



Happy New Year!

19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

20 The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,
21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.

Isaiah 43:19-21

In Isaiah, our wondrous God declares that a new thing is about to spring forth, that God is going to do something new. There will be a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. God will give drink to the chosen people – the ones God formed. There is a lot of beautiful imagery here. God is making a way where there once was no way, God is giving water to a very dry and parched land. Wild animals – beasts, jackals and ostriches will honor God. Water will flow more freely and God's chosen ones will perhaps thirst no more. It was only a few chapters earlier that the Israelites were in exile with no hope – with fear that God had abandoned them forever. But now God is about to do a new thing, times are changing. Dry lands will be filled with water, there will be a way in the wilderness, and people will no longer thirst. And perhaps God is doing a new thing here as well. Many churches in the US (and throughout the world) have been experiencing droughts, they've gotten lost in the wilderness, their people have become thirsty and burnt out – perhaps a kind of modern day exile. No matter how much we want the church to grow, to be what it used to be, to have Sunday school children running the halls, youth groups flourishing, the sanctuary filled, sometimes God is waiting for us to get on board with God's new thing.

The truth of it is, sometimes God is waiting for us to catch up. We get so far behind with wanting the church to be what we think it should be, what we want it to be, what we hope it will be, that perhaps we don't even ask God what the church really should be – and should be doing. The Israelites wound up in exile because they chose idols over God. Perhaps our view of church has become an idol without us even realizing it – without us even meaning it to become one in the way we try to hold on so tight to old traditions. But behold, God is doing a new thing! Do you not perceive it? God is at work in the world and we need to join in on God's work. There are some churches that are earnestly praying for God's guidance. Some are trying new things – blessing bicycles, having bible studies and discussions at coffee shops or bars, family church dinners where they invite the community in for free, advent bazaars with crafts for the whole family, going out and praying in their neighborhoods. These churches have gone through some discernment and decided these are some things God is calling them to do. Might God be calling us to do?

For God is doing a new thing! And we are called to join in. In this new year, let us discern our call, let us perceive this new thing so that there might once again be a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Let us bring water to the thirsty so that all people might one day declare praise to our wondrous God.



Good News Gazette

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



Per Capita Update

Per Capita for the new year has gone up to \$39. We will have more information in the February newsletter and will be taking this up as our second offering in February, as well.

A Happy New Year from the Deacons

This past meeting was our last meeting of the year. It is hard to believe the year is almost over. We bid a fond farewell to outgoing Deacons Joan Van Der Meulen, Helen Braidotti, and Jerry Sutherland. We thank them for their service. We are looking forward to having Edna Babcock, James Peterson, and Joanne Brooks serve with us in the coming year. Welcome!

A college box was sent to and gratefully received by Austin Van Der Meulen. Thank you to all who contributed.

Reusable shopping bags were purchased to distribute to recipients at the December food pantry. Last month turkeys and hams were available for our 53 families and 17 seniors. Turkeys and hams will also be available for Christmas. We would like to give a big thank you to our volunteers including Key Club and student volunteers from Burke High School (and Mom!) They provide much needed help unloading the truck and stocking the shelves.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

TREASURER NEEDED

We are incredibly thankful for Alan Eckard's service as treasurer for the past few years. Especially, when he was so willing to step in when we had such few options in a time of need. Session will be forever grateful. With that said, we need a new treasurer ASAP as Alan will be stepping down come the new year. We are working on updating our system to use Quickbooks to make things a bit easier and hoping to divide some needed tasks up. If you are interested, please don't let Quickbooks or any computer skills scare you. Session is willing to work with whoever might be interested by dividing up some of these parts. We ask that you prayerfully consider if this is a way you can help serve your church and serve our Lord. Any other thoughts or suggestions are welcome.

UPDATED DIRECTORY

A new directory will be ready by 1/6. Printed copies will be available for pick up at the church. Mailing by special request only. Electronic copies will also be available upon request.

STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

Thank you for all who have pledged for 2019! We are thankful to all our members and friends who continue to support the mission and ministry of this church in our community and the world! If you haven't already handed in your pledge, please try to do so ASAP.

JANUARY 6TH

Mark your calendars now! Session has decided to hold a brief re-dedication service for the backroom/chapel area following worship on January 6th. This will mark around 135 years since the addition was made. It will also mark 165 years since the sanctuary was consecrated/dedication on January 4th 1854. We hope you are able to join us! Coffee hour will be held in the backroom as well.

ANY INTEREST?

Is there any interest from the congregation/community to start a monthly craft circle. This is something we have tried before but didn't always have a set day/time. However, there have been continued questions about a group like this starting again. Please see Pastor Erin if you are interested.

LOOKING AHEAD

**January 6 – Epiphany Sunday (also Communion Sunday);
Re-dedication of the chapel space**

**January 7 – 10am un-decorate the sanctuary, Music and
Worship to follow (no Bible Study)**

January 13 – Session Meeting following worship

January 14 – Bible Study 10am at 19 Main St.

January 21 – Bible Study 10am at 19 Main St.

Food Pantry Truck 3pm

January 22 – Women's Council Meeting 1pm

January 25 – Food Pantry Distribution 4-7pm

January 28—Bible Study 10am at 19 Main St.

**January 29 – Presbytery meeting at Stony Point Center at
9:30am**

If you have an article or announcement you would like to have in the next newsletter, please have it into the church office by January 22nd.

A date is still needed to de-brief our last RBD.

January Second Offering

Our second offering for January 20th will be for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to help aid hurricane and forest fire relief. More information about this offering will be in the bulletins leading up to the collection.

Church Office:

(845) 469-4877

E-mail:

info@chespresny.com

Website:

www.chespresny.com

Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/chespresny