



I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me. I will be present for you, declares the LORD, and I will end your captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have scattered you, and I will bring you home after your long exile, declares the LORD. – Jeremiah 29:11-14

A colleague, Rev. Lisa Johnson, shared this story with me the other day and I found it quite powerful. So I decided it best to share with all of you. I hope you find it as meaningful as I did.

On my desk sits a desktop labyrinth. It's one of the more intricate labyrinths, modeled on the 13th century labyrinth inlaid in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France. The spiritual purpose of a labyrinth – either a full-sized version that you can walk or a miniaturized version that you walk with your finger – is to meditate on your journey with and to and for God as you follow the path. It's a contemplative practice. It's a centering practice. And Lord knows we could all use some centering right now.

So as I was sitting and working on things today, I took some time to wander my way through my desktop labyrinth. It's certainly a path I've wandered plenty of times before, and yet what struck me as I made my way through it this time was the unpredictability of the path. Looking at it, you think you know which way to go. You think you know what's coming. You think you know where the path is going to lead. I mean, it only goes one way. It shouldn't be that hard to figure out, right? Wrong.

Every time I thought I knew where the wooden stylus was going to go, it went somewhere different. It looped. It stretched. It doubled back on itself. And suddenly I was in the middle. After spending a few moments thinking and praying, I made my way back out, thinking, "Well, at least I'll be able to anticipate the path better this time. I mean, I just did this. I know it now. I know what's coming and where it will twist and turn." Yeah ... nope. I still couldn't correctly anticipate the path.

I still didn't know where the path was taking me. I still guessed wrong at almost every turn. And suddenly I was out again. And it struck me just how accurate this was for the path we're on as a society right now ... because we don't know the path. We don't know what's around the next corner let alone what's waiting for us at the end or when or how that end will come. But we trust that as we follow this path, we are walking it with God. Day in and day out. Every minute. Every twist and turn. Every unexpected corner. God is making this journey with us, showering us in compassion and grace and hope even in the face of uncertainty and loneliness and a collective fear that many of us have never encountered before. And so we continue putting one foot in front of the other. And we trust. And we pray. And today, that is enough.



Good News Gazette

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



Wedding Update:

Due to the on-going issues of the pandemic, Pastor Erin and James Peterson will be holding a private wedding ceremony. While there is disappointment to not be able to celebrate as originally planned, we hope to be able to celebrate at a later date when it is safe to do so. Thank you for all your concerns, kind thoughts, and prayers throughout the past few months. All have been greatly appreciated.

Summer sermon series

We have kicked off our summer series of “Summer at the Movies: Finding God on Film” and we hope you’ve been enjoying getting to hear a bit of how we can find God just about anywhere and how some of these movies shine a light into some important theological themes and lessons. We also hope that you’ve been able to enjoy a few other voices as we have shared our pulpit a few times now. We will hear from a couple of more other voices as we virtually share our pulpit two more times before the end of the summer. Here’s what you have to look forward to:

August 2: “Field of Dreams” in connection to Luke 7 & 10 (Pastor Erin)

August 9: “Glory” in connection to Luke 10 and Job 31 (Pastor Erin)

August 16: “Moana” in connection to Exodus 3 (Rev Kate Woolf, Evangelical Church in America)

August 23: “Places in the Heart” in connection to Luke 14 (Rev. John Miller from Rye Presbyterian Church)

August 26: “Princess Bride” in connection to Exodus 19 (Pastor Erin)

As a reminder, our services are posted to our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/chespresny/ and our YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrLgI6VOe9lbmcfB4dRHGfA>

If you would prefer a print out copy of the bulletin and sermon, please call the church 845-469-4877 or email at:

info@chespresny.com

We also send out weekly email reminders, if you would like to be added to this list please email the church at info@chespresny.com (please note, if you have not been receiving these emails it is either because we do not have your email address, the one we have is outdated, or it was not recorded properly in our directory).

Session News

Session continues our time of discernment about when re-opening might take place, what it might look like, how it might be done as safely as possible. We know that there have been both questions and concerns and are taking this matter very serious. As always, our Clerk of Session (Session secretary, in a sense), Matt Van Der Meulen, is the one to go to if there are any questions about what has been discussed, decided, etc... as he can share not just Session discussion but, if requested, Session minutes. With this, we want to give you a friendly reminder that all Session meetings are open to the congregation. While you are welcome to join, share in discussion, and ask questions, it is only Session members who vote/make the decision in the end. We hope to begin working on a re-opening plan soon. However, there are still many factors at play and we all know how much can change in a month’s time (or even a week!). Please continue to keep Session and the church leaders in your prayers that they may truly be guided by the Holy Spirit during this very difficult time of serving during a pandemic (again, a friendly reminder that this is both something they didn’t sign up for nor have they ever lead in a time like this before).

Food Pantry Update

The Food Pantry continues to serve about 50 families, an increase from the fall/winter when it was about 30-40 families. They are continuing with the new procedure of packing boxes ahead of time and placing them directly in client cars. Thankfully, our volunteer base continues to expand little by little and we are getting more regular volunteers as well. This is making the process a little easier/smoothen, though we all long for the day to return to “normal.” The local farmers and a few local businesses (as well as many community members) continue to help with produce, donations, and drop-offs. It’s been said before, but never hurts to be repeated, we are truly blessed by the support of our community! Praise be to God!

Buildings and Grounds Update

Thank you for everyone who has come by to help water, weed, and keep up with the grounds! We know it’s been a hot one out there lately and all the help is greatly appreciated. A friendly remind that if you have some spare time, consider some church grounds clean-up. There are bushes along the front of the CE building that need to be trimmed, there are weeds along the front and side garden beds that need to be addressed (as well as by the church sign), and there’s always work needed for the memorial garden to be cleaned up. Any help is greatly appreciated!

Capital Campaign Update

Although the Capital Campaign committee hasn’t been able to meet yet to discuss and discern the second year of our multi-year campaign, we are overjoyed that we have already received \$700 towards year 2! We hope to begin meeting in September and determine a plan for year 2 as we know the world is not at all what it looked like when we first began the multi-year campaign over a year ago. Thank you again for your continued support. Below are a few pictures of the finished new steps, the new cement walkway (extended), and the updated food pantry steps. They all look great!



Second Offering

If you would like to give a second offering for August it will go towards the Capital Campaign. Thank you.

Ruling Elders:

Vicki Braidotti
Ron Brooks
Ruth Magyar
Jerry Sutherland
Matt Van Der Meulen
Clerk of Session
Gene Winters

Deacons:

Edna Babcock
Jean Barrett-
Helen Braidotti
Joanne Brooks
Vanessa Magyar
James Peterson—
Moderator & treasurer

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Website:

www.chespresny.com

Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/
chespresny](http://www.facebook.com/chespresny)

Crafters Corner

One of the fundraisers we still hope to be able to have in the fall is a craft fair. However, we will need everyone's help to be able to pull this off (as possibly the only fundraiser we may be able to have this year and the foreseeable future). You do not need to be "crafty" in order to help. For example:

We are looking for people to paint some cut tree stumps orange (we can provide the paint/materials needed and the stumps). And if you think you are capable, perhaps even paint a little face on it as well. If not, even just painting it orange will be incredibly helpful!

We are looking for people to paint some other cut wood so we can make ornaments. This can be just a white (or other colored background) or if you are comfortable painting a design.

We are looking both for wood pallets and some help painting the pallets.

If you are crafty and can knit, crochet, quilt, needlepoint, sew, etc... we'd encourage you to make what you make best or love to make! If needed, we can supply materials as well for this.

We are still collecting bottle caps (metal), wine corks (the real cork, not the plastic kind), pine cones, pillow cases in good condition, t-shirts in good condition, fabric, wood pallets, yarn, malt-o-meal cereal bags, and any flower pots or tea cups you are no longer using or have a need for.

If you have any ideas, we'd love to hear them! We hope you will consider helping in this effort in some way! We know that Florida Presbyterian Church raised over \$8000 last year for the craft fair. While we know this would be a stretch for us given our circumstances, we do hope to make this a successful fundraiser if we are able to host it in the fall!

Recycling

We have begun a new recycling program with TerraCycle. This program collects various items and finds ways to re-use, re-purpose, or completely recycle them in some way! On top of it, for each item we send in, we collect points and those points can be redeemed for a donation to a charitable organization (our church!).

Right now, we are currently collecting:

-Vitamin and supplement packaging, Personal care and foot care packaging, and throat and nasal care packaging (blister packs, tubes, bottles, caps, lids, cans, boxes)

- Infant formula and child nutrition packaging (tubs, bottles, caps, lids, cans, boxes)

-Any old cell phone cases or Popsocket brand products

NEW--- disposable razors and its packaging

NEW - empty writing instruments (pens, markers, etc...), glue sticks, water-color dispensers, paint sets, and flexible packaging.

We can also collect old cell phones, tablets, laptops, and inkjet cartridges (from HP and Cannon only, no toner cartridges). However, it is recommended that all personal information be cleaned from the devices before they are sent in. Please see Pastor Erin if you have any of these items as we need a certain amount before we can send it in for recycling.

Items can be dropped off in the marked bin next to the food pantry bin along the side of the church.

Reminder we are still collecting:

Pinecones, Corks, Pillowcases (in good condition), T-shirts (in good condition), Fabric, Pallets, Yarn, Malt-o-Meal cereal bags

If you have any flower pots or tea cups you are no longer using, we will gladly find use for them!

At this time, we do not have a collection site set up. If you have any of these items please let Pastor Erin or Betty Ann Reilly know. A time can be set for pick up or a drop off at the church.

Clothing Bin:

At this time, our clothing bin has been removed as the company was not able to keep up. It is uncertain if it will be back soon or if we will need to search for a new company/bin. Thank you for your patience.