



APRIL

*We are a welcoming community formed in Christ, committed to sharing his love with others – with feet that carry us out into the world, with hands that serve, and with hearts in fellowship and faith.*

Dear Friends:

As some of you know, one of my favorite poets is the late Ann Weems, who during her life was called by some the poet laureate of the Presbyterian Church. In her collection of poems entitled *Kneeling in Jerusalem* is this thought-provoking gem entitled *Holy Week*:

### **Holy Week**

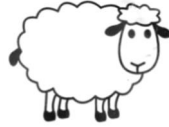
Holy is the week ò .  
Holy, consecrated, belonging to God ò .  
We move from hosannas to horror  
    with the predictable ease  
        of those who know not what they do.  
Our hosannas sung, our palms waved,  
let us go with passion into this week.  
It is a time to curse fig trees that do not yield fruit.  
It is a time to cleanse our temples of any blasphemy.  
It is a time greet Jesus as the Lord, Anointed One,  
    to lavishly break our alabaster  
    and pour perfume out for him  
        without counting the cost.  
It is a time for preparation ò .  
The time to give thanks and break bread is upon us.  
The time to give thanks and drink of the cup is imminent.  
Eat, drink, remember:  
On this night of nights, each one must ask,  
    as we dip our bread in the wine,  
        is it I?+

And on that darkest of days, each of us must stand  
    beneath the tree  
and watch the dying  
    if we are to be there  
when the stone is rolled away.  
The only road to Easter morning  
    is through the unrelenting shadows of that Friday.  
Only then will the alleluias be sung;  
    only then will the dancing begin.

Come and join us on the journey to Easter:

**Maundy Thursday Worship/Communion at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 6, in the Chapel**  
**Good Friday Worship at 1:00 p.m. Friday, April 7, in the Chapel**  
**Resurrection Day Worship at 10:00 a.m. Sunday, April 9, in the Sanctuary**

Your Easter alleluias and dancing will be more joyous for having walked through the unrelenting shadows! See you in worship! Grace and peace, Bruce



The life of a sheep is one of total dependence on the shepherd.  
Sheep are gentle creatures who feel pain, fear and loneliness.  
A good shepherd stands in the way of predators who threaten to harm the sheep. They come to know the voice of the shepherd and will only feel safe when that voice is heard.

We might say that the shepherd offers 'grace' to the sheep.  
They lay their anxieties to rest by putting their trust in his voice.

We are not so different from the sheep who graze on God's amazing landscape. We know the voice of our Shepherd and when we come to trust that voice we too can lay down our anxieties and graze at God's bountiful table.

We show our gratitude and grace to our Good Shepherd by praising His name, and living by His Word. We support our church and community of believers so His Word will live on for generations. Through **Endowment** giving we help insure a prosperous now and a more secure future.

Engraved Leaves and Stones for our Tree of Life, Green Umbrella  
Note cards and cash gifts are just a few of the ways to give through Endowment. Pick up a brochure on tables in the hallway.  
Call Laura Magrath (201) 214-3499 or Joanne Bonwick (201) 652-7520

We wish you "Amazing Grazing"

## MISSION



On Sunday, March 5, the McDevitt family delivered dinner to the men at St. Paul's shelter, provided by volunteers from First Pres. On the menu that evening was baked chicken made by Dana Feeney, meatballs made by Fay Reid, macaroni and cheese made by Suzy McDevitt, broccoli and cauliflower casserole made by Janis Ax, and fruit and rolls provided by MaryEllen Castaldo.

A big thank you goes out to these ladies for their generosity and talent in providing these dishes, and for helping to keep the mission going.

If you are interested in helping out with First Pres's mission at St. Paul's or just have questions, please contact Suzy McDevitt by email at [suzyjmc2@yahoo.com](mailto:suzyjmc2@yahoo.com) or by text at 201-315-2063. Currently being scheduled are the months of May (1 entree still needed as of 3/8), June and July.

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### REMINDER - ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING FUNDRAISER

Wednesday, April 5th (rain or shine)

5 PM to 7 PM - Food truck will be in front church lot

\$20.00 for Fish (or chicken) French fries and coleslaw

Portions are large enough to share!

To order- email [joandavies916@gmail.com](mailto:joandavies916@gmail.com)

Or call Dana at the church office at 201-652-2504

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ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

Jessica Strader Paz did a Minute for Mission. For over 70 years, **One Great Hour of Sharing** has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world assisting in disasters, hunger, and oppression. Please pray and reflect on how much you can give this Lenten season.





We heard of God's wondrous blessings and the faith journeys of Sophie Stone, Jerome Lane, Suzy McDevitt and Richard Davies. Thank you to Trinity Presbyterian Church, the Deacon's, Worship and Arts, Christian Education, and Growth Committees for the tasty and abundant food! And thanks to Ed and Carol Schmeidecke for leading the hymns, Steven Eliya for playing the piano, Shane Strickland, Frankie and Luke Feltmann for lay reading and all who attended to make this a time of meaningful fellowship!





We witnessed God's love in action as Sherif, a young man from Ghana, was able to attend a Lenten supper, while recovering from lifesaving heart surgery. The surgery was made possible due to the generosity of Fort Lee and Paramus Sunrise Rotary's Gift of Life program and Trinity Presbyterian Church!

## Sunday School Notes



Sunday school lessons in March:

First sin, Abram's call, Jesus heals a blind man, Jesus's friend Lazarus.

Our church school students have worked on Lenten activities including writing prayer cards to First Pres. church members!

**Thank you to all the youth who served as Liturgists through our Lenten season**

Cole Bellorgey

Frankie Feltmann

Luke Eliya

Luke Feltmann

Maddy Eliya

Shane Strickland

Hudson Feeney

CJ & Dante Torielli



**Sunday, April 16th** An invitation to Sunday school families with young children to meet downstairs in the Minnema Room. We will have activities for the children. Parents can relax on the sofas and chairs and enjoy refreshments, fellowship and adult conversation!



Easter Egg Hunt

**Easter Sunday, April, 9th**

Children are invited to our annual **Easter Egg Hunt!**

After our 10:00 am worship service children ages 2-7yrs old and their families will meet in the auditorium, and will receive an Easter bag. Then we will walk to the "church manse" where children will hunt for eggs!

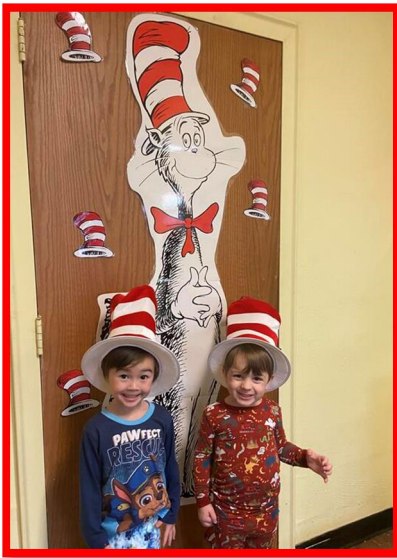


**Youth age 8yrs & older will receive an Easter "treat bag"**

**(Please RSVP with # of children attending & their age!)**

**MaryEllen Castaldo (862-686-8956) call or text!**





**March was a busy month in the Nursery School!**

**The children and teachers enjoyed a school wide theme of Read Across America. The students enjoyed special stories, creative crafts, and wearing silly clothes, teachers included!**

**Students have just completed our Arctic Adventure and Friday Fitness Enrichment Classes.**

**Arctic Adventure took the children on a fun winter wonderland learning journey! The students learned from a variety of texts about polar animals, including polar bears, penguins, seals, and more. They built igloos, experimented with ice and snow, and even went on an "Arctic Safari Cruise." They enjoyed stories, songs, science, and art activities that helped them learn about life at the North and South poles!**



**Friday Fitness was designed for children to have fun while being active! Students were provided the opportunity to develop large muscle control using a variety of equipment. Fun-filled fitness activities included the parachute, scooters, basketballs, hula hoops, beanbags, hockey, and an obstacle course.**

**Registration for the 2023-2024 school year is underway! We offer programs for children 2 ½ years – 5 years, 5 days/week. If you are looking for a quality, nurturing preschool for your 2 ½ - 5-year-old child, or know of**

**someone who is, please mark your calendars to attend our Open House on Friday, April 14th, 9:30 – 11 am, or call us to arrange a tour of our school. Church members receive a tuition discount. We offer a fun, nurturing environment, while preparing our children for kindergarten. We look forward to hearing from you!**





Bingo was back on 3/19! Thanks to the Growth Committee- Sandy Santangelo, Kate Yates and Linda Strickland! They are always looking for new members to join this fun committee!







MaryEllen Castaldo, Dana Feeney, Greta Croucher, Rick Friedl and Anita Hutton shared in 200 seconds what First Pres means to them!



Evan Nicholas Perrapato, son of Allison and Matthew Perrapato received the sacrament of baptism on 3/12/2023!



Evan was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

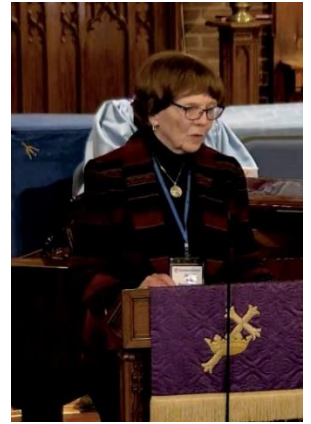


Suzy McDevitt thanked volunteers that cook for St. Paul's with COOKIES!

## Thanks to First Pres!



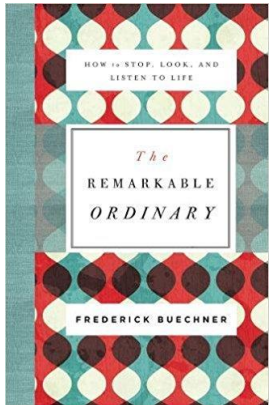
On Boy Scout Sunday, Dave Clark thanked First Pres for their longtime sponsorship of Troop 5!



Janet Daly thanked the church for sponsoring Connections, a group started by wives of the Hobbyists!



## The Remarkable Ordinary: How to Stop, Look, and Listen to Life A Four-Week Book Discussion Group ~ Led by Signe Myhren



The late Frederick Buechner was an ordained Presbyterian minister who found his calling as a writer. Signe Myhren began reading his books decades ago, and even corresponded with him. She invites you to join her for a four-week study of *The Remarkable Ordinary*, a book based on a series of mostly unpublished lectures.

In this book, Buechner reveals how to stop, look and listen to your life. He reflects on how both art and faith teach us how to pay attention to the remarkableness right in front of us, to watch for the greatness in the ordinary, and to use our imaginations to see the greatness in others and love them well.

Join us for discussion in the Minnema Room

Wednesdays, May 3, 10, 17, & 24

Noon-1:00 PM

Copies of the book are available on Amazon. Prices range from \$9.21 (used) to \$16.99 (new). Order your book today, start reading, and join the discussion on May 3! Friends are welcome!





Happy April birthdays to~

<b>Emmy Eliya</b>	<b>Gianna Torielli</b>	<b>John Eliya</b>
<b>Robin Byrne</b>	<b>Hudson Feeney</b>	<b>John Hutton</b>
<b>Samantha McDevitt</b>	<b>John Plucinski</b>	<b>Lily Cohen</b>
<b>Roger Yaden</b>	<b>Richard Davies</b>	<b>Collin Feeney</b>
<b>Vera Coleman</b>	<b>Stephanie Strickland</b>	<b>Ivan Mashliakovich</b>

Please let Joan Davies know if you are missing from our birthday lists  
joandavies916@gmail.com

### Church Staff~

Pastor	Rev. Bruce Ballantine
Director of Children & Families	MaryEllen Castaldo
Director of Music	Dr. Edward Schmiedecke
Organist	Linda Sweetman Waters
Director of Youth Music and Handbells	Carol Schmiedecke
Administrative Manager	Dana Feeney
Bookkeeper	Lavonne Mcmillen
Tom Carozza	Sexton
Custodian	George Wood
Director Nursery School	Julia Bolt
Newsletter Editor	Joan Davies (Volunteer)

**Church Phone** (201) 652-2504

**Pastor Bruce:** (215) 337-5623 please contact him directly for Pastoral Care

[www.firstpresridgewood.org](http://www.firstpresridgewood.org)

