

Oak Leaves

Vol. LXIV, Number 3

November 2021



Spirituality That Counts

by Pastor John

It is hard to see when you are in the middle of it, but I am convinced that we are experiencing a profound shift in human consciousness. We are changing and our world is changing whether we want it to or not. Our cultural divides have never been greater within our lifetimes, and the growing tensions among us portends a breakthrough into something very different. A way of being human is ending and a new way is emerging. Our culture wars are simply a battle for position and power in the emerging reality. This is to be expected no matter how uncomfortable it makes us.

This global pandemic is moving people to re-evaluate their lives and how we do them. Of course, the job market has been impacted, and people disagree about how a new economic system should look. It is not surprising that as we all intuit the coming changes and see the signs of their arrival, that people would become ever more defensive of their perspective and less tolerant of others. When we can breathe and become curious about our circumstances, then we can begin to see that collectively we are about to crash. After the crash and after attempts to heal and repair the collective damage take place, then the new reality will begin to solidify.

Superficially, churches have been changed by virtual platforms for worship and meetings. More profoundly, churches, like every other human institution will have to adapt to the new and to reinvent itself. Profound change has been going on for some time. Church leadership began to become available to women only sixty years or so ago. Whenever significant change occurs, at first, people try to fit the change into the existing structures and mindsets. Eventually, the structures and mindsets—and heart-sets—begin to change to fit the new reality. The feminine will no longer be defined by the prevailing masculine. Ideally, the feminine and masculine will seek a balance defined by respect and appreciation. It takes some time for this to happen.

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It has been said that the most segregated hour of the week in American culture was Sunday morning. Unfortunately, this may still be true. Change, however, in our collective consciousness about race is afoot. America is having a hard time looking at and dealing with its painful racial history, but there is no way to true racial reconciliation without such a collective and soulful grappling. Repentance is central to our Christian tradition. Engaging in repentance, which accepts responsibility for what we have been and moves toward a new mind and a new way, is not a sign of unfaithfulness, but of profound faithfulness to our Christian faith. As Jesus made clear, only those who think that they have no need to repent are the ones who cannot move more fully into God's kingdom.

My final thought for this article is that for the new reality to arrive in and among us, a new consciousness must emerge. John Philip Newell says that the human ego is necessary for consciousness. At birth, before ego development, "everything is experienced as a sea of undifferentiated oneness." With the ego, we become aware of differentiations. But we have become stuck. There is the possibility of perception of unity beyond our differentiations. This is the next step in our evolution, the move from undifferentiated oneness, to ego which perceives differentiation, to a consciousness which perceives differentiation and the oneness from which it proceeds and to which it flows.

I believe that the calling of the church is to assist people in this fundamental shift in consciousness which is necessary for the new which is wanting to be born among us. This is slow and demanding work and churches which have the courage to take it on will be of inestimable worth to the planet. See you in church!

Worshipping Together in November



Note: Except where noted, both online and limited in-person worship options are available at this time. Check our website for updates.

Sunday, November 7, 2021 @ 9:45 AM (Communion)

Sermon: "The Self Beneath Appearance" by Rev. John W. Monroe III

Scripture: Mark 12:38-44

This text reveals that there is the self of external appearance and a hidden self beneath the

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external self. The hidden self is the one that matters. And God sees.

Sunday, November 14, 2021 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: "That Which Holds the Chaos" by Rev. John W. Monroe III

Scripture: Daniel 12:1-3; Mark 13:1-8

The biblical vision is large, encompassing the visible and invisible, the temporal and eternal. We live in the intersection and can be supported in extraordinary ways amid the chaos of temporal existence.

Sunday, November 21, 2021 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: "Our Only Security" by Rev. John W. Monroe III

Scripture: Daniel 7:9-10,13-14; John 18:33-37

How secure Jesus was even at his trial before death. There is only one true source for security, and he was intimately connected to it. Where lies our security?

Sunday, November 28, 2021 @ 9:45 AM

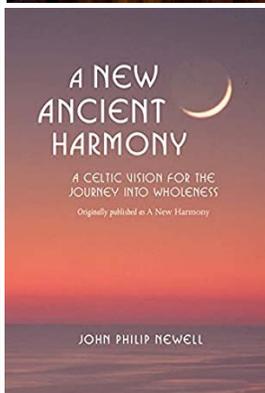
Sermon: "Beginning at the End" by Rev. John W. Monroe III

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Advent, originally, was a season of preparation, not for Christmas, but for the end – Christ's second comings. Advent begins the church year. It begins the year by thinking about the end. How does the end return to the beginning?

For updates & more services, visit rumsonpresbyterian.org/upcoming-services

Adult Nurture



Wisdom Wednesdays: Beginning in October, our Wednesday Wisdom meetings, each Wednesday from 7:00 – 8:30, will focus on John Philp Newell's book, *A New Ancient Harmony: A Celtic Vision for the Journey into Wholeness*. At the present time, these meetings are being held on the Zoom platform which can be accessed on our Church website. We will not meet on Nov. 24.

Church School



Hi Everyone!!!

I hope November's Oak Leaves finds you all healthy and well. Thank you to everyone who came out for our October Ice Cream Social, the children, Thomas and I loved getting everything ready for you all to enjoy. November gives us a chance to reflect on what we are THANKFUL for. I am thankful to have been afforded the opportunity to meet so many new faces and your children over the past couple of weeks. Please email me directly at churchschool@rumsonpresbyterian.org and let me know how I can support your family in any way. If you know anyone who would like to tend to the nursery please see the sign up sheet, volunteers will be paid \$25 for their time.

Warm Regards,
Sandi Van Cleve, Church School Director

Music Program



Dear friends,

Wishing you all a happy and healthy November.

We are currently planning music for the holiday season, and wanted to invite you to join us! If you would like to sing, do a solo, play an instrument or join us for a Sunday perfor-

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mance, please let me know by emailing me at: andreeafegan@gmail.com.

Additionally, I'm planning on having a pageant with the kids this December but could really benefit from having some adults step in and join us for some small parts. If you are available and interested, please let me know.

I wish you all a wonderful month ahead. See you in church!

Blessings,

Andreea Fegan, Music Director

Mission News



The Mission Commission met again in October after a one month gap to continue good works in supporting a variety of causes. Rumson Presbyterian has a long history of supporting the Red Bank Crop Walk and in this year of virtual walking, we raised \$1,310 through our online campaign, topped that up by \$200 to slightly exceed our \$1,500 goal and provided \$500 of sponsorship for a water station. The Red Bank CROP Walk is the most active and successful CROP Hunger Walk in the NJ/NY region, raising funds to support 15 local partner programs and national/global programs through Church World Service. We also approved a \$2,000 donation to Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center, a place where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are welcomed to experience God in a serene environment. We continued with a quarterly donation to FulFill Food Bank, anticipating continued pressures on our food banks as holidays approach. Fulfull (The Foodbank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties) provides over 26.6MM meals to families in our county each year. With the continued pandemic-elevated health crisis, we approved a \$5,000 donation to the Parker Family Health Clinic in Red Bank which operates through a network of volunteers to deliver health services to the community. Pivoting to the critical priorities for social justice, the Mission Commission approved a \$2,000 donation to the Innocence Project, an organization committed to exonerating wrongfully convicted individuals through DNA testing while also working to reform the criminal justice system to prevent future injustices.

We also want to thank the exceptional team of volunteers that support Family Promise. Your

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spirited engagement is as crucial as ever as the organization navigates Covid and finds new ways to support families in need. Special thanks to our Angel Captain Heather Yockel who delivered 25 frozen dinners earlier this month to the Family Promise Day Center in Fort Monmouth, Ann Hutchinson, who kindly purchased and brought meals for delivery; and to Diane Burke, Heather, Pat and Linda Wallace, and Ray Sacket who donated dollars to purchase meals. Thank you!

We have several priorities for review and consideration next month that include Aslan Ministries, Blessing Bag Brigade and the Central Jersey Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club. Please join us at 7:30pm on November 22nd if you are able!

Anita Waters, Mission Chair

Other Church News



2021 CROP Hunger Walk



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**Walk. Give. Change the world.
Donations are being accepted until December 31!**

We participated in the 2021 CROP Hunger Walk to support CWS (Church World Service) and help families who are struggling with hunger. We're asking you to join us - with your steps or your donations - to provide more meals for the growing number of people in our community who need them, and greater food security in communities around the world.

Please visit our team page (<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/rumson-presbyterian-church-2>) to support us by making a donation today! Thank you!

Giving

GIVEPLUS⁺

YOUR CHURCH GIVING APP

Rumson Presbyterian Church is excited to partner with the Presbyterian Foundation and Vanco Payment Solutions to bring you our GivePlus Online Giving page (<https://rumsonpresbyterian.org/giving/>).

We are also listed in the GivePlus Mobile App, which can be downloaded to your smartphone, making Online Giving even easier. This YouTube video explains how to get and use the App. In addition, here are links to two more documents about the service and the App: "Vanco GivePlus Church FAQs for Donors" and "Vanco GivePlus Church How it Works".

Note: 2% of your GivePlus donation will be retained as an administrative fee by the Presbyterian Foundation.

Community News



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Early Risers



If you want to stop drinking call: 1-908-687-8566
or (toll free from NJ area codes): 1-800-245-1377
24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

For a list of other local A.A. meetings, visit www.nnjaa.org/#
For information about A.A. visit www.nnjaa.org

Meetings: Fri. from 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM at Rumson Presbyterian Church

Waterspirit



Event Calendar

Meditation for Earth Every Tues. from 12:15 PM - 12:45 PM (ET)

Please join Waterspirit for a "Meditation for Earth". We read a short blessing, followed by an excerpt from Hal Borland's 12 Moons of the Year. Then we lead a simple meditation followed with silence, for a flourishing Earth. The meditation and silence last approximately 30 minutes. There are two ways to meditate for Earth with us: 1) In-person in the Sanctuary at Rumson Presbyterian Church; 2) Online on our YouTube channel. All of our meditation videos are filmed by our Programs and Communications Consultant, Abbey Koshak, with loving care.

Book Club: Exploring Spirituality, Nature & Action Mon, Nov. 22 from 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Please join us for an engaging discussion of Helen Scales' *The Brilliant Abyss: Exploring the Majestic Hidden Life of the Deep Ocean, and the Looming Threat that Imperils It*. Email us at [water \[at\] waterspirit \[dot\] org](mailto:water@waterspirit.org) to receive instructions on how to participate. Happy reading!

All are welcome. Please visit their website (waterspirit.org)
for more information about these events.

Caring for God's Earth



Submitted by **Diane Burke** and **Sue Smith**

We are running a series of articles from Mission Crossroads, a publication of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, on the impact of climate change around the world.

Trees of Life

What can one person do to combat climate change? Ask Mama Toya

by **Jed Hawkes Koball** | **Mission Crossroads**

TVILLA EL SOL, Peru — Last year, I took more than two dozen flights. In many cases I could have taken a bus, but for little extra cost, I opted to save time. A flight from Lima (on the Pacific coast) to Tarapoto (in the Amazon) takes a little over an hour. The bus takes more than 25 hours. So, for about \$25 more per flight, it seems worth it to travel by air. I know my knees are grateful. But, like so many things in life, there are usually more costs than those that simply make a dent in our wallets. There are environmental costs, too.



Here in Peru those costs are adding up. Two years ago, unprecedented rains on the desert coast led to floods that displaced a quarter of a million people. This year, forest fires are decimating large swaths of the Amazon and threatening the lives of indigenous populations. Every year, farmers in the Andes are seeing their natural water supplies decrease. The water temperatures off the Pacific Coast are rising. The mountaintop glaciers are melting. The biodiversity of the rainforest is dying. This plus gross inequality and poor infrastructure

make Peru one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change.

In the grand scheme of things, air travel contributes to a relatively marginal 2% of all green-

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house gases. While not the most contributing factor to global warming, it is notable nonetheless. And, looking at my personal lifestyle, it is quite remarkable: The carbon dioxide emissions attributed to my air travel account for about 75% of my family's carbon footprint. Despite all of our recycling, reusing, repurposing, limiting red meat consumption, not owning a car and not using air conditioning, our carbon footprint is still twice that of the average Peruvian family. I came here to help, not hurt.

Of the more than 24 flights I took in 2019, all except two were for my work. Some of those flights were to help our global partners prepare for Presbyterian short-term mission trips. We Presbyterians travel a lot! Those of us engaged in World Mission really travel a lot! And, let's be honest: that's not going to end anytime soon. And it will be decades before air travel can be supported by renewable energies. So, how can we hold ourselves responsible? How can we live into hope and not out of guilt or fear?

Just east of Lima, in the heart of the Andes mountains, 84-year-old Mama Toya — a friend to many Presbyterians — gets up at sunrise to tend to the trees on the hills outside her home. She has planted more than 30,000 trees over the past 20 years to help restore fertility to her community's lands that have been contaminated by emissions from a nearby metals smelter as well as to adapt to advancing climate change.

Next year, our global partner, Red Uniendo Manos Peru, will donate \$20 to its own newly established tree fund on behalf of each Presbyterian short-term mission trip participant it receives. Every penny of these funds will support Mama Toya's work to help offset greenhouse gas emissions generated by short-term mission trip participants' air travel.

What if this offset idea became our Presbyterian practice? What if we Presbyterians put money into a Presbyterian Tree Fund for every single flight taken for Presbyterian-related work? What if global partners around the world were supported in their reforestation efforts with these funds? Yes, there are many such funds one can contribute to. But how often can you see exactly where that money goes, while also igniting passion for the care of the very Earth that sustains the people we have come to love through partnership in mission? In the face of a climate crisis that impacts us all, may such love show us how to live justly in the world today.

Consider supporting the work of Jed Hawkes Koball and Jenny Valles Koball, PC(USA) mission co-workers in Peru: pcusa.org/donate/E200447

The Rev. Jed Hawkes Koball and his wife, Jenny, serve as mission coworkers in Peru. Jed accompanies the work of Joining Hands, a Presbyterian Hunger Program partner, in identifying and interpreting root causes of poverty, and Jenny coordinates the Young Adult Volunteers program.

A Meditation



Center for
Action and
Contemplation

Original Goodness : Creation Is Very Good

by [Richard Rohr, OFM](#)
October 25, 2021

God saw all God had made, and indeed it was very good. —Genesis 1:31

In Judaism, there is no concept of “original sin.” Instead of believing humans are born in sin, Judaism affirms our place in a “very good” creation. Rabbi Ellen Bernstein is a leading thinker about spirituality and the environment. Commenting on Genesis 1, she writes of humanity’s responsibility to manifest the “goodness” that is our birthright.

On the sixth day, God designs the land creatures, creates the first human couple, and completes the entire creation. In and of itself, an individual creation may be good, but when it can contribute to a larger interdependent ecosystem, it is very good. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The goodness of this day is further emphasized through the language used to describe it. While all the other days are referred to as “a” day, the sixth day is referred to as “the” day. This day is distinguished among all the rest: it is whole. Wholeness rests in the complete web of life.

Both from an ecological perspective and from Genesis’ point of view, goodness resides in the community, the web of life, in the relations of the whole biosphere. All organisms interact constantly with their surroundings, in an endless cycle of giving and receiving. No creature, human or otherwise, can live in isolation. “No matter how sophisticated and complex and powerful our institutions,” said Wendell Berry, “we are still exactly as dependent on the earth as the earthworms.” [1] Ultimately our individual happiness rests on the health and well-being of the larger earth ecosystem and the common good. [2]

Author Danielle Shroyer understands the goodness of creation as its and our capacity to grow in potential toward further goodness. The Garden of Eden is not a place of perfection so much a place of wholeness and unfolding life itself.

Creation is the result not of destruction, but of God’s goodness overflowing. . . . God looks upon creation and says, “It is very good.” It’s . . . a declaration, over and over, of creation’s goodness. . . . If we imagine creation to be something as simplistic as a utopian happy-go-lucky place where nothing ever will go wrong, we disparage the beauty and harmony illustrated in the Genesis stories. God’s goodness is not that shallow and neither is God’s crea-

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tion. I wonder if there is not something immature about our desire for the garden to be perfect. . . .

A more appropriate view of creation would be not perfection but potential. God designed the world to develop and function in a certain way, while allowing for creation to live freely into its potential. Sometimes creation will live up to and into its potential, while other times it will renounce it. . . . Potential reminds us once again that goodness is both an origin and a goal. It is given to us as a gift, but it is also given to us as a calling. [3]

References:

[1] Wendell Berry, *The Long-Legged House* (Counterpoint: 2012), 90.

[2] Ellen Bernstein, *The Splendor of Creation: A Biblical Ecology* (The Pilgrim Press: 2005), 119–120.

[3] Danielle Shroyer, *Original Blessing: Putting Sin in Its Rightful Place* (Fortress: 2016), 66–67.

Pastor John's Weekly E-Mail "Blasts"

Julian's Vision (Oct. 1)

This Sunday, October 3, the Scripture reading is Mark 10: 2 – 16. The sermon title is "Discovering Our Hearts" and the "hymn" after the sermon is "One" by U2. It is Communion Sunday and for the first time in nineteen months, we will be serving Communion in-person. We will invite people to come forward to the Communion Table, where they can take a wafer from a plate and a small container of juice and return to their seats to consume these elements.

In-person attendance was higher last week. We will continue to monitor and discern our best response to the needs of our faith community. I have received some feedback from those choosing to worship from home that Livestreaming is not as meaningful as Zoom. I understand this sentiment and sympathize. This is truly a time of mutual sacrifice for one another. I cannot predict precisely how the weeks and months ahead will unfold. I invite us all to see our circumstances as an opportunity to offer ourselves in compassion for and solidarity with one another. As Paul wrote in Romans 12: 1, our true worship is an offering of our whole selves to God. Even the circumstances of a pandemic do not prevent us from doing this.

The truth be told, faith often comes most alive during periods of challenge and struggle. Our Wednesday Wisdom group recently finished our study of Julian of Norwich. Let her vision inspire us. During her experience of a pandemic more devastating than our own, she discov-

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ered the depths of God's love in ways she may not have in less trying circumstances. Amid the loss and grief of her times, she affirmed that, "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."

The vision of Julian is able to see beneath the surface of things and to comprehend the presence of God, working for our good in all things. It's a vision which can see the unifying movements of God amid all of our differences and anxieties. We can see as she if we practice going within and paying attention to our hearts—opening and trusting.

Let us hold one another in prayer as we continue our journey together in these remarkable times. Blessings all!

The Good News of Bad Times (Oct. 7)

This Sunday, October 10, the Scripture readings will be Amos 5: 6 – 7, 10 – 15 and Mark 10: 17 – 31. We continue with "hard teachings" of Jesus and the sermon title is "Tough Love." The "hymn" after the sermon will be "The Sound of Silence."

Those of us in Cynthia Bourgeault's wisdom community have been encouraged to make our way through various books to aid us in thinking about a contemplative response to our broken social fabric. One book which I am reading now is, ironically, a scientific work, called Design in Nature by Adrian Bejan and J. Peder Zane. The book describes what is being called, the constructal law, which governs how nature and humans create systems designed to facilitate the flow of everything from heat, to water, to energy, and information. This law explains why we see the same patterns and structures in trees, our blood vessels, rivers and their tributaries, and road systems. The applications of this law apply to the construction of efficient ways to cool our electronics and to promote traffic flows at airports, among other things. This law can even apply to the way that human cultures evolve.

Nature wants to move toward equilibrium. Ironically, the imperfections and resistances within nature are what create flow systems. In human life, imperfections and resistances are often seen as a problem, but without them, there would be no evolution of flow systems. There would be a movement to total equilibrium, which is how we define death. In death, the flow of movement stops.

Of course, when resistance and turbulence are too high, there will be a natural movement to more efficient patterns of flow, a move to greater equilibrium, but not total equilibrium. Imperfections and resistances remain, which means that life will too.

We are experiencing much individual and collective turbulence right now. Our circumstances give evidence of much fear and exhaustion among us. I share these feelings. We want things to change. We want for the chaos to stop. With time, we will move to greater equilibrium,

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but not total equilibrium. Imperfections and resistances will remain. This is what science is telling us.

Of course, so does our faith. From Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares, where he counsels us to be with what we don't want, be with the weeds for a while, to Paul's assurance in Romans that in all things God is working for our good, we are encouraged to trust that there is good at work in the bad.

Maybe if we can be with the reality of our fear and exhaustion and accept it to some degree, then perhaps we will become more prepared to begin to see how new patterns and structures among us are beginning to emerge, as part of God's on-going recreation of our lives and the earth. It's important for us to remain hopeful and to trust that there is good news even in bad times. Blessings all!

Soul Work (Oct. 13)

This Sunday, October 17, the Scripture readings will be Isaiah 53: 4 – 12 and Mark 10: 35 – 45. The sermon title is "Is the Third Time a Charm?" in reference to the verses just preceding the Gospel reading which indicate that this was the third time that Jesus told his disciples that he was going to suffer and die. The "hymn" after the sermon will be "While My Guitar Gently Weeps."

Whenever we read a passage in the Bible, it is not simply communicating a piece of information for our intellectual digestion. It is giving us a story to prepare us for our own lives, our own spiritual journey. Therefore, as we reflect on Jesus' repetition of his prediction of his suffering and death and his follower's resistance to his remarks, we can also begin to think about what aspects of our lives appear unpleasant or unthinkable to us and how we resist facing these.

No doubt, we feel this way about this on-going pandemic which inhibits our lives in many ways. Perhaps there are relational issues which we know are real, but because they are painful to deal with, we avoid doing so. More fundamentally, we avoid the true depths of our lives because it is easier to keep busy with tasks and pleasures.

When we become truly present to our lives and to one another, our hearts inevitably break open to the beauty and vulnerability of life. If we love deeply, we will become conscious of our vulnerability, because life is constantly in flux and no moment, no relationship, no life can be frozen in time. Every moment requires of us a letting go, so that the next moment can be embraced. If we try to hold on, we miss being present to what is actually arising as our lives. We try to shield ourselves from the challenge of true presence by freezing life and imposing our desires upon it.

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Isn't this what was going on with Jesus' disciples as he spoke to them of what lay ahead? They loved Jesus and wanted to keep him. They couldn't comprehend the depths and the cost of love. They simply could not allow love to take them where it would. In so many ways, I think that we all fight with life and presence and with where love would take us. It's understandable, yet the Jesus story assures us that all of our attempts at letting go and dying to our desire to hold on, lead us to something new and more beautiful than we can dream. Each moment presents us with some opportunity for soul work in which God is leading us to new life. Seeing this and living into it requires of us great faith.

Let us keep at our work moment by moment, letting go of our failures and embracing each new chance to open and trust. Blessings all!

Living in Two Worlds (Oct. 20)

This Sunday, October 24, the Scripture readings will be Jeremiah 31: 7 – 9 and Mark 10: 46 – 52. The sermon title is “After the Exile” and the “hymn” after the sermon is “After the Goldrush” written by Neil Young. (Click here on Sunday morning to join us).

Session met Tuesday night and struggled with how to conduct two tracks of worship simultaneously. In-person attendance was the highest since the pandemic began, approximately 25. For two consecutive Sundays, we have had children in Sunday School. Session hopes that we will continue to move forward toward growth in in-person worship and education.

However, we have received complaints from some who are choosing to worship from home that Livestreaming is not as meaningful as Zoom, with its interactive features. Session did approve going forward with improvements to our sound system which will make the sound on Livestreaming much better. We are not sure yet when these improvements will occur.

Beginning this Sunday, we will return to the Zoom format for virtual worshippers on a trial basis. There will be a gain for virtual worshippers in that their ability to interact with others will be re-established. However, there will also be losses. Andreea and other singers will continue to be in the sanctuary and the music experience for Zoom worshippers will likely not be as good as when Andreea played from her home. I will be in the pulpit, with my laptop before me and will turn my laptop toward singers when they share a piece of music. We will continue to have bulletins with a responsive Call to Worship and unison Prayer of Confession. Bulletins will be accessible on our website for virtual worshippers.

We will give this a try for a couple of weeks and see how it goes. Until this fall, my focus for worship was for the virtual congregation. Those who showed up in-person were watching me lead worship on the other side of my laptop. This fall the emphasis has changed to a focus on in-person worshippers, with virtual worshippers watching a broadcast from afar. A return to Zoom is an attempt to enhance worship for virtual worshippers without changing our

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focus from the in-person congregation. I am asking at home worshippers to be disciplined about remaining muted except for times when I invite unmuting. As I move my hands to help make a point in the sermon, I hope not to accidentally punch my computer screen. It is not easy to lead worship in ordinary times. It is difficult when leading worship in two different modalities at once. We will do our best and ask for grace.

I will end with an observation that our struggles with hybrid worship is something of a microcosm of what all of us are experiencing in our lives. We live in two worlds at once. Some emphasize freedom to return to life as it was before. Some emphasize safety and taking measures to limit exposure to COVID. Those in service professions such as teachers, health-care workers and others find themselves pulled in two directions in their attempts to respond.

Our time is stressful and all of us are experiencing exhaustion, understandably. Let's commit to seeking grace, for ourselves and others. We can't expect that we will all see things the same. What we can do is be graceful with each other as we navigate our terrain as best as we know how. Blessings all!

Welcoming the Numinous (Oct. 27)

This Sunday, October 31, is both Halloween and Reformation Sunday. Who knows what ghosts of spiritual passion and wisdom will be gracing our worship this day? The Scripture readings will be Deuteronomy 6: 1 – 9 and Mark 12: 28 – 34. The sermon is being called, "Recovering the Sacred" and the "hymn" after the sermon will be "Both Sides, Now" by Joni Mitchell.

Last Sunday we broadcast worship on Zoom and Livestreaming. For the immediate future, at least, we will offer both platforms for virtual worshippers. The last two Sundays, in-person attendance was over twenty. We remain open to the leading of the Spirit as we continue to navigate these unusual times.

As the nights in the Northern hemisphere lengthen, we move into the celebration of holy and mysterious festivals. Halloween, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day offer three consecutive days and nights of remembering those who no longer occupy this material realm, while also recognizing that the veil which separates us from the invisible presences in our lives is thin. Soon we will approach the time of preparation and expectation of Advent, followed by the mystery of the Incarnation at Christmas. May this coming season be rich with opening and healing for us all!

Rosanne turns a year older this Friday. She has long been fascinated by the celebration, The Day of the Dead or Dia de Muertos which originated in Mexico. It's a time of remembering and celebrating family and friends who have died. So this year, her birthday party and din-

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ner at the manse will be an early celebration of The Day of the Dead.

The menu will be Mexican. Some of us may paint our faces white to represent to ourselves the reality that, ultimately, we are skeletons, or will be. There will be pictures of loved ones and items that were meaningful to them. Children and grandchildren will be present, and stories and expressions of gratitude will be shared.

It is easy for me to laugh and say something like, "There goes my cooky wife again!" Rosanne is offbeat, but her tendency towards foolishness also carries much wisdom. Since she announced to the family her plans for her birthday, I have found myself thinking a great deal about my deceased mother, brother and sister. They all died before I came to this church, a long time ago. So much of the time I live in my head, anticipating the future. This month I have found myself more in my heart and opening to how the past is still in my present.

I have been remembering the gifts of those no longer in this realm and how I am who I am because of them. Mom, Jared and Debbie have given me the very best of who I am. My debt and gratitude to them is infinite. My remembrance is not a desire to return to some past time, but a recognition that they are still living presences in me, guiding me to be my best in each moment.

We are moving into a numinous time of the year. My prayer is that it will be a deep and transformative time for us all. Blessings all!

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Nonprofit Organization

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL ENCLOSED

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

NOVEMBER 2021

Nov 1	Mon	All Saints' Day	
Nov 2	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Nov 3	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Nov 7	Sun	Daylight-Saving Time Ends	
Nov 9	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Nov 10	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Nov 11	Thu	Veterans Day	
Nov 16	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Nov 16	Tue	Session	7:00PM
Nov 17	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Nov 21	Sun	Christ the King Sunday	
Nov 22	Mon	Waterspirit Book Club*	6:00PM
Nov 22	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30PM
Nov 23	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Nov 25	Thu	Thanksgiving Day	
Nov 28	Sun	First Sunday of Advent	
Nov 30	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM

DECEMBER 2021

Dec 1	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Dec 5	Sun	2nd Sunday of Advent	
Dec 7	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Dec 8	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Dec 12	Sun	3rd Sunday of Advent & Pageant	
Dec 14	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Dec 15	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Dec 19	Sun	4th Sunday of Advent & Cantata	
Dec 21	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Dec 21	Tue	Session	7:00PM
Dec 22	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00PM
Dec 24	Thu	Christmas Eve	5:00 & 9:00PM
Dec 25	Sat	Christmas Day	
Dec 26	Sun	First Sunday of Christmas	
Dec 27	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30PM
Dec 28	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM

**Waterspirit sponsored event. All are welcome.*

Please visit their website (waterspirit.org) for more information about their events.



www.rumsonpresbyterian.org