



Dear Siblings in Christ, it is good to be back with you. I must say, I'm still processing a bit of my time during Sabbatical and will only briefly speak to it here, but I would love to hear your experience as well. It will be good for us to process the time away together.

My Sabbatical started off with playing catch up on a few things and went to service at the Florida Presbyterian Church before heading up to Linwood Spiritual Center in Rhinebeck, NY. A truly beautiful Catholic retreat center right on the Hudson River. While I quickly found out my room on the third floor was no air conditioned in 100 degree heat the day I got there, I was thankful for the thunderstorm that came through that night and cooled everything off for the next few days I was there. I spent my time reading, walking the grounds, including a walk that was supposed to take me down by the Hudson but didn't pan out, and a walk to a waterfall that I'm still thankful I didn't come back with poison ivy after navigating a tricky area. I brought my road bike with me and a very lovely staff member helped guide me to some safe roads to ride on locally. Due to COVID precautions they didn't have many people staying and programming was minimal. I found out by email at 6pm that I missed a small chapel service happening at 5pm when the email was sent out at 4:30pm that day! My guess is with COVID so many things are still up in the air at times. Overall, it was a lovely experience. I left the retreat center and drove down to the Walkway Over the Hudson and rode my bike from Highland, NY to Hopewell Junction, NY and back (then treated myself to ice cream for lunch). I returned home briefly, much to the cats' joy and disappointment, before James and I headed out a day later to Western PA for the wedding of the friend who officiated our wedding. It was good to be able to celebrate, see friends I hadn't see in years, and make some new ones. On 5 and a half hour drive home we stopped just outside of Scranton to stay over with my best friend who I've known since we were 5 years old, who we don't get to see often enough.

We were home for a few days to regroup, and make the cats happy, before we had another brief overnight stay in NJ exploring local breweries, eateries, and Kittatinny State Park. That Sunday I went to the Goshen Presbyterian Church to worship and we had an enjoyable 4th of July with family. The following week, my two nieces were spending the whole week at my parent's house. I was able to meet them down there, at local parks, and they came up here for some time together. We ended the week with fireworks and for the first time James and I worshiped together that Sunday going to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. That sentence might sound a little funny to you as, yes, James and I worship together in our sanctuary. However, this was the first (non-funeral/wedding) service where we were both just there to worship, not help lead.

On Monday, July 12th I left for a 5-day road trip. I started in PA to see a college friend who just had a baby and hoped to be able to see my brothers. Unfortunately, we were able to make it work. I then traveled down to Southern Maryland to visit a good friend from high school. The last time we saw each other in person was the day she found out she was pregnant with her son, he is now 4 years old. We had a wonderful time catching up and exploring parts of Southern Maryland. From there I went to Virginia, just west of DC, to stay with my cousin. That part of the trip was deeply meaningful to me. I was able to visit my aunt and uncle who I haven't seen since 2016. They are in their mid-80s and can no longer travel very well. It was too brief of a visit, but thankful for even the short time together.

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Good News Gazette

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



Pastoral Visits

Pastor is offering in-person/in-home visits once again now that it is a bit safer to do so. Pastor Erin is fully vaccinated and happy to meet with anyone in-person. She requests that for an indoor meeting, that you be fully vaccinated, too. Otherwise, she is fine to find a day when it is nice enough to meet safely outside for a pastoral visit. If you would like in-home communion, this can also be arranged. Contact the church office 845-469-4877 for more information regarding a visit.

Continued...

I returned home Friday around lunch time for a quick turn around to pack up for camping and left the house by 3pm. James and I had a lovely camping trip with friends, even in monsoonal rain. Some of you saw us return earlier than expected that Sunday as we needed to dry out a bit.

The last week of Sabbatical was spent calming the cats down (after I'd been away for so long), catching up on a few things, some nice long bike rides, and a few day trips. James and I enjoyed one final camping trip the last weekend to Schodack Island State Park, which is along a bird conservation area. It was a beautiful weekend with almost perfect weather.

In the brief reflection of my time away, I'm so incredibly thankful to have time for rest. Resting in God's good creation, resting in spending time with those who know and love me best (even if we don't get to see each other often enough), resting in spiritual practices of bike riding, reading, and gardening, resting in worshiping (participating online when not able to go anywhere in-person), resting in the goodness of God. I'm sure I'll have more profound things to say as I continue to reflect and process the time of Sabbatical but for now it's just the brief summary, my gratefulness, and my prayer that this time has been beneficial for our congregation and community as a whole. As I said my last Sunday before our time of Sabbatical began, may God use these 40 days to strengthen us for future ministry like God provided for Elijah, for the disciples, to provide teachings, insights, healing, grace, and love.

Some of the Books Pastor Erin read during Sabbatical:

Original Blessing – Danielle Shroyer
Burnout – Amelia Nagoski and Emily Nagoski
Janet Evanovich – Stephanie Plum Series
Holy Envy – Barbara Brown Taylor
Shameless – Nadia Boltz-Weber

Places of Worship:

Florida Presbyterian Church
Goshen Presbyterian Church
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Oak Hill Presbyterian Church
New Hope Methodist Church
Faith Lutheran Church

Crafters Corner

Crafters will be starting back up again with meeting regularly. We will meet Wednesdays at 3pm in the community room. A number of projects are in the works and even if you are not "crafty" there is also something you can do! If you are unable to meet with us Wednesdays at 3pm but would still like to help, please let Pastor Erin or Betty Ann Reilly know. There are plenty of things that can be done at home or on your own time.

Capital Campaign Update

We have officially brought the second year of our Capital Campaign to an end. Many, many thanks to everyone who helped to make it a success! While we weren't able to attain our goal of \$20,000, we are so incredibly thankful to have raised just shy of \$15,000! On top of this, we were also able to receive a \$25,000 grant from the Presbytery to help with a new roof for the Community Room as well as a \$5,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help us updating the old 1960s boiler/heating system for the CE building. To date (including grants), we have raised \$66,406 to help us make needed updates and improvements to our buildings. With those funds we have been able to replace the sanctuary steps, resurface the Food Pantry steps as well as extend the sidewalk (and add a cement slab for the pantry box), update insulation in the CE building, replace the carpeting in the Manse with luxury vinyl plank flooring (and a few other minor updates to the Manse). We have plans to put a new roof on the Community Room (just awaiting scheduling conflicts with a contractor), fixing the Manse porch (awaiting lumber prices to drop a little more) and replacing a few broken windows, planning out an updated heating system for the CE building, and replacing our church sign. Thank you again to all who have helped in giving of time, talent, and treasure we couldn't have done this without all of you! God is good!

Book Study

Our book study group is working on finishing our second book (Consider the Birds by Debbie Blue) at our next meeting. At that meeting, we will also determine our next book as well as future meeting dates. If you aren't already involved but would like to join please see Pastor Erin. We are a small group of about 4-5 individuals who meet every other week at 7pm in the church library for about an hour (usually a Tuesday or Wednesday evening). Future books we are considering:

Learning to Walk in the Dark – Barbara Brown Taylor

Half Truths – Adam Hamilton

Everything Happens for a Reason: and other lies I've loved – Kate Bowler

If the Church Were Christian – Philip Gulley

Love Wins – Rob Bell

Original Blessing: Putting Sin in its rightful place – Danielle Shroyer

As well as other suggestions from the group.

Coffee Hour

Session has approved coffee hour once again following worship. It will be held in the Community Room. Please see the sign up sheet on the back table of the Sanctuary. Please note, if you sign up for coffee hour, you are responsible for making the coffee, if you are unsure how to make it, please ask for assistance. Cups, spoons, sugar, coffee, plates, etc... can all be provided. We ask if you use a re-usable cup that you take it home and wash it. Otherwise, please use a disposable cup.

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

Deacons:

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

Church Office:

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Website:

www.chespresny.com

Facebook page:

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



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

-Any old cell phone cases or Popsocet 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

There is a bin in the back of the sanctuary for any of these items

Presbytery News:

Save the Date!

PresbyBuild's 14th Annual Talent Show
on the lawn at First Presbyterian Church in Goshen

Sunday, Sept. 26 at 3 p.m.

We are looking for talent from our Presbyterian churches!

You may also want to note that Habitat Newburgh's Annual **Walk for Housing** is scheduled for **September 12, 2021.** and

Our 10th Presbybuild house with Habitat Newburgh at 187 N. Miller St. will likely be dedicated this fall as well!

\$3,400, or some portion thereof, is waiting for some grassroots group in our Presbytery to let us know about their work to organize for the purpose of meeting a felt-need for themselves. In past years such groups as the following have successfully applied for a **Presbytery Self Development of People grant**: bicycles for work related travel; support for publicizing needs related to COVID 19 sufferings; youth empowerment through youth group collaboration; organizing domestic workers for rights, dignity and justice, etc. etc. Get in touch with your community and then let our Presbytery SDOP Committee know about possible recipients. This year we have \$3,400 from our share of **One Great Hour of Sharing funds** – let's use it to bolster the work of neighbors in need. Contact Chairpersons: Rev. Gail Burger: gailburger@gmail.com and Rev. J. Edward Lewis: jobiezulu@gmail.com

The nominating committee is beginning the process of nomination for Hudson River Presbytery committees for terms that will begin in January of 2022. As our congregations transition from Covid shutdowns, all of our leaders are here to resource and support them. If you would like to be a part of the exciting things that God has in store for us, or know someone who would, let us know! Please find the nominations form on the presbytery website here: <https://www.hudrivpres.org/nominating-form?rq=nominating> In addition to most committees, nominations are now open for Moderator-elect for Hudson River. According to our traditional rotation, we will be looking for a female Teaching Elder.

Community News

The Chester Music Series is in full swing. The free concerts are on Tuesday evenings at 7pm behind village hall.

The Historical Society is accepting yard sale donations every Saturday from 10am to 12pm at the Erie Station. The yard sale is scheduled for Saturday, September 18th. They also have a date of October 1st for their Penny Social, save the date (calling starts at 7pm).

Looking Ahead

August 1 – Communion Sunday

**August 2 – Bible Study 10am church library;
Fundraising Planning meeting 7pm church library**

August 3 – Tentative Book Study 7pm

**August 4 – Crafters 3pm Community Room;
Tentative B&G meeting 7pm church library**

August 8 – 10am Worship, Session meeting following worship

August 9 – Bible Study 10am church library

**August 11 – Crafters 3pm Community Room;
Tentative Book Study 7pm church library**

August 15 – 10am Worship

August 16 – No Bible Study

August 18 – No Crafters meeting

August 22 – Tentative Tour de Goshen with 10am worship

August 23 – Bible Study 10am church library

August 25 – Crafters 3pm Community Room

August 29 – 10am worship

Pastor Erin will be away from August 12-20th. If there is a pastoral emergency, please contact one of the elders.

September we will be celebrating the Season of Creation. Contact Pastor Erin if you would like to be involved in any of the planning for the worship services.

If you have any announcements they need to be in by August 24th to be included in the September newsletter.

Areas of help needed

Moving forward we will need some help covering some specific areas:

1. We need one or two individuals who would be willing to help with publicity. This would involve contacting the Chronicle and THR from time to time as well as if able, making up fliers. Ideally, even just someone to contact the local papers would be a huge plus for our congregation and doesn't require a large time commitment.
2. We need one or two individuals who would be willing to chair the few committees that we have—Buildings and Grounds, Outreach/Fundraising, Crafters. A chair person would be responsible for planning meetings, communicating any changes to fellow committee members, and checking in with committee members to make sure agreed upon tasks are being completed.
3. We need a few people who would be willing to help with organizing. We need to organize the church office (filing paper work, cleaning out old file cabinets, etc...) as well as help organizing the old nursery for storage purposes.

Second Offering

There is no second offering for the month of August.

Recycling update

To date, we've received \$50 towards our recycling efforts! This program is a no cost program to our church as we partner with Terracycle. All items we send in are weighed and we get a certain amount of points per weight. When we have earned enough points we can request a check for at least \$25. The first check we were able to request was for \$50! Thank you to all who help support our efforts on caring for creation and helping give back a little to the church. Please see our recycling list for items we are currently collecting.