

Summer is a time for vacations and bbqs, for relaxing nights on the porch or back deck. In a sense, things seem to slow down in the summer. We find ourselves trying to enjoy the nice days more with taking a day off to go to the lake or down to the shore... or maybe even up to the mountains. With the sun staying out longer, we find ourselves out and about after working or a busy day – out hiking at Bear Mountain or Harriman, or a walk or bike ride on Heritage Trail. Whatever it might be we find ourselves enjoying the days and nice weather, or trying to anyway.

And this is great, this is actually what we should find ourselves doing more throughout the busy year. Finding time, carving out time for rest, for enjoyment, for Sabbath. In both Exodus and Deuteronomy the Israelites are told to rest one day a week. The 7th day is to be a day of rest, just like God rested the 7th day of creation. There's to be no work, not even the animals or hired help or travelers and foreigners passing through. It is to be a day of rest for everyone. But not just rest, it is also to be kept holy. It is to be set apart for all the other days. A day that's not filled with labor or work but one of rest, that rejuvenates your soul, and that brings you into a closer connection to God.

Now for some, this might seem like a nightmare or a flash back to grandma's house where you couldn't play out in the yard but had to sit quietly in the house all day long until dinner time. No fun, no enjoying the outdoors, nothing. But I don't think this is really what God has in mind. God desires the Israelites to take one day off where they set it apart for rest and to keep it holy. God doesn't want them to burn out in their labor (perhaps like they often were as slaves in Egypt). God wants them to be well rested, rejuvenated for their next week of work, knowing that some weeks the work will be harder than others. And God also wants the time to be a time that will be refreshing and relaxing, a time that will give us life and bring us closer to God. Sitting in your grandmother's living room quietly talking might have been that time for some, but it certainly wasn't for everyone.

For some it might mean being out in the garden, planting flowers or weeding. Getting your hands dirty as you physically feel creation, connecting deeper with God's created world. For some, this isn't viewed as work but as pleasure. For others it might mean reading a good book, getting wrapped up in the characters or storyline (or a non-fiction book with eyes being open to new discoveries). For some, this helps settle them as well as open their eyes to a larger world. A reminder that this world and our God is bigger than we can imagine and at times these books help remind us of that reality. For other it might mean going to a show or concert, enjoying live music or performances. Enjoying the arts and again God's beautiful created world. There are a number of different ways a Sabbath can look and what might be Sabbath to one person could look like work (or torture) to another. Yet, however it looks to you, remember it's important and it's needed. Cutting out these times or days in our life is very important, especially as we continue the long, and sometimes hard, journey of following Christ. For me, I try to carve out one day a week. I set up boundaries of not answering work texts, calls, or emails (unless in an emergency, of course). I put boundaries on even having my phone with me, knowing I need at least part of a day where I am truly disconnected in hopes to be more connected with God. Your carving out and boundaries of Sabbath time might look different, but it is important to have the time set aside on a regular basis. For God tells us, "6 days you shall labor and do all your work but the 7th day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God" (Deut 5:13-14).

Pastor Erin

Chicken BBQ – Thank You!

A big thank you to everyone who helped with our chicken bbq! We were able to raise \$1300! It was a wonderful day of fun and fellowship cooking the chickens and having the yard sale out front. We easily could have sold another 60 or more as we were turning people away the day of the sale. It was great to have the chickens cooked on-site and certainly brought many people wandering over hoping they could still purchase one. We look forward to holding this event again next year!

Eagle Scout Project – Thank You!



A very special thank you to Austin Van Der Meulen and his great work with organizing and completing his Eagle Scout Project for the church. We can't thank him enough. There are now 7 garden boxes outside the back of the church (where the old playground once was) that will be used as a community garden and to benefit the food pantry. The space is beautifully transformed and we couldn't be prouder that it was one of our own members who put in the work and care for the project. Currently there are 5 tomato plants in a box, but if you have anything extra to share, feel free to bring something down and plant it in one of the boxes!

Telling Our Story

We are putting a new welcome board up by the back door and we will get one in the new community center (gym/chapel area) once it is completed. We want people to feel welcome entering our church as well as know a little bit more about us and what we do. We'd love to be able to include some stories from our church members. It would be great if you would be willing to write up a little blurb about why you are a member of First Pres or what you love about our church (or anything along those lines) that would give those coming into our building a better idea of what makes us so great! Please consider sharing your story!

Hymnals

If you haven't noticed, some hymnals now have their labels placed in them marking in honor or memory of those who made a donation for the hymnals. There are more labels that can be made if you'd like to make a donation to the hymnal fund (please see Pastor Erin for more information). As a thank you to the kind woman who did such a beautiful job with creating the labels we'd love to collect a thank you donation for her time and talent. Suggested donation is \$2 but please feel free to give what you feel appropriate. Please see Pastor Erin or Helen Braidotti.

Bible Study

We are trying to determine when and where to start up Bible Study again, along with what book we might study. Please see the bulletin board for more information and to sign up if you are interested in participating.

Buildings and Grounds

Thank you to everyone who continues to help with improving the appearance of our grounds! Slowly but surely, our appearance is getting a bit better as we check things off our list for grounds work. If you find some extra time please feel free to stop by for an hour or so on your own time to help with any of the yard work listed below (updated to reflect what has been done already). Or plan with another member or two when a few of you might be able to get together to help.

Front of the building:

- Trim cherry trees and weed underneath
- Weed by church sign
- Cut any new growth coming out of the base of the dogwood tree

Back of the building:

- Weed the memorial garden
- Cut down any saplings in the memorial garden
- Replace pavers blocks
- Remove dead bushes and any branches that have fallen
- Trim cherry tree

Of course, if you see anything else that might have been overlooked, please feel free to either let Buildings and Grounds know or take on the project yourself. Thanks again for all of your help to get our yard looking great!

Looking Ahead

July 3 - Music and Worship meeting 1pm

July 19 – Evening Session Meeting

July 22 – Church work day 9am (tentative)

July 25 – Presbytery Meeting at Holmes 2pm

Pastor Erin will be away on vacation July 7th-July 14th. If there is a pastoral emergency during this time please contact a session member or the church office.

If you have an article or announcement you would like to have in the next newsletter, please have it into the church office by July 20th.

Pastor: Erin Moore

Moderator of Deacons: Okey Barrett (845) 651-4707

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