



These are certainly some interesting times we are living in, times many never expected in our own lifetime. They were times that I, honestly, were not trained for in seminary. I'm not just talking about how to serve our people in a pandemic but all the ins and outs of recording worship and editing videos as well as applying for relief loans and fielding an average about 5 calls per week regarding the food pantry (with them ever increasing the days leading up to distribution).

I read an article the other week about how hard this is on clergy not only that this isn't what we were trained for, but this isn't how we feel our calling is supposed to be done. We are incarnation-al, in-flesh people. We worship an incarnational God, that is God became one of us, in the flesh, and walked among us. We worship a relational God, a God that took down all boundaries that separates us. And yet, now we are forced to determine how to do ministry via phone calls and emails, online worship and daily prayers. There's not a lot of in-flesh that can happen right now. Even the pantry is as minimal in-flesh as possible to help keep everyone safe. Our clients, some of which used to love gathering together as a sort of social event, now have to remain in their cars and come spread out over various times. This is a new world for all of us.

And so, perhaps during this time, we can think of ways to be incarnation-al even if we can't physically be in the flesh together or in the flesh serving. We can find ways to share the good news, live the good news even while we are spread out in our homes across the village, town, county, and beyond.

We can set aside a time every single day to sit down and pray. We can make sure to lift up specific prayers for our community and our world. Together (while apart) we can pray for all essential workers, all who are home working (and teaching kids) and all who are home not working. We can pray for all the lives this has disturbed and upset, especially the children, many who don't or can't fully understand it. We can pray for our government and leaders that they be guided by the God's righteousness and justice. We can pray for our world, parts of which are finally able to heal, and pray for continued healing and restoration. We can pray for God to be moving in and through this and working all of it together for good (even if we can't imagine it right now).

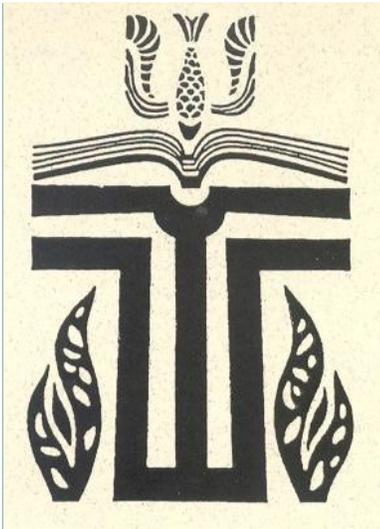
For those who are able, we can offer help to our neighbors: is someone afraid to go shopping and can't get a shop-from-home slot? We can offer to pick up groceries for them. Can someone not afford to cover their heating bill or other expense? Do we have a financial situation in which we are blessed enough to help? Are local businesses struggling? Could we spare a few dollars to buy a meal out and tip the delivery driver? Can we look to buy as local as possible – vegetables, meats, breads, eggs, or even things like home-made soaps, to help support our neighbors? Or could we begin to grow our own to share later on (even sharing the flowers in our yard to brighten someone's day)?

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Good News Gazette

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



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

Pastor Erin's email address is:
erinmoore@chespresny.com

Pastor Erin's cell phone: 862-432-7467, please limit use to 9-6pm Sun-Thurs unless there is an emergency.

Fundraising Plans – all on hold. Any other/new ideas please share with Pastor or Session.

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Maybe we can join with what some of our neighbors are already doing. There's a small restaurant/shop in Middletown. They have an option that you can buy breakfast or lunch for hospital employees at ORMC. The farmers down on the black dirt have options to donate fresh produce or even live plants (like tomato or pepper plants) to those in need in our community.

Maybe we could drive past a fellow church member's house just to honk our horns and wave, to make sure they know they are remembered and loved.

These are hard times where we are all figuring out how to be the Body of Christ, but together, even while apart, we remain this Body, called to spread and live good news. May we figure it out together in ways that truly shine the light of Christ into this dark world. Amen.

Crafters Corner

Crafters meetings are on hold for the time being, however, please feel free to continue to craft at home! Also, we are continuing to collect:

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 but cannot keep them in your home, please let Pastor Erin know.

Capital Campaign Update

As of the end of April we have \$17,765 raised towards the capital campaign! We also have approved quotes and work lined up for our Sacred Sites Grant. Unfortunately, at this time the work cannot be done. However, we are hopeful that within the next few months we will have new sanctuary steps and new steps leading into the food pantry. On top of this, much needed work will soon be done to around the chimney of the CE roof and some other weak areas. This will allow us to finish insulating the CE building. We will then determine best ways to insulate the sanctuary and community room. Thank you to everyone who continues to help with this campaign to make it a success! Our God has blessed us and continues to bless us with such amazing resources to serve the needs of our community. Let us continue to give thanks!

B&G Update:

Many have noticed that we had the old, dying maple tree partially cut down behind the CE building. This work was generously done at minimum cost with members doing the bulk of the clean up. We will also need to consider cutting down 4 trees alongside of the manse that continue to pose a safety issue. If anyone can recommend a tree service, we'd greatly appreciate the help.

Presbytery and Denominational News

Our Presbytery continues to be amazing with support for both our congregation and all the congregations throughout the presbytery. Once it was clear churches would need technological help, they hired a part-time technology person to help with questions, guide pastors and leaders with best programs and tips of the trade. The next step was to allow for a one-time grant of up to \$2000 to help churches with both technology and communication during this difficult time of social distancing. We applied for and were approved a grant of over \$1700 to both help us during this time and to make sure we can continue to digitally connect to those we are now reaching (and otherwise wouldn't have been able to) once we return to in-person worship. They now recently announced yet and third step in their support. They will be offering a grant for clergy coaching to help all the clergy in our presbytery navigate this difficult and changing times. It also wouldn't be surprising that they are brainstorming and working on other ways to continue to support our congregations.

On a more denominational level, we are incredibly thankful that the Board of Pensions for the PCUSA has offered small congregations a waiver of pension and benefit dues for up to 3 months. They understand this difficult circumstances facing many of our congregations and are able to do this to help smaller congregations without any change in benefits for pastors. We applied for a received a waiver, to this we give thanks and praise the Lord!

Also, on the denominational level, for the first time ever there will be a virtual General Assembly this year. It was just announced on April 21st and will be quite different and adapted from regular General Assemblies of our denomination in the past. As of now, it looks like there will be opening worship and the election of the new moderator/vice moderator of the Assembly on June 19th. There will be optional bible studies during the week and then the bulk of the business will be done in two days, June 26-27th. This will only be essential business and right now what is essential has yet to be determined. More news and information will be shared as this continues to unfold and be determined. Please keep those making such difficult decisions for our denomination as a whole in your prayers. This was not an easy decision to make nor will the decisions in the days and months ahead be easy to make.

Wedding Invitation

With so many things up in the air, we aren't sure what will be happening. But as of now (this could change by the time it reaches you), Pastor Erin and James Peterson are getting married June 13th. If you'd like to help them celebrate you can do so one of two ways: come to the ceremony in our sanctuary on June 13th at 3pm and/or join us for a cake reception after worship on a date to be announced at a later date giving the circumstances of so many unknowns right now.

May Second Offering

Our second offering for Sunday, May 31 will be our Pentecost Offering. Please see bulletin insert for more information. Even if we cannot celebrate Pentecost together, we will still have this special offering.

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

Church Office:

(845) 469-4877

E-mail:

info@chespresny.com

Website:

www.chespresny.com

Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/
chespresny

Thank You

We are so incredibly thankful for all who are able to continue to keep their pledges and tithes (we know this is not the case for everyone and we hold you in prayer). Since many were able to give we've been able to continue to worship (online and print-outs) and add a time of online daily prayer. With moving worship online, we've been able to reach more people both with worship and our daily prayer. We are able to continue to house our food pantry and keep it up and running (both by financial gifts but most importantly, right now, gifts of time). Perhaps we are most thankful that right now, we are able to continue to pay our employees and make sure they don't have to worry about their financial situation in these very uncertain times. God calls us to take care of one another, to love as Christ first loved us. With your continued financial gifts, as well as gifts of time and talent, we are able to continue to be the Body of Christ in and for this community. We cannot thank you enough for the ways you give, and not just financially. We've had members continue to help with the pantry (taking as many precautions as they're able to), we've had a member run an Ethernet line into the sanctuary so that once we are back to "normal" we can continue to share our services online. We've had members help with ShopRite gift cards, making phone calls to check in with other members, and members holding us all in prayer. We've had members call numerous tree service companies to try and get quotes for the safety of pastor and the manse, members call about roof repairs and lining up getting the work done. None of it has gone unnoticed (though I will give a disclaimer of apology if I forgot anything)! For all who give time, talent, and treasure, we thank you for helping to keep us going and spreading the good news! Thanks be to God!

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 (blister packs, tubes, bottles, caps, lids, cans, boxes)

- Cough, cold, flu, sore throat, and nasal care packaging (blister packs, tubes, bottles, spray bottles, caps, lids)

- Personal care and foot care packaging (tubes, bottles, caps, lids, plastic packaging)

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

- any old cell phone cases

- Popsocket brand products

- NEW--- disposable razors and its 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.