



TIDINGS

WESTHAMPTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 2023

A Message from your Pastor

When I was a kid, my parents would plop a box down on the dining room table on Ash Wednesday and all through Lent they would put their spare change in there at the end of the day. On Easter Sunday, they would dump it all into the church collection plate (I remember how loudly it would pour in there, they would let us kids do it!). I had friends that would not eat red meat on Fridays during Lent, some gave up sugar or drinking or television. One year my sister decided to give up sarcasm.

These are fairly common practices during Lent to help us observe a season of repentance and reflection. And this is a good thing. But in the past few years we have sacrificed a lot more than usual. We've set aside plans, trips, family gatherings, weddings, and time spent with those we love. So maybe this year we can observe Lent in a different way—a new way that is still helpful in focusing on the meaning of Lent, but flipping the focus of our prayers and spiritual practices to appreciate what we might gain during this season. Here are some suggestions for your Lent practice this year.

Steep yourself in quiet. We are surrounded by noise, media, chaos and fear. Lent can be a season where we turn down the volume and find ways to meditate on and experience the shepherd's Psalm:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul." —Psalm 23:1-2

Turn off the newscast, skip listening to the radio in the car, maybe sit somewhere at midday and listen to the quiet.

Look for a fresh perspective. After Elijah has his showdown with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18) he is exhausted, he feels isolated, alone, and as if he is the last sane voice in the nation. But he wasn't. God spoke to him and told him that there were still thousands of faithful souls who were with him. He gained a new outlook.

A change in your routine, even an unwelcome disruption, can provide a fresh perspective if we talk through it with God. God can restore us and point us in a new direction. So don't just spend the days waiting, keep asking, seeking, and knocking. As you pray, look for God to give you a fresh point of view.

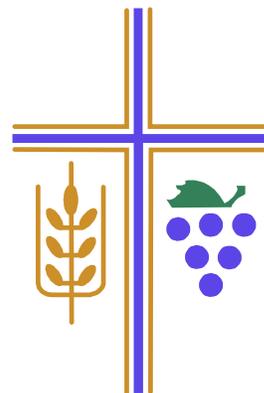
The prophet Isaiah prayed: "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!" (Isaiah 26:3) What would happen if you made this your prayer during Lent? If you fixed your thoughts on God could you let go of a longstanding grudge? Forgive a hurt? Make that long overdue phone call?

What will bring you peace? Why not make choices that will bring you inner calm during Lent this year? Could Lent be a time of healing for you? Physical, financial, or healing of a relationship? It takes sacrifice to give up something like red meat or sugar, but what about praying for the neighbor that irritates you? If you give up praying for an outcome, you'd surely miss the one prayer that might lead to healing.

Have you stopped praying and hoping? Why not take the steps needed to start healing this season to change that?

While many people this year will be giving something up, that doesn't mean you can't try something new. Maybe you'd like to try and shift your focus to look for something you might gain. Whether it's finding some quiet, seeking out new perspectives, prioritizing peace or focusing on your own healing, your Lenten journey can bring you spiritual renewal for the rest of the year. My hope and prayer for you is that it does.

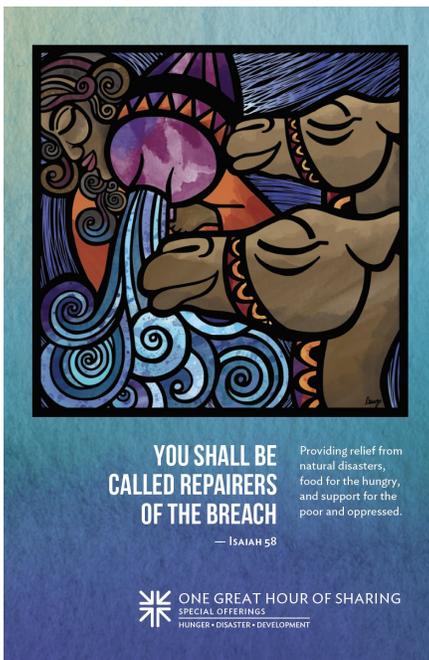
Blessings,
Rev. Vanessa



Prayer Concerns

Recent: Byron Preston, home, friend of the church; Helen Fitzsimons; Joyce Reaver; broken femur; Kevin Fitzgerald; Marjorie Ridgway, home; Seamus Naughton, home; Kimberly Rogers Murawski

Long Term: Dean Speir, Gale Seidler's brother; Dottie Evans, Westhampton Care Center; Ralph Downs, Florida; Phyllis Styrzo, Hamptons Center for Rehab; Dana Barrett, friend of Nancy Miller; Chelsey Carter Collins, Hamptons Center for Rehab; Ellen Pfaff; Rev. John Kloepfer, home; Jay Sears



Easter Sunday, April 9th
6:15am Sunrise Service (location TBD)
10am Easter Sunday service
Children's Easter Egg Hunt

WHB High School Play

Westhampton Beach High School presents their spring musical Mamma Mia on March 24th-26th. Friday and Saturday at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:00pm at the Westhampton Beach District Auditorium. Admission is free. Cast members include Anderson Hipp, Kaitlynn Mazurkiewicz and Ryan Zollweg.



Men's Fellowship

Tentatively meeting on March 1st at 10am in the conference room. See Russ Babis



Notes from the Session

(The Elephant in the Room)

We have an elephant in the room that nobody has been noticing. The elephant is the fact that our annual report a month ago says we have 276 active members, but only about 70 are coming to worship in recent Sundays. Where are the other 206? Some are watching the service online, we know, but most of the rest have been unknown to us, although we are paying per capita for all of them (\$43.95 per person this year).

Our Book of Order defines members as those who participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation. This means coming to church, or supporting us financially, or working on church projects in some way.

The Membership Committee has identified 75 people whom we have not heard from in any of those ways in the last two or more years, and we are sending them a letter in March which asks them to respond by either coming back to us, or supporting us financially, or joining in with a church project (volunteering with Maureen's Haven, for example). Alternatively they may ask to be a friend instead of a member, but in either case if they do not contact us directly they will be dropped from membership. The letter states clearly that we hope they will re-join us.

The elephant may still be in the room, but if we do this each year we will soon know who is really with us and who disappeared years ago. If you have questions, see Stu Wood, the Membership chair.

Stu Wood



Mission Committee: Father's House

The mission committee is asking for your help in meeting a very compelling need in war torn Ukraine. You may have heard Marge Qua's Minute for Mission about Father's House, but in case you didn't I want to tell you about it here in hopes that you can find it in your heart to help.

In 1996 Roman Kornijko, a practicing physician, saw desperate need on the streets of Kiev; children living like rats, scurrying to find food and shelter and avoid arrest or further abuse. Some were toddlers, some teens. He could not turn away. With tremendous effort and against many difficulties, Roman started Father's House, a home that rehabilitates traumatized children and transitions them into loving adoptive families.

Though this is what we might traditionally call an orphanage, Roman is clear that this is not a traditional orphanage. The focus is on rehabilitation and preparation for adult life.

The home provides rehab for traumatized children through professional services and family matching. Children have been adopted from Fathers House by families all over the world.

Since 1996 they have broadened their service to include homes for unhoused elderly.

When war broke out in Ukraine last February and Russian bombs were landing on Kiev, the staff knew that fathers house had to be evacuated for the safety of the children. It took several days of desperate searching to find busses and when they finally showed up the children had very little time in which to gather some things and start their journey. Their counselors told them: when we get out of Ukraine, we will return your childhood to you, but for now we need you to be grownups. Everyone had to be quiet and as calm as possible, there were no toilet facilities, their blood types were written on their backpacks in case of emergency. They were traveling through areas with active bombing and told that they must flee the bus if it was hit and tell their counselors if one of the other children was wounded. They had to travel without headlights on bombed out roads in order to not bring attention to themselves. At one-point, local police lit their own headlights to illuminate a safe path for the bus, risking danger themselves to offer safe passage for these vulnerable children. God's love was in evidence here and all along the way: They were helped by compassionate border guards to navigate the terrible chaos at the border. Eventually arriving in Germany and dispersed amongst refugee camps, their leaders worked tirelessly to find homes where they could be together and live a reasonably normal life. This is where they are now in three different donated homes in Germany pursuing their studies and longing to be back in Kiev.

Meanwhile the war is creating new orphans and traumatized children. Many of them have shown up at Father's house in Kiev which has sustained damage and is under renovations as we speak. They are asking for our help. For example: Electricity goes out regularly and when it does it costs \$20/hour to run a generator, and that is if fuel is available. Solar panels are determined to be the best alternative and the team has been working tirelessly to find donors to help with that project. In the house new electric lines have been installed and fixtures are needed. \$2200 is the figure that would provide the necessary fixtures and our Mission Committee is determined to help: We have some funding to offer, and an additional donation has been made but we really need more.

We are hoping to have a longstanding relationship with Father's House, perhaps eventually with an opportunity to offer concrete services as well as money, something we hope would be beneficial to our members as well as to the children and staff.

Please read below the beautiful firsthand account by the founder of the Capturing Grace Blog, who visited Father's House to see for himself the beautiful work that is being done.

And please, donate if you can to our project to help light the home for these traumatized children.

<https://capturinggrace.org/capturinggrace/2019/07/12/fathers-house-in-kiev-ukraine/>



Christian Ed & Youth Group

Boy have we've been busy!!! We ended January with our Souper Bowl For Caring kickoff. We decided to collect food items and money to benefit The Little Food Pantry on Mill Road and Immaculate Conception Community Food Pantry. The kid's first area of raising money was to get sponsors for our Hyper Bowling Event at All Star Lanes in Riverhead. The second was to sell soup on Super Bowl Sunday. We had 5 different types of soups, a BIG round of applause for those who volunteered to make the soup; and to those of you who purchased the soup! We collected over 80 food items and \$655.00 which we used to purchase grocery cards to give to Immaculate Conception Food Pantry. THANK YOU for supporting our mission.

The Youth also shopped for Heifer from the money we collected in December and for the "tube" that's in the sanctuary. The kids were able to purchase: a goat, sheep, water buffalo, flock of chicks, food baskets, honeybees, a promise gift basket, a pig, garden seeds, women self-help group and the gift of clean water. Heifer is a year-round collection for us, so don't forget to empty your pockets and purses of quarters and fill our tube! When our tube is filled, it's enough to purchase a goat or other useful items.

Lastly, the Sunday School children had a wonderful time celebrating the Lenten season, by making various crafts in Bailey Hall before the winter school break. We hope you like the pictures. It's never too early to start looking, but we will be in need of a Sunday School teacher or two come September. Also, if there is any interest we'd like to try and have Vacation Bible School this summer. However, we will need volunteers to run the 4-5 day program. Message me or speak to me if you are interested. whpresbyterianss@gmail.com

Looking forward to Spring! Kathy

Sunday School Schedule through June:

- 3/5 Sunday School (MS & HS)
- 3/12 Sunday School (MS & HS)
(Confirmation Class)
- 3/19 Sunday School
- 3/26 Sunday School (MS & HS)
(Confirmation Class)
- 4/2 Sunday School / Palm Sunday
(MS & HS)
- 4/9 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL / EASTER /
EASTER EGG HUNT
- 4/16 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
- 4/23 Sunday School (MS & HS)
(Confirmation Class)
(Tentative Confirmation Retreat 4/28-29)
- 4/30 Sunday School
- 5/7 Youth Sunday (All SS/YG participate)
- 5/14 Sunday School (MS & HS)
(Confirmation Class)
- 5/21 Sunday school (Confirmation Class)
- 5/28 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL /
PENTECOST (wear RED) / Confirmation
- 6/4 Sunday School (MS & HS)
- 6/11 LAST DAY OF SS / Church Picnic





Fun on the new playground equipment!

If you haven't gone outside to the playground lately, take a quick look at the new equipment!

You may be like these 2 fun girls and take a ride or climb! Thank you to those who helped take down the old slide and get the playground ready for this beautiful new piece of equipment!

Remember to follow the playground rules and have fun!

Thank You!



Janet Hann



Cheryl Van Tuyle

PW News

Eleven met at noon on Feb. 8, 2023 for a sandwich and soup luncheon in the Conference Room. Betsy Doyle served her version of Olive Garden's Minestrone. It was delicious. It was a first, for a luncheon, decaf coffee. Should we try it again?

We extend comforting prayers to Pat Hubbard and family on the death of her husband Gordon. And to Marjorie Ridgway and family on the passing of her son David, a resident of Maine.

The church cookbook was available for reference if anyone wanted to look for a recipe for the March Luncheon set for Wednesday, March 8th at noon in the conference room.

Have you looked in at the church playground? Many thanks to the donor/donors for the addition of a spectacular slide set! More than one of our Trustees dismantled the worn-out slide and helped bring the new one to life. "Test" sliders say all is ready for fun!

It is time for us to have made a decision about where we want to go for the May luncheon. We have mentioned Pulaski St. Grill (Riverhead), On the Docks (Aquebogue), and Café Volo (by Gabreski Airport in Westhampton).

We hope to review the PW budget soon. We have set plans for a Summer Community Yard Sale in May and the Christmas Tea & Bazaar for early December.

Respectfully submitted for the Presbyterian Women,
Marjorie Beckwith

Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary

1	Sharon Conway	27	Serafima Droznik
1	Tova Keblish	27	Jim Sperber
1	Barbara and Anthony Danowski	28	Fina DiBiaso
4	Pete Seidler	30	Donna & Korey Williams
6	Pat Barile	31	Bill Manker
7	Meg Baird	31	Spencer Baird
7	Gavin Jessup	31	Aram Terchunian
8	Ruth Duvall	31	Lisa Gooder
9	Kristina Carter Bennett	31	Carter Howerton
9	Carol Nemeth		
10	Erika Lukert		
11	Brad Ravenhall		
11	Georgia Gooder		
12	Jennifer Gillin		
12	Kelly Martin		
14	Kathy Tureski		
16	Daniel Staniford		
16	Marie and Vincent Yervasi		
17	Delaney Campbell		
17	Laianna Vigorito		
18	Leon Ringot		
21	Betsy Fox		
22	Kimet Speed		
23	Pam Chance Herzing		
23	Justin Shiu		
24	Mary Beth and Taf Lundborg		
25	Lily Burns		



March 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<p>1 10am Men's Fellowship</p> <p>5:15pm E.E.H. Children's Bereavement Group</p>	2	<p>3 World Day of Prayer</p>	4
<p>5 2nd Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10am Worship</p>	6	<p>7 2-3:30pm E.E.H. Adult Bereavement</p> <p>7pm Deacons</p>	<p>8 9:15am Mission</p> <p>10:30am Staff Luncheon</p> <p>12pm PW</p>	9	10	11
<p>12 3rd Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10am Worship</p> 	13	<p>14 2-3:30pm E.E.H. Adult Bereavement</p> <p>5:15pm M&W</p> <p>6pm Session</p>	<p>15 5:15pm E.E.H. Children's Bereavement Group</p>	<p>16 2-3:30pm E.E.H. Adult Bereavement</p>	<p>17 Happy St. Patrick's Day</p> 	18
<p>19 4th Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10am Worship</p> <p>3-5:30pm E.E. Women's Choir Cabaret</p>	<p>20 5pm Maureen's Haven</p>	<p>21 7pm Trustees</p>	22	<p>23 2-3:30pm E.E.H. Adult Bereavement</p>	24	<p>25 11am Memorial Service Gene May</p>
<p>26 5th Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10am Worship</p>	27	28	<p>29 5:15pm E.E.H. Children's Bereavement Group</p>	<p>30 2-3:30pm E.E.H. Adult Bereavement</p>	31	

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Your issue of the March Tidings

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