



Oak Leaves



Vol. LXII, Number 1

SEPTEMBER 2019

“Liminal Space”

by Parson John

In a few weeks, we officially move into fall, but it is upon us already. You can feel it in the shorter days and the angle of the sun. My body always senses the shift and with it comes memories of past rhythms. For me, the fall has been my favorite time of year for as long as I can remember. As a young person, it meant returning to school. As an adult, it has meant a return to the more active period of church life. Today, mid-August, I find myself in a liminal space, which is defined as the time between what was and the next. It is a place of transition, waiting, and not knowing. Liminal space is where all transformation takes place, if we learn to wait and let it form us.

This sense of being in a liminal space is especially true this year for me. Rosanne and I, after ten years of marriage, were finally able to sell her house in Middletown. We wanted to ten years ago, but contaminated soil from an underground oil tank made this impossible. It's been a stressful journey. We thank God that this is over, and we could not have made it without help from many friends and from the church.

Now, we are just days away from closing on the purchase of a house in Upstate New York, in a small town called, Unadilla. Our plan is for this to be a get-away place for us and then our permanent home when we retire, likely in four years or so. It fits our dream of having a place in the country that is within our financial means and is not too far away from most of our children and grandchildren. That we can begin to enjoy it now and then come back to our work and community here, makes this time truly liminal. We will be living in a time between what is and what is next. Liminal times and spaces are exciting and also transformative. With the change comes stress, asking us to learn, let go and trust.

Of course, our collective space is a liminal space, as well. Our world is living through perhaps the most dramatic and challenging period in human history. Technology is enabling us to become one world, and yet, in seeking to become one world, we are asked to navigate waters that the human race has never navigated before. It is a promising time and one filled with peril and anxiety. Some welcome this transitions and transformation, but others long for something more familiar. I believe that, at its

...Continued on next page

Liminal Space (...continued from previous page)

root, this is what our culture wars are about. Liminal space is about not knowing and trusting.

I would be a liar if I said that the past few months have been easy. They have not. We experienced so many surprises and challenges and things not going the way we wanted. With my anxiety, I found that I was not as spiritually evolved as I thought. The challenging times are the ones which really reveal where we are internally and help us to see how much we need the support of a higher realm of being.

I think that the same is true for us, collectively, as we go through this challenging time. At the present, the stress has seemed only to deepen our divisions. I hear from people of differing points of view that they are anxious and disillusioned. These are clear signs that our moment is indeed, liminal. We are between times. We are being asked to transition and transform. And even if we are excited about the change upon us, it is still disorienting and scary. It is hard not knowing. The only way safely through is being more deeply connected with Source, which is what our church is to be about these days. See you in church!



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.

Worshipping Together

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

Luke 14:1,-7-14

“Finding Worth Within”

SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

Jeremiah 18:1-11; Luke 14:25-33

“Love’s Plunge”

SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; Luke 15:1-10

“Why God Prefers Sinners”

SEPTEMBER 22, 2019

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1; Luke 16:1-13

“Spiritual Shrewdness”

SEPTEMBER 29, 2019

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Luke 16:19-31

“Good Cop, Bad Cop”

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.

9:45 am beginning September 8th.



Music Program News

Dear friends,

Welcome to September, and the start of our fall season! Hope everyone had a happy & safe summer. A heartfelt thank you to all the soloists who participated in musical worship these past several months of summer. Your music has been such a gift to the church, and I'm grateful for each of you!



I'm excited to start choir rehearsals again, with our first one taking place on Thursday September 5th at 7:30 pm, and our first performance in worship on Sunday September 8th.

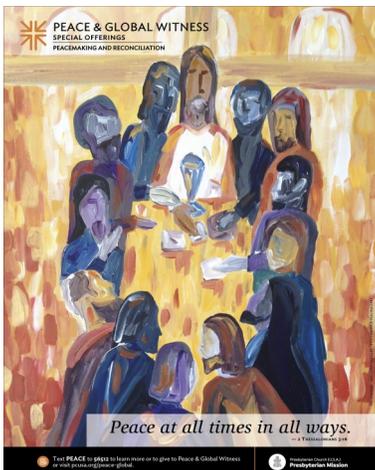
The kids first rehearsal will take place on Sunday September 8th, and their first performance will take place on Sunday September 29th.

If you're interested in having your children join the children's choir, or are an adult considering joining the Adult choir, please reach out! 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

Peace & Global Witness Special Offering



The four churchwide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost Offering, Peace and Global Witness Offering, and Christmas Joy Offering - play an important role in defining what it means to be a connectional church in the twenty-first century, bringing together the diversity of the PC(USA) to focus and take faith-based action on shared concerns. The Offerings offer opportunities for partnership, learning, and witness and profoundly affect the life of the church as a collective witness to Jesus Christ's love for the whole church.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering draws Presbyterians together, and provides education and exposure to those who show us how to do peacemaking well. It allows us to create resources for dealing with conflict and provide nurturing reconciliation, and stand in support of our global sisters and brothers, because the peace of Christ belongs to people everywhere.

World Communion Sunday (October 6) is the most common Sunday for receiving the offering, but many congregations promote the Offering throughout A Season of Peace (September 1 - October 6). Look for more information in your bulletins between now and October 6.

Church School News



Hope everyone had a safe and fun summer! It's hard to believe it's coming to an end and we are back to school already.

As many of you know, I'm having a baby! I'm due October 13th. I wish I knew the exact date the baby will arrive as it would make scheduling a lot easier :) What I do know is that for a couple of weeks I will be relying solely on volunteers both for Church School and Nursery. Lessons plans are complete and will be ready for each volunteer. As for nursery, we have been a lot busier than usual and I expect that to continue. Throughout the year, we will

need volunteers for nursery so we can continue to offer this service. Please reach out to me via my personal email mlegge210@gmail.com (my church email via my outlook app is a little unreliable). I'd like to have volunteers scheduled as soon as we possibly can so the children have someone no matter what.

I would also like to schedule a beach clean up to continue some of the lessons from late spring. Parents of church-school kids, please reach out to me about times that work with your schedules!

Here's September's schedule: (Church time resumes at 9:45AM)

Rotation 1: Exodus

September 8th:	Through Water and Wilderness
September 15th:	Moses- Crossing the Red Sea
September 22nd:	Ten Commandments Origami Activity
September 29th:	Family Worship

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions! Thank you in advance for volunteering your time!!!

Marie Van Cleve , Director of Church School

Summer Mission

On behalf of the students who are receiving the school supplies, thank you. Your generosity is truly appreciated and will help get them off on the right foot for the 2019-2020 school year.

Mission Commission

Look Up - And Out

The Church on earth is a cross-eyed church, with one eye on God in his heavenly benediction, and one eye on the needy world of men.

—David Head

Ushers Needed!!!



USHERS

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 mvancleve@rumsonpresbyterian.org if you are interested.

Coffee Hour Volunteers



COFFEE HOUR

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 the month at 11:00 am

This month we will meet on **September 9th** and **September 21nd**.

We meet at the **Rumson Presbyterian Church**. Any questions or for more information, please contact **Winifred Steele-Burnett** at **732-842-3989** or (cell) **732-687-3330**.



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

Neighbor to Neighbor

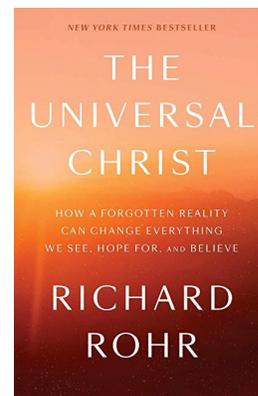


We request and continue to accept donations of the following items: **CANNED GOODS, TOMATO PRODUCTS, PASTA, RICE, BEANS and FRESH GARLIC**. Many thanks for your ongoing support!

Nan Hosna

Adult Nurture Gathering Returns!

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.



“Pied Beauty”

Glory be to God for dappled things —
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced — fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

—Gerard Manley Hopkins





Please see the upcoming events with Waterspirit

Meditation for Earth

Tuesdays 12:15-12:45 PM

Quiet meditation and contemplative prayer for Earth

CREATE Core Courage Social Justice Arts Competition and Event

Submission deadline: Sept. 1 (with showcase event to follow in mid-October)

Waterspirit is participating in the CREATE Core Courage art for social justice competition. For this competition, Waterspirit is inviting artists of all ages to use watercolors to express the importance of clean, safe water. To participate, submit a high-resolution digital image of the piece at <https://www.createcorecourage.art/> by September 1.

Winners will be notified by September 15, when they will be invited to showcase the original work at the CREATE Core Courage social justice art event in Red Bank in mid-October.

Fall Equinox Celebration

Monday, September 23, 7-8:30 PM

An evening of ritual and reflection to celebrate Autumn's bounty and beauty while reflecting on the deeper meaning of the season of cooling breezes and lengthening nights.

The celebration will include live music by mystical folk-pop duo Tommy and Abby Anton. Refreshments to follow.

Explore Spirituality, Nature & Action: Waterspirit Book Club

(next meeting will be in September, date and location to be announced)

*Current selection is Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction.*

Drumming for Water is Life

Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 PM (re-starting late fall)

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.

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



The Perennial Tradition : Beholding

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM

My friend and Christian philosopher James Danaher writes about unfiltered divine encounter as a core element in the Perennial Tradition.

There is a perennial philosophy that is not relative to history, culture, or language community. It is a philosophy, or perhaps better termed an alternative epistemology, that continually claims that pure, unfiltered perception is possible. [Remember, epistemology means how we know what we know; an “alternative epistemology” means that there’s another way of knowing what we know—what we’re calling Perennial Tradition—that is less rooted in culture, religion, tradition, or binary thinking.] This alternative epistemology perennially appears in every major religious tradition. In every historical epoch and in every cultural tradition, there are those who practice a form of contemplation that puts them in a position to receive the gift of an unfiltered divine encounter.

Unlike those who imagine that they can experience and know God the way they know other things, the contemplative knows that God is encountered in a way very different from any ordinary experience. . . . Our ordinary experience is always an interpretation based upon the conceptual understanding we bring to the data of the experience. When we encounter the divine, our conceptual understanding is not equipped to do anything but misinterpret that encounter. If we recognize this, we treat our encounters with the divine very differently than our normative experience, and wait upon the divine without all of the filters through which we normally process the data of our experience.

Consequently, the divine encounter is something of a pure or direct encounter because there are no appropriate words or concepts through which to interpret it. Maggie Ross refers to the encounter with the divine as “beholding.” [1] Beholding is the antithesis of ordinary experience in that the self, which usually processes the data of our experience through an understanding inherited from our history, culture, and language community, is suspended, and we change our focus in order to be open to an engagement that defies whatever understanding we bring to it. . . .

Continued on next page...

The Perennial Tradition : Beholding (...continued)

What makes the contemplative experience universal and perennial is that contemplatives suspend the understanding through which their minds actively process and assess the data of their experience. . . . The prejudice of the modern mind is that knowledge must be something we can possess, but the knowledge that comes from our encounters with the divine possesses us and infuses an ineffable knowing within us. . . .

The prayer of the contemplative is, essentially, an attention to the omnipresence of God. God is omnipresent not as a theological doctrine, but as the great silence that is present in every moment—but from which we are usually distracted by an overactive mind that refuses to wait in a humble unknowing for a pure wisdom from above

References:

[1] Maggie Ross, “Behold Not the Cloud of Experience,” *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium VIII*, ed. E. A. Jones (Boydell and Brewer: 2013), 29-50.

[2] James P. Danaher, “What’s So Perennial About the Perennial Philosophy?”

“The Perennial Tradition,” *Oneing*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2013), 50-51, 53. No longer in print; a Kindle version is available from Amazon.

Image credit: A Moment of Prayer (detail), Frederick Arthur Bridgeman, 1877, Private Collection.

Inspiration for this week’s banner image: In every historical epoch and in every cultural tradition, there are those who practice a form of contemplation that puts them in a position to receive the gift of an unfiltered divine encounter. —James Danaher



Words of Wisdom

The simplest toy, one which even the youngest child can operate, is called a grandparent.

—Sam Levenson

God is not out there or back there or yet to be, but hidden in the most ordinary things of our ordinary lives.

—Sallie McFague

Time for Reflection

Labors of Love

Thomas Merton, an American monk, writer and social activist, said, "It is in the ordinary duties and labors of life that the Christian can and should develop his spiritual union with God." As the United States observes Labor Day, may we find meaning not simply in marking summer's end but in celebrating the ways nearly all "duties and labors of life" can empower ministry and faith.

Whether as a dentist, parent, artist, teacher, mechanic, gardener, city councilor, farmer, day laborer, attorney or anything else, a Christian can begin each workday or shift by praying for opportunities to serve whoever they'll encounter. We also can pray for and seek ways to grow in "spiritual union with God": cultivating spiritual fruits; actively loving God and neighbor; seeing Jesus in the vulnerable; practicing humility, gratitude and praise.

In Labor Day, may we find inspiration to make all our labors loving and faithful!

Happy Birthday to - and for - You

Birthdays are unique because they celebrate who someone is, not what they've done. Henri Nouwen wrote, "It is more important to celebrate a birthday than a successful exam, a promotion or a victory. Because to celebrate a birthday means to say to someone, 'Thank you for being you.' ... On a birthday we do not say, 'Thanks for what you did, or said, or accomplished.' No, we say, 'Thank you for being born and being among us.'"

To rejoice over someone purely for who they are is an echo of God's joy over us. Some families celebrate "baptism birthdays" (anniversaries) by lighting candles, sharing scripture and prayer, perhaps looking at photos and recounting stories of that milestone event that marked the beginning of their faith life.

On a birthday, said Nouwen, "we lift someone up and let everyone say, 'We love you.'" In baptism, God lifts us to his very heart and declares, "You are my precious child. I love you."

Stop the Hopping



A church is an imperfect mix of imperfect believers, so it's easy for members to find faults or feel disappointed. That, in turn, may tempt us to shop around.

C.S. Lewis addresses that in *The Screwtape Letters*. "If a man can't be cured of churchgoing," Screwtape advises his demon protégé, "the next best thing is to send him all over the neighborhood looking for the church that 'suits' him until he becomes a taster or connoisseur of churches." How Satan must hate when Christians maintain long-term commitment to one church!

The urge to church-hop harms congregations as well as believers. "Spiritual depth isn't fostered by satiating your sense of felt needs," writes James Emery White. "It's receiving a balanced diet of teaching and challenge, investing in service and mission, living in community and diversity that you probably would not select for yourself."

First Presbyterian Church of Rumson NJ
P.O. Box 399
East River Road at Park Avenue
Rumson, NJ 07760

Nonprofit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Red Bank, NJ
Permit No. 318

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL ENCLOSED



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

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

Sep 2	Mon	LABOR DAY		Oct 1	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Sep 3	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm	Oct 2	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Sep 8	Sun	Choir & Church School Return	9:45am	Oct 8	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Sep 9	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am	Oct 9	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Sep 10	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm	Oct 14	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am
Sep 11	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm	Oct 15	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Sep 17	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm	Oct 15	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Sep 17	Tue	Session	7:00pm	Oct 16	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Sep 18	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm	Oct 22	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Sep 23	Mon	FIRST DAY OF AUTUMN		Oct 23	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Sep 23	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am	Oct 28	Mon	Rumson Seniors Meeting	11:00am
Sep 23	Mon	Fall Equinox Celebration*	7:00pm	Oct 29	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm
Sep 24	Tue	Meditation*	12:15pm	Oct 30	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Sep 25	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm				

**WATERSPIRIT sponsored event. All are welcome.*



www.rumsonprebyterian.org