



Oak Leaves



Vol. LXII, Number 3

NOVEMBER 2019

Where Spirit Meets Flesh

by Parson John

I think that most of us struggle to bring spirit and flesh together. Our dualistic habits of culture and mind are hard to break. We have been taught to see spirit and flesh as separate, even in opposition to each other. The way that this tends to work out in our lives is that we make time to work on the spiritual and time to work on matters of the flesh, and never the two shall meet. When we go to church or to a spiritual group of some kind or read a spiritual book, then we are being spiritual. But most of the time when we are at work or paying bills or accomplishing tasks, then we are in the realm of the flesh. Ultimately, how this plays out for so many is that our lives here on earth are primarily concerned with matters of the flesh, and the spiritual will become dominant for us after we die.

This dualistic caste of spirit and flesh has much more to do with Greek thought than with our biblical tradition. God loves flesh, we are told. That's why God created a universe and proclaimed it very good. Our teaching of the Incarnation says that God became flesh in Jesus. Even our thinking about an afterlife combines spirit and flesh. Along with Christ, we will be resurrected. Our earthly bodies will become spiritual bodies. Earth is not left behind for some spiritual realm, but it is healed and restored in some more complete and glorious way. Richard Rohr, in his book, *The Universal Christ*, says that the incarnation of spirit in flesh in Jesus is meant to help us see the marriage of spirit and flesh in all of creation and life.

Practically speaking, what this means is that spirit is seeking to become manifest and visible in the most mundane and ordinary aspects of our lives. We are invited to ask, "Is there a spiritual way to make a living, to pay our bills, to plan and organize our lives?" I find myself asking these days, "Is there a spiritual way for us to conduct ourselves in meetings, to approve a budget, to work on our financial investments?" I don't know if you can notice, but there are times when I am preaching or leading worship when I let go of self-consciousness as the leader or presenter and allow spirit to flow through me. I love when that happens. I am beginning more recently to ask if I can allow spirit to flow in and through me as I lead or participate in a meeting. Why not?

...Continued on next page

Where Spirit Meets Flesh (...continued from previous page)

The Christian practice is to let go of ego in all of its manifestations—anxiety, identification, defensiveness, anger, righteousness, and the like—and to allow the Spirit to breathe life into even the most fleshly realities—meetings, chores, work. Isn't this what Jesus did? He gave every encounter a deeper and more spiritual dimension. He healed people by bringing this dimension into their awareness. He didn't say, "I made you well with my special power." He said, "Your faith made you well." Faith not as an intellectual belief, but our trust in and contact with this dimension of spirit here and now. Notice how much richer and vital your day is when you too bring awareness of the spirit to your encounters and your work. There is so much more to experience when we become more aware and alive.

Jesus used all kinds of images to talk about this more alive way of being—abundant life, being born from above or again, finding the kingdom of heaven within you or among us, finding the living waters or the bread of life, becoming the light of the world, becoming pure of heart. Paul called this new life, being in Christ, and he said that this made him able to be okay with however life was showing up for him and made it possible for him to find a peace which surpasses all understanding. This is where spirit meets flesh in the likes of you and me. See you in church!



Worshipping Together

NOVEMBER 3, 2019

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-10

"Faith, Justice, Vision"

NOVEMBER 10, 2019

Haggai 1:15b-2:9; Luke 20:27-38

"Money, Family and Faith"

NOVEMBER 17, 2019

Isaiah 65:17-25; Luke 21:5-19

"New Earth, Old Earth?"

NOVEMBER 24, 2019

Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43

"Life that Death Cannot Teach"



Church School News

Happy November Everyone! Thank you so much for the well wishes as we welcomed our sweet baby boy, Milo, to the world.

And again, thank you SO much to our volunteers! Nina has been a godsend and has given me such peace of mind that everything is in good hands. A big thank you to our November volunteers for both church school and nursery as well! I can't tell you how much I appreciate the outpouring of help and generosity of your time.

November Schedule

- November 3rd: Gratitude Tree
- November 10th: Family Worship
- November 17th: Fill your Bucket (and the Earth's)
- November 24th: Getting in the Holiday Spirit/Baking
- December 1st: Family Worship

Marie Van Cleve , Director of Church School

Music Program News

Dear friends,

Happy Autumn! Wishing that this season brings you all peace and joy.

A few dates to keep in mind for November:

- Sunday, November 17th:** A special guest will be performing on flute
- Sunday, November 24th:** Youth sing in Family Worship
- Sunday, December 8th:** Children's Pageant

If you're interested in having your children join the youth choir, please reach out by emailing me at andreeafegan@gmail.com. All are welcome, and we'd love to have you join us. Thank you, and looking forward to connecting in church!

Andreea Fegan, Director of Music



The Mission Commission will be holding its annual winter coat, scarf, hat and glove/mitten drive from Nov. 3 through Dec. 2. All articles should be gently used or new. All sizes, both children and adult, are greatly appreciated. A collection container will be marked in the foyer.

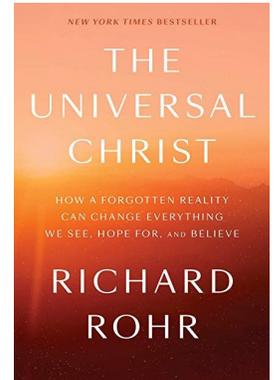
This November, the Mission envelope is earmarked for **Clean Ocean Action**. This non-profit's mission statement is "to improve the degraded water quality of the marine waters of the New Jersey / New York coast." If you would like to learn more about this worthwhile local organization, go to their website at www.cleanoceanaction.org.

Thank you in advance for your donations and contributions.

Sue Bostic, Mission Commission

Adult Nurture Gathering

Wisdom Wednesdays: Our weekly Wisdom practice gatherings will return starting September 11. We meet in the Lounge from 7:00 – 8:30 and engage in classic Christian contemplative practices, including chanting and meditation. In addition, we have some element of study and discussion. John has been focusing personally on adapting a daily rhythm from monastic schools to heighten awareness of God throughout the day. The group will explore how practices and rhythms can enhance the experience of God throughout our days. Also, the group will look at Richard Rohr's recent book, *The Universal Christ*, to help us to see how deepening our Christian contemplative practice can deepen our sense of connection with people of all traditions and our connection with all of creation. Please reach out to John with any questions about the group.



Memorial Garden



A new display for plaques in our Memorial Garden is in motion. We have noticed that the plaques weather better when they are mounted on a slant than when they are flat. We have ordered three small granite blocks, each of which can hold twenty-eight plaques. The blocks will be placed in appropriate areas of the garden, with an eye to maintaining the natural beauty of it. The cost will be about \$5000.

We have received several generous gifts to support this improvement and are asking for others. Any gifts which bring us above the cost of the new displays will go into a fund for the maintenance of the garden. This is very important for the garden. These past two years, especially, have created an environment conducive to weeds. We need a fund to support regular weeding, mulch and trimming of plants.

The Memorial Garden is a much used and appreciated part of our church grounds. Thank you for your support which will enable us to maintain its beauty.



Church Dinner!

Congregational Life will be hosting a Church Dinner on Friday, November 15 at 6:30. More details will follow. Save the date!

Ushers Needed!!!



We are in need of a few more volunteers to be ushers or alternate ushers. We try to maintain around 10 usher teams, and each team usually ushers 5-6 weeks each year. Thank you very much for your support.

Contact **Rosanne Monroe** at rosannecanore@gmail.com if you are interested.

Nursery Volunteers



Please keep in mind that we will still be looking for nursery school volunteers for the summer months! Please reach out if you or interested or know someone that may be! Pay is \$25 for the hour.

Contact **Maria Van Cleve** at mlegge210@gmail.com if you are interested.

Coffee Hour Volunteers



We all enjoy the coffee and delicious treats served Wilson Hall after Sunday's church service. Congregational Life is looking for volunteers for next September and beyond to keep this WONDERFUL program running.

A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board.

Please contact **Rosanne Monroe** at rosannecanore@gmail.com with any questions.

Rumson Senior Citizens Club

2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 11:00 am

This month we will meet on **November 11th** and **November 25th**.

We meet at the **Rumson Presbyterian Church**. Any

questions or for more information, please contact **Sharon Cook** at **732-570-3787** (cell) or mygemini671@comcast.net.

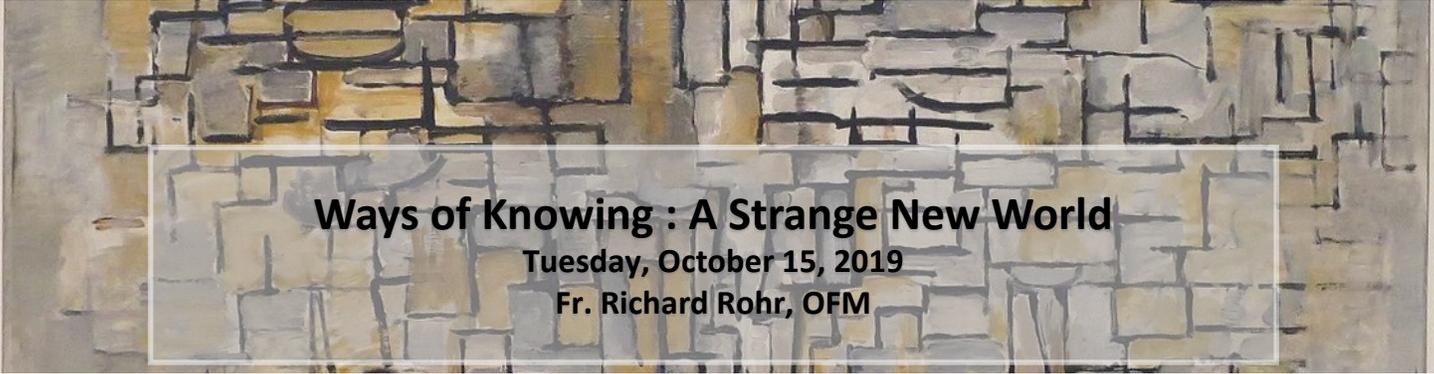


All seniors are welcome.
Its not just for Rumson residents.

Rumson Senior Citizens Club (continued)

November 25th, 2019 @ 11:00 am

Muriel J. Smith, co-author of *"Hidden History of Monmouth County"*
"It's like the Reader's Digest books we all grew up on!"



Ways of Knowing : A Strange New World

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM

I grew up relatively sheltered in my Kansas home and in Catholic schools. However, over the years, life has provided me with countless opportunities to meet people whose different experiences and understandings have opened unseen doors and enriched my knowing. Moving out of our comfortable bubbles is essential to knowing God and reality in a self-critical way.

Presbyterian theologian and activist Robert McAfee Brown (1920–2001) wrote about what Karl Barth (1886–1968) referred to as “a strange new world.” Brown begins by telling a story:

A retired Air Force major, now a seminarian, went to a conference on “The Church and Central Africa.” As the talks proceeded, he got angry. One speaker, he reports, “was basically saying that the United States is greatly responsible for the suffering in third world countries.” . . . [He] went back to hear the African speaker a second time. His outlook was modified:

[The speaker] was showing us that our imperialism is often unconscious, done through economic arrangement. As Christians who have compassion, we need to know these facts, even if they hurt. . . . I came away . . . with a deeper awareness that we have to attempt to see the world the way others do. . . . [1]

What [he encountered] is what Swiss theologian Karl Barth described . . . [as] “The Strange New World Within the Bible.” [2] . . . When [Barth] approached the Bible, every bit of spiritual and mental equipment he brought to the task was shattered by that “strange new world” and that as a result he had to begin looking at both the Bible and his own world in a new way. . . .

Christians make the initially bizarre gamble that “the strange new world within the Bible” is a more accurate view of the world than our own and that we have to modify our views as a result. This means engaging in dialogue with the Bible—bringing our questions to it, hearing its questions to us, examining our answers in its light, and taking its answers very seriously, particularly when they conflict with our own, which will be most of the time. . . .

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Ways of Knowing : A Strange New World (...continued)

We must be in dialogue not only with the Bible but also with Christians in other parts of the world who read the Bible in a very different way . . . [especially] Christians . . . who are generally poor and powerless, victims of political and social and economic structures . . . that oppress them on all levels of their lives, while those same structures support and enrich us. . . .

When [they] listen to the Bible, they hear different things than we hear. It often seems as though they and we are reading different books. . . .

People like us read the Bible from the vantage point of our privilege and comfort and screen out those parts that threaten us. [People who have been marginalized] tell us that the basic viewpoint of the biblical writers is that of victims, those who have been cruelly used by society, the poor and oppressed. . . . Consequently, when they hear the Bible offering hope and liberation to the oppressed of the ancient world, they hear hope and liberation being offered to them as the oppressed of the contemporary world. If God sided with the oppressed back then, they believe God continues to side with the oppressed here and now.

References:

[1] From Sequoia, Northern California Ecumenical Council (September 1983), 5,7. As cited by Brown in his Introduction, 12.

[2] Karl Barth, "The Strange New World Within the Bible," *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (Peter Smith Publishers: 1978, ©1928), chap. 2.

Robert McAfee Brown, *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (The Westminster Press: 1984), 11, 12, 13-14.

Image credit: Tableau No. 2/Composition No. VII (detail), Piet Mondrian, 1913, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New York.

Inspiration for this week's banner image: Perhaps it was the strangeness of the setting, perhaps it was the power of the moment, but, as I stood there, those stones began to speak. It was a clacking sound, a clattering sound, like the fluttering of wings, the descent of birds, the pounding of a hundred thousand hooves across the frozen tundra. —Kent Nerburn



Center for
Action and
Contemplation



Please see the upcoming events with Waterspirit

***Meditation for Earth
Tuesdays 12:15-12:45 PM***

Quiet meditation and contemplative prayer for Earth

Drumming for Water is Life

Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 PM (re-starting November 5th)

Praying and drumming for the "Water is Life" movement. Join in solidarity, prayer and drumming for all who are actively trying to stop new destructive fossil fuel infrastructure and who are advocating for a just transition to renewable energy sources. Drums and instruments provided.

Climate Anxiety Support Group

Thursdays 6:00-8:00 PM

Waterspirit presents Good Grief Network's 10-week program for creating personal resilience in the face of climate change. Until December 11th.

Winter Solstice Celebration

Thursday, December 19th 7:00-8:30 PM

Join Waterspirit for a celebration of the winter season. More information coming soon.

***Unless noted, All events are at Waterspirit
(co-located at the First Presbyterian Church of Rumson)***

4 East River Road, Rumson, NJ 07760

***Call or email for registration and more information:
732-923-9788 or water@waterspirit.org***



Neighbor to Neighbor

We request and continue to accept donations of the following items: CANNED GOODS, TOMATO PRODUCTS, PASTA, RICE, BEANS and FRESH GARLIC. Many thanks for your ongoing support!

Nan Hosna

Sermons Online

Please note that you can listen to our sermons online by visiting our website:

www.rumsonpresbyterian.org.

If you have difficulty with this please contact the church office for assistance.



John : Mon. - Thu.; 9:00 am - Noon & 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm.

Steve : Mon., Tue., Thu., & Fri.; 9:00 am - Noon & 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm.

Time for Reflection



The Generosity Cycle

God makes us rich in every way so we can be generous on every occasion, which will result in thanksgiving to God. ... God doesn't bless us to provide for our own needs; he blesses us so we can be generous.

—Rick Warren, (based on 2 Corinthians 9:11)

Present Tense

After “turkey day” came and went last year, a pastor challenged church members to ask one another not “How was your Thanksgiving?” but “How is your Thanksgiving?” After all, giving thanks should be an ongoing act.

That doesn't always need to be profoundly deep, either. A.J. Jacobs, author of *Thanks a Thousand*, once asked a philosophy-professor friend what he was grateful for. The shockingly simple reply? “Sometimes I'm just grateful I have arms.” That odd but spot-on answer shows the importance, Jacobs says, of being “thankful for things so omnipresent that they can escape our notice.”

So ... how is your Thanksgiving?

The Sacred in the Everyday

All of the places of our lives are sanctuaries; some of them just happen to have steeples. And all of the people in our lives are saints; it is just that some of them have day jobs and most will never have feast days named for them.

—Robert Benson, *Between the Dreaming and the Coming True*

Words of Wisdom

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

—Jane Goodall

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put all together that overwhelm the world.”

—Bishop Desmond Tutu

“Gratitude is the least of the virtues, but ingratitude is the worst of vices.”

—Thomas Fuller



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~Please check our website at www.rumsonpresbyterian.org for calendar updates~

NOVEMBER

Nov 3	Sun	Daylight-Savings Time Ends	
Nov 5	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Nov 6	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Nov 7	Thu	Climate Anxiety Group*	6:00pm
Nov 11	Thu	Veterans Day	
Nov 11	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am
Nov 12	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Nov 12	Tue	Drum Circle*	6:30pm
Nov 13	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Nov 14	Thu	Climate Anxiety Group*	6:00pm
Nov 19	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Nov 19	Tue	Drum Circle*	6:30pm
Nov 19	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Nov 20	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Nov 21	Thu	Climate Anxiety Group*	6:00pm
Nov 25	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am
Nov 26	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Nov 26	Tue	Drum Circle*	6:30pm
Nov 24	Sun	Christ the King Sunday	
Nov 28	Thu	Thanksgiving Day	

DECEMBER

Dec 1	Sun	1st Sunday of Advent	
Dec 3	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Dec 3	Tue	DrumCircle*	6:30pm
Dec 4	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Dec 5	Thu	Climate Anxiety Group*	6:00pm
Dec 8	Sun	2nd Sunday of Advent / Pageant & Party	
Dec 9	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am
Dec 10	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Dec 10	Tue	Drum Circle*	6:30pm
Dec 11	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Dec 12	Thu	Climate Anxiety Group*	6:00pm
Dec 15	Sun	3rd Sunday of Advent / Cantata	
Dec 17	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Dec 17	Tue	Drum Circle*	6:30pm
Dec 17	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Dec 18	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Dec 19	Thu	Climate Anxiety Group*	6:00pm
Dec 19	Thu	Solstice Celebration*	7:00pm
Dec 22	Sun	4th Sunday of Advent	
Dec 23	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am
Dec 24	Tue	Christmas Eve Services	4:00 & 8:30pm
Dec 25	Wed	Christmas Day	
Dec 30	Wed	New Year's Eve	

**WATERSPIRIT sponsored event. All are welcome.*



www.rumsonprebyterian.org