



We began our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. It looked a bit different than the start of these journeys in the past. Usually, our service includes a time of remembering and reflecting – that from dust we have come and to dust we shall return. We are then marked – on our foreheads, hands, or bulletin – with ashes. But, yet again, the pandemic has forced us to become creative. For those of you who weren't able to join us, we distributed ashes in communion cups, along with a few drops of oil (this helps them to stick better) and had everyone apply their own ashes in this time of remembering and reflecting.

And, well, if I'm honest, that was an image I never before thought of, and who knows if I ever would have not needing to be creative, that is ashes in communion cups. The two seem so very far from one another. Yet, somehow, there was beauty in it, too, and perhaps a way that helps point us to Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper as we enter the Lenten journey.

For in a few weeks, we will be gathering again, and again it will look different, far from our previous Maundy Thursday services with everyone gathered around one table for an intimate service. However, we will still gather to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Maybe not with those same communion cups, but communion nonetheless. We will reflect on Jesus' last meal with his disciples and some of the last words he imparted to them. While Ash Wednesday those communion cups held the symbol of our own deaths, the communion cups on Maundy Thursday will remind us of Christ's death.

So as we continue on our Lenten journey of journeying with Jesus to Jerusalem, let us reflect not just on the scriptures, on our prayer lives, on whatever we gave up for Lent or new practice we started for Lent, let us also focus on the symbols around us. Let us focus on the ones we've always, in a sense, taken for granted. With new eyes, in the midst of creativity in a pandemic, let us see how God is still working in this world. Let us see how the Holy Spirit is still moving among us, helping us, guiding us – communion cups filled with ashes and oil, the markers of death and mourning – these same cups that hold the blood that is shed for you, for me, for the whole world. New life is possible. These words from Gungor from their song, "Beautiful Things" certainly speak truth:

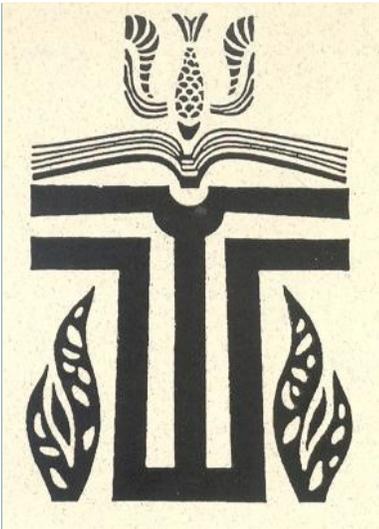
"You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us"

May these reflections sustain you not just the rest of this Lenten journey, but in all the ways new life is being found among the pandemic, the work of God, the love of Jesus, the healing of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Good News Gazette

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



Second Offering

Our second offering for Sunday, March 28th (Palm Sunday) will be One Great Hour of Sharing. There are coin banks available on the back table if you would like to fill a bank. Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Prayerful Discernment

Beloved community, as some of you know by now, we have slowed down our discernment process with the help and guidance of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. We will not be making a decision about moving to part-time leadership until sometime after Easter. In the meantime, we will be holding congregational conversations together. Session is still in the process of planning these out and more information will come in the bulletin/email announcements. We do hope to engage with as much of the congregation as possible, which means some meetings may be Sundays following worship and others might be weekdays or weekday evenings. Each meeting will have a guiding theme so that we do not become overwhelmed by multiple layers of conversation and decisions. Certainly, there may be overlap in many conversations, however, it has been suggested that we focus as much as possible to the one (or two) questions/points/themes for that specific meeting so everyone has a chance to share, listen, and discern. For example, one of our conversations might be regarding biggest hopes/fears for our church, another might be the role of pastor, and another focusing just on financial aspects, etc...

We do hope you join us for some, if not all, of these conversations as this is an important time in our congregation. Thank you.

Help Needed

We need some filing/organization help for the church office. We have cleaned out a few file cabinets and now need some help organizing to get recent documents filed to get the office cleaned up a bit. Please see Pastor Erin if you are able to help with this task.

Recycling, currently collecting: NEWLY UPDATED

- Vitamin and supplement packaging, Personal care and foot care packaging, and throat and nasal care packaging (blister packs, tubes, bottles, caps, lids, cans, boxes) and Infant formula and child nutrition packaging (tubs, bottles, caps, lids, cans, boxes)
- Any old cell phone cases or Popsocket brand products
 - disposable razors and its packaging
- empty writing instruments, glue sticks, watercolor dispensers, paint sets, and flexible packaging.
- empty toothpaste tubes, mouthwash, old (clean) toothbrushes, empty floss containers, soap packaging, empty deodorant containers

Crafters Corner

We are collecting some supplies:

Pallets
Light bulbs
Flower pots
Old picture frames
Old flatware
Tea cups
Old spools of thread
Rulers or yardsticks
Fabric
wood cuts – small and medium (for ornaments, coasters, pumpkins, etc...)
Wood scraps (nothing too small, please)
Tin cans
Old candles
Neck ties
slate
old jeans
wine glasses, other glasses (needs to have smooth sides, no etching or design)
old wood cutting boards
Old bicycles/bicycle parts

Looking Ahead

March 1 – Bible Study 10am
March 6 – Virtual Cooking class 4pm
March 7 – Deacons meeting following worship
March 8 – Bible Study 10am
March 10 – Crafters meeting at 2pm
March 14 – Session meeting following worship
March 15 – Bible Study 10am
March 16 – Virtual cooking class 5:30pm
March 18 – Book Study 7pm
March 22 - Bible Study 10am at 19 Main St.
Food Pantry Truck 3pm
March 24 – Crafters meeting at 7pm
March 25 – Food Pantry Distribution 4-7pm
March 28 – Palm Sunday – Second Offering
April 1 – Maundy Thursday service 7pm
April 4 – Easter Service – possible SonRise at 7am; traditional 10am

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 18th.

Bottles and Cans

Bring your bottles and cans for us to redeem and help support our mission and ministry! They can be dropped off at any-time by the side entrance to the sanctuary or by the barn door.

Ruling Elders:

Vicki Braidotti
Ron Brooks
Jerry Sutherland
Gene Winters
Janet Writer
(Matt Van Der Meulen
Clerk of Session
non-voting member)

Deacons:

Edna Babcock
Jean Barrett-
Helen Braidotti
Joanne Brooks
Catherine DeAngelis
James Peterson—
Moderator & treasurer

Church Office:

(845) 469-4877

E-mail:

info@chespresny.com

Website:

www.chespresny.com

Facebook page:

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

Fundraising Plans

We kicked off our small business raffle and while we haven't yet finished selling tickets, so far we look to have made a profit of around \$1000. We will share the official number once we have it finalized but we'd like to thank everyone for their efforts! We will most likely run another raffle in the coming months rotating in gift cards from other local businesses. Share your thoughts about which ones and we'll consider how we can support them in the next raffle!

We will be holding a soup only take-out on March 27th. The soups include: chicken and vegetable, chili, and vegetarian butternut squash. Areas of help:

- Making sure we have pint-size take out containers
- Help selling ahead of time – please consider helping with the call lists
- Help advertising
- Purchasing of food to make the soups/chili
- Help a few days ahead to make soup
- Someone to secure starter monies
- Help on day of sale

There will be a sign-up sheet on the back table of the sanctuary. Or you can call (469-4877) or email Pastor Erin (erinmoore@chespresny.com) to sign up.

We are planning another Ziti Take-Out Dinner in April for either the 17th or 24th. We will need to be selling tickets for this beginning mid-March at the latest. This means, we might be calling to ask people if they want both soup (in March) and Ziti (in April).

Future hoped for events:

May – possible a “Tea-to-Go” (tea lunch/picnic); hold the date of May 29th for possible Kiwanis Road Race (to make breakfast).

June – Chicken BBQ tied to village-wide yard sale, possibly a Spring Bazaar

A Fall Craft Fair and possible chicken BBQ, November dinner, and small Christmas Bazaar

We'd love to hear other ideas/suggestions! Please share your thoughts! You can pass them along to Pastor Erin, a Session member, or leave a note in the collection plate.

Shop with Scrip

We have an opportunity for an easy fundraiser if we have one or two people willing to be “point person.” Shop with Scrip is a similar program to our ShopRite Gift Card program, only it opens up the possibilities of over 100s of stores. Each store donates a certain percentage of each gift card sold through our organization back to our organization. For example, Amazon gives 2.25% back whereas CVS gives 6% back. Gift cards can be ordered online and emailed directly to you or ordered through a point person through the church and mailed out. This is minimal work, even for the point person or two, and could be a very easy fundraiser for our church if one or two people are able to help. Please see Pastor Erin if you are willing to be the point person.