



*March*

*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,

Four years ago during Lent, we created a midweek worship service combined with a simple meal. During its early years, the **Lenten Supper Series** met a need by providing food for body and soul. While this year we're not gathering in-person to share a meal, we will gather online to experience a brief worship service and listen as members and friends share a portion of their faith journey or faith story. All are encouraged to make this series a part of your Lenten practice!

Also, prayer is a spiritual practice which traditionally is emphasized during Lent. Therefore, I encourage you to read the **Lenten Prayer Stations** article, also in this issue of First Press, and plan to take part in this unique opportunity to enrich your prayer life during this Lenten season!

Grace and peace,

Bruce



## ***2022 Lenten Suppers Minus the Calories Series*** ***Journeys of Faith***

Join us at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays on Zoom as First Pres members and friends share a portion of their faith journey. Zoom will open at 6:45 for those who would like to sign on early and visit with friends. The evening will conclude at 7:30. A Zoom link will be emailed each week on Monday.

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Speaker</u></b>
3/09	Carol Eliya - Missionary, Youth With A Mission
3/16	Linda Sweetman Waters - First Presbyterian Church Organist
3/23	Signe Myhren - Friend of First Pres, Former Alto Section Leader
3/30	Scott Millard - CEO, Paterson Habitat for Humanity
4/06	Andy Castaldi - Elder and Treasurer, First Presbyterian Church

*Come and receive food for your soul. And one more thing: Invite a friend to join us!*

## First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood, New Jersey



### ~ Experience Lent in a New and Deeper Way ~

Entering the wilderness with Jesus through  
engaging and prayerful Lenten prayer station activities

**The Worship and Arts Committee invites you to set aside some time to come to the church during the first week of Lent and spend time experiencing the different Lenten prayer stations in silent guided prayer.**

Lent is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on one's spiritual and faith journey. Our Lenten season lasts 40 days...the number of days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, where he fasted, prayed, and was tempted before he started his public ministry. God was present with Jesus the whole time. He wasn't alone, and he was never abandoned. God is present with us too during this holy season, as we wander our own wilderness.

As we begin our journey, consider this:

- How do you want to grow spiritually during these next weeks of Lent?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- What would you like to see different about yourself when Easter arrives?
- How can you choose to grow closer in your relationship with God over the next 40 days?

To help you experience your journey in a deeper and hopefully, more meaningful way, we will have different prayer stations set up during the first week of Lent. We hope that it will be not only experiential, but prayerful. We hope that it will inspire you to a closer relationship to God as you pray, contemplate, and are moved to action during this holy season.

### **What are the Lenten prayer stations?**

There are eight interactive stations set up in the auditorium of the church that we hope will facilitate a unique prayer experience for you. Perhaps you will have an experience that is meaningful for you not only at the time, but that you can carry with you throughout Lent and beyond. Each station has a theme and takes you through a guided activity with instructions and all the materials needed that will help you pray creatively. One of the stations will be "Come to the Table" and you will be invited to join Pastor Bruce in the Chapel for a time of prayer and communion.

**When?** Thursday, March 3 evening 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Friday, March 4 daytime 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
You can come one or both days and stay as long as you like.

Yours in Christ,

Bruce

Worship and Arts Committee  
Joanne Bonwick (Co-chair)  
Diane Eliya (Co-Chair)  
Sue Dickinson  
Kali-Roi Eklof

Donna Flagg  
Susi Hudson  
Ed Schmiedecke  
Marcia Unger



You are invited to take some personal time to reflect on your spiritual and faith journey as we prepare our hearts and minds for Easter.

~ Lenten Prayer Station activities will be set up in the auditorium ~



**Fountain of Grace** - Our burdens weigh us down and separate us from our loving God who invites us to lay them down. Place a small rock in the water to let go your burden. Feel the peace of God as you lay down your burden to Him.



**Light a Candle of Concern, for Yourself or for Someone You Love** - Throughout the world, lighting candles is a sacred ritual. Candles have always been a symbol of the Christian life - a light in the midst of the world's darkness. Light a candle to represent you and your life, and another candle to represent a person who may need your light and pray for them.



**Book of Psalms - A Rich Tapestry of Prayer and Praise** - The Psalms were originally meant to be sung. But they are also meant to be prayed. As you help to color in the unfinished drawing, pray through the psalm and let it speak to you.



**Our Gracious Loving God** . Words from the heart offered as a prayer of thanks for God's presence is powerful and beautiful. Use letters to create words to describe who God is to you? What God means to you? How God has worked in your life? Consider connecting your words Scrabble-style to the words added by others or create a word in a new area of the board.



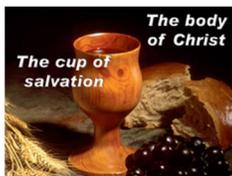
**The Light of God's Love Shines Through Others** ó Be Still. Take a couple of deep cleansing breathes. Slowly-in and out. Blessings to those persons who have had an impact on your faith life. Take a moment, hold those persons in God's light, write their names and place them in the Blessings jar.



**Called to Be the Light of the World** - Pictures speak to us about the reality of the world how people are living, dying, serving, suffering, their hopes, fears, Listen to the emotions stirred within you, say a prayer of thanks and ask God how you can use your gifts to be a light of the world.



**The Cross** - The resurrection, the rising of Jesus from death, proves that God can overcome any struggle, darkness or pain that we suffer and use this to serve his purpose. Make a palm cross and feel God's help, protection and love.



**Come to the Table** - Around the Table of the Lord, the Lord's people are in communion with the crucified and risen Lord, and with all who belong to Christ. Take a few moments to reflect on the Sacrament of Communion as a gift from God and how you can give thanks to God for His grace. The Sacrament of Communion is a great feast of meaning and mystery we have received through Jesus Christ. You are invited to join Pastor Bruce in the Chapel for a time of prayer and communion. You may: share any prayer concerns, join him in a time of prayer and receive the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper.

## Our Presbyterian Roots (A Brief History Lesson)

*Information derived from: What Presbyterians Believe. Gettys, Joseph. Copyright 1982. About Being Presbyterian. Channing L. Bete Company, Inc. Copyright 1974, and the Presbyterian Historical Society.*

The Presbyterian faith got its start in Europe. The background for Presbyterian beliefs was established by a Frenchman named John Calvin. Originally a Roman Catholic, Calvin converted to Protestantism in 1533. Calvin left his native France and settled in Geneva, Switzerland, where he began social and government reforms. Calvin's teachings were based on belief in a sovereign God, a fundamental element of Presbyterian belief.

In the 1500s, persecution of Protestants increased in England and Scotland. John Knox fled his homeland of Scotland to avoid persecution. He settled in Geneva, Switzerland, where he studied under Calvin. John Knox later returned to Scotland and established the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Such massive persecution in Scotland, Ireland, England, and France caused many Protestants to flee their homelands and settle in America. Presbyterians were among the earliest Reformed immigrants to America.

In 1706, seven Presbyterian ministers formed the first Presbyterian presbytery. The clergy assumed the freedom to organize and the right to worship, preach, teach, and administer the sacraments. Growing population and immigration prompted the presbytery to organize a synod in 1717, with four presbyteries. It adopted a constitution that included a form of government, a directory of worship, and subscription to the Westminster Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Presbyterians dominated American colonial life at the time of the Revolutionary War. Presbyterians participated in the writing of state and national constitutions. In 1741, the Presbyterian Church split when new ideas clashed with traditional values but reunited in 1789, to form the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA).

In the early 1800s, the church expanded with revivals, organized congregations, presbyteries, and synods while emphasizing the connectional nature of the church. Presbyterians helped to shape voluntary societies to encourage educational, missionary, evangelical, and reforming work. As the church began to realize that these functions were corporate in nature and as the century proceeded, it formed its own boards and agencies to address these needs at home and abroad. Mission to Native Americans, African Americans, and populations all over the world became a hallmark of the church.

In 1845, Presbyterians were in disagreement and division over theology, governance, and reform-particularly slavery. The southern Presbyterians split from the PCUSA, forming the PCCSA in 1861.



Presbyterian denominations in the United States have split and parts have reunited several times. Currently the largest group is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. Our church, First Presbyterian of Ridgewood, NJ, is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and in 2023 will have been for 200 years!

The Bicentennial Committee (Team 200) has met once and has lots of ideas to celebrate our church's milestone! If you would like to be part of Team 200 let Pastor Bruce know!

**Forward in Faith!**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Church Fundraiser for One Great Hour of Sharing!

Fish (or Chicken) and Chips Dinner~ provided by Tastefully British



**This is a take-out but if weather permits there will be tables set up to eat onsite!**

Date: Sunday, April 3rd (rain or shine)

Time: 5 PM to 7 PM

Where: Food truck will be in front church lot (unless you require handicap parking, please park in back lot or on Circle Ave)

Cost: \$20.00 for Fish (or chicken) French fries and coleslaw (portions are large enough to share!)

**ALL fish or chicken orders must be received by Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>**

To order email [davies333@aol.com](mailto:davies333@aol.com) or [jessicatrader@gmail.com](mailto:jessicatrader@gmail.com) or text

Jess at 551-404-7345 or call the church office at 201-652-2504

**You will pay at the event BUT please note-when you order we are obligated to pay for your dinner!**

**Youth -Bring your fish banks and win a prize!**

**The need is great and so is our calling, please come and support this cause!**

**Thank you in advance!**

## ENDOWMENT CORNER

### IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF OUR ENDOWMENT SUPPORTERS IN 2021

There are many ways our First Pres members support our church throughout the year. All efforts work together to help us be the church in the world, to bring hope and help to all God's people and to nurture and support our own church community.

As an Endowment Committee we take on the task to build and sustain a sound financial foundation to secure the present and future of our church. Part of that task is to share our abundance in a loving way so that all will see the fruits of a life of faith. We are reminded in Philippians 2:1-4 to ..."***Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.***"

We say a gracious and humble thank you to all who gave support to our Endowment Fund in 2021. Included are many who are not members\* but gave in memory of friends or family who are members.

Frank & Carol Pastor	Jessica & Mike Strader
Kali Roy Eklof	Kay Sechrist Estate
Joanne & Larry Bonwick	Carol & Jim Davidson
Anita Hutton	Janet Johnston
Dave & Mary Shaw	Claire Hothem
Jill Critchley	*Ben & Aliza Eliya
Sami Eliya	*Zuheir & Saousan Basna
Richard & Joan Davies	*Dr. Hanna & Selma Illia
Carola Dilorio	Connie & Tom Moore
Steven Dear	Al Schagen
Andrew Castaldi	Emmy & Abed Eliya
Craig Walters	*Lisa Gilgen
Laura & Leo Magrath	Sue Denice
Bruce Ballantine	*Ann Kodersha
Sandy Santangelo	*Efrain Milina
Rick Friedl	*Ionna Macon
Peggy Niemann	*Gold Coast
Linda Strickland	*Rita Vasile
Joe & Marcia Unger	June Reitmeier Estate
Christian Ed, Growth & Mission Committees	

Total Giving to Endowment in 2021 \$32,769

Blessings and Thank You to All!

Your Endowment Committee,  
Richard Davies (Chair) Joanne Bonwick, Don Dexter,  
Laura Magrath, Al Schagen, David Shaw

## Sunday School Notes



We began lessons on "Families in the bible" including our first family Adam and Eve, Noah & family, Abraham & Sarah. Then we will present "Lessons for Lent" thru March!



Christian Ed and Growth sponsored our 2022 Souper Bowl of caring soup sale which was a great success! Thank you to those who purchased soup, chili and stew and thank you to all who **generously** donated to our Souper bowl of caring event!

We raised over \$ 700.00. All proceeds will support Eva's Village in Paterson, NJ

We would like to thank all of our soup, chili and stew makers: Pastor Bruce Ballantine, MaryEllen Castaldo, Dave Ciccolella, Elisa Cerrina, Jill Critchley, Cynthia Rae, Sandy Santangelo, Sue Sofka, Linda Strickland and Kate Yates.

## MISSION

On Sunday, February 6, the McDevitt family delivered dinner to the men at St. Paul's Men's shelter, donated by volunteers. This month's volunteers included Laura Magrath who made baked beans and hot dog casseroles; Jessica Strader who made a lasagna; Suzy McDevitt who made chicken, broccoli, spinach and cheddar casseroles; Nancy Walters who made a large pasta salad; and Rebecca Burger who provided apples, clementines, and baguettes. As usual, the men were delighted by the plentiful and delicious choices. Thank you, ladies, for your generosity of food, time, and talent!

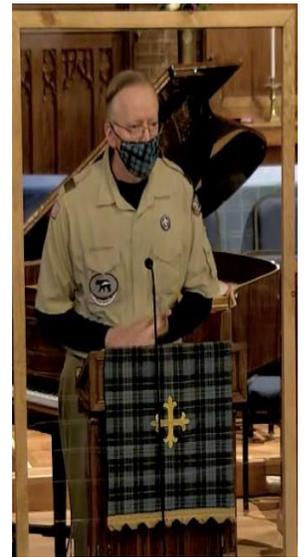
If you are interested in helping out with this mission, or have questions about how it works, please contact Suzy McDevitt by email at [suzyjmcd2@yahoo.com](mailto:suzyjmcd2@yahoo.com) or by text at 201-315-2063. We are fully scheduled through April, so the next available openings in the schedule are for May. We are truly blessed with amazingly dedicated volunteers!

*"If you love me, feed my sheep."*  
John 21:15-19

The Mission, Peace and Social Righteousness Committee has once again set this year's goal for One Great Hour of Sharing at \$10,000-where there is a need we are called to be the church. Stay tuned for more information!



ENTER HIS **GATES**  
Sunday Morning  
**WORSHIP**  
with THANKSGIVING





Dawn Murdock  
Jeanine Jamieson  
Dante Torielli  
Steven Dear  
Mary Weyant  
Dennis Ax

Marjorie Vanacore  
Andy Castaldi  
CJ Torielli  
Richard Vanacore  
Laurie Feltmann  
Rebecca Burger

### 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
Tom Carozza	Sexton
Custodian	George Wood
Director Nursery School	Julia Bolt
Newsletter Editor	Joan Davies (Volunteer)

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

**Pastor Bruce:** (215) 337-5623 please contact him directly for Pastoral Care  
[www.firstpresridgewood.org](http://www.firstpresridgewood.org)



**Service to be held in the Sanctuary and Online**