

Oak Leaves

Vol. LXIV, Number 6

February 2022



A New Relationship with Time

by Pastor John

It seems that we all agree, regardless of our ideology and perspective, that we are living in strange times. Change and uncertainty are afoot and with it, anxiety abounds. I prefer life to be harmonious and predictable; but I am beginning to believe that this time is planting seeds for new life and deep renewal. Maybe that's just a coping mechanism in me—time will tell, as they say.

Jean Gebser believed that the next leap in human consciousness would bring about a new relationship with time. Currently, we experience time spatially. We create mental maps in relation to time, dividing it into segments of past, present, and future. For us, time is an empty palate upon which our lives play out. This is one reason that our relationship with time is so conflicted. We never seem to have enough time, on the one hand. On the other hand, we have too much time on our hands and look for ways to kill it. Gebser invited us to pay attention to our language and what it reveals to us about our psyches.

The mental-rational structure of consciousness which has dominated human history for hundreds of years is now revealing its inadequacies for our present moment in time. We sense deep within that something in us is lacking. We sense that something new needs to be born. Maybe a new relationship with and understanding of time is part of the something new which is emerging.

Gebser invited us to begin thinking of time more as a quality than as a quantity. Contemplatives of all backgrounds and all times have sensed this truth. In the silence and emptiness of contemplative practice, something is encountered—something more profound and holy than our minds can contain or begin to understand. Gebser called this something, Origin, which he claimed is ever present. Our minds are great for many things, but subtle and non-

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mental perception is not one of those. Gebser believed that the next leap in consciousness would integrate our mental and spiritual abilities. I believe that this great evolution is at play among us.

Last night, I witnessed our new Presbytery taking strides toward something new—perhaps. In 2022, certainly our church is moving toward something new. My conviction is that this something new is not to be feared or lamented. If we can learn to embrace it with trust, it will yield surprising results. I believe this. I sense it. I trust that God is with us. See you in Church!

Worshipping Together in January



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

Communion Sunday, February 6, 2022 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: **"When God Calls"** by **Rev. John W. Monroe III**

Scripture: **Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 5:1-11**

The call of God upon us does not make us comfortable. It overwhelms us and leads us to lives of service.

Sunday, February 13, 2022 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: **"Forgotten Sermons"** by **Rev. John W. Monroe III**

Scripture: **Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 6:17-26**

Not all sermons are remembered. Some, perhaps, we would rather forget. Are these two included in our list of forgotten sermons?

Sunday, February, 20, 2022 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: **"Lord, Have Mercy"** by **Rev. John W. Monroe III**

Scripture: **Genesis 45:3-11,15; Luke 6:27-38**

We are called to be merciful, as God is merciful, who is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. By practicing mercy, we manifest the energy of God in the world.

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Transfiguration Sunday, February 27, 2022 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: "**The Future of Humanity**" by **Rev. John W. Monroe III**

Scripture: **2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36**

Both passages speak of a transformed humanity, marked by a quality of transparency, of splendor. Our destiny is to see through the density of our material existence into the spiritual dimensions which shine through for those with eyes to see.

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

Church School



Happy February!

It feels like the days (months) are passing by way too quickly. While the temperature is completely frigid, our Sunday's together warm my soul. If there is anything I can do for you or support your family in any way I would be more than happy to help. Please reach out to me at churchschool@rumsonpresbyterian.org or (732)768-9913 with any questions, requests or concerns.

If you know anyone who would like to volunteer for the nursery please let me know. Volunteers will be paid \$25 for the hour, time can also be used toward volunteer hours.

February Church School Calendar

February 6th: "When God Calls": Community Service-Valentine Cards for the Senior Center

February 13th: All you need is Love: Valentines Day Craft

February 20th: "Lord have Mercy": Manifesting Good- 'Good Egg Book and Craft'

February 27th: Family Worship

Sandi Van Cleve, Director of Christian Education

Music Program



Dear friends,

Wishing all a happy and healthy February.

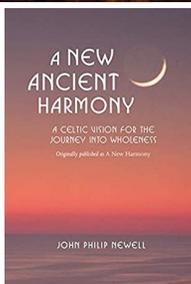
Thanks again to all of our guests and soloists who share their music with us in worship. We appreciate you!

If you are interested in joining in singing, please do let me know. We have a small choir at the moment (with no rehearsals) but we can always use enthusiastic people who love singing hymns or in a small group. Please email me if you'd like to join: andreeafegan@gmail.com

If there are any youth in the congregation who would also like to join in singing on Sundays, please let me know. I'd love to get the youth choir back together again, in any capacity we can. Please email me if you are interested. I'd love to make it happen!

Blessings, Andreea Fegan, Music Director

Adult Nurture



Wisdom Wednesdays: Each Wednesday, from 7:00 – 8:30, our Wednesday Wisdom meetings will focus on John Philip 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.

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



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

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As night fell on December 10, powerful tornadoes ripped across several states, ending the lives of more than 100 people and wreaking devastation across many communities by morning. In the wake of these catastrophic storms, it is the role of people of faith to shine as light in this bleakest of winters. We are called to be the hands and feet of God to help to rebuild the lives of those who have experienced significant loss. We are invited to stand with them — and to stand together — bearing witness by our gifts and prayers that God is indeed incarnate among us.

GIVE: Gifts can be made online at pcusa.org/DT21, by phone at (800) 872-3283, or by check using the below reply device. Text PDA to 41444 to donate.

ACT:

- Gift of the Heart Kits are a hands-on way to help others this Advent season (pcusa.info/heart).
- To register your interest in future rebuilding efforts, email PDA.CallCenter@pcusa.org. You will be notified when volunteer opportunities are available.

Stay informed and like us on Facebook (facebook.com/PDAcares), download resources at pda.pcusa.org/pda/resources and share updates with your congregation.

PRAY: As we learn of another natural disaster, we pray. For those experiencing loss, may they

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Waterspirit Event Calendar



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

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.

10-Step EcoAnxiety Support Group Info Session Wed., Feb 2 from 6:00 PM 7:00 PM

Register for this online informational meeting that will outline what this 10-step support group entails, explain the course's suggested donation, and answer any questions you might have prior to committing.

Volunteer Orientation Sat., Feb. 12 from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Are you ready to get more involved in your community? Do you embody Waterspirit's eco-spiritual mission, or are you ready to learn more about how to enact that mission? If so, please join us for Waterspirit's Volunteer Orientation 2022! This two-hour community gathering is intended for anyone who would like to learn more about eco-spirituality and volunteering with Waterspirit. We will give an overview of currently available opportunities (outreach, fundraising, advocacy, and office help), but there is always room to create new opportunities based on your skills and passions! Online on Zoom.

Community Advocacy with Waterspirit Thu., Feb. 24 from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Together, we will write individual public comments and submit them to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). No prior technical expertise is required. Starting with a grounding exercise and ice breaker and ending with a community soundboard opportunity, the public comment writing activity will be the focus of our shared time. Online on Zoom.

Beach Cleanup Sun., Feb. 27 from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Join Waterspirit and Save Coastal Wildlife as we clean up Cedar St. Park in Keyport, NJ!

Waterspirit Book Club Meeting Mon., Feb. 28 from 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Our book club will meet online on Zoom at 6PM ET to discuss the book: Loving Water Across Religions; Contributions to an Integral Water Ethic, by Elizabeth McAnally. Email water@waterspirit.org for more info.

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

A Meditation



Center for
Action and
Contemplation

Everyone Belongs : No One Is Expendable

by [Richard Rohr, OFM](#)

January 26, 2022

“Don’t laugh, folks: Jesus was a poor man.” —Phrase written on a canvas covering on the mule train of the 1968 Poor People’s Campaign

Jessica C. Williams, an activist with the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, invites us to consider the practical implications of the poverty of Jesus.

What if we take seriously the proclamation of the Mule Train organizers—that “Jesus was a poor man”? . . . [1]

In the time and place in which Jesus ministered, most people lived under the subjugation of the Roman Empire and were considered expendable. Elite rulers extracted wealth from all the lands they conquered, pushing people to hunger, homelessness, and the brink of starvation—and sometimes over the edge into slavery and death. The Bible tells us that Jesus had no place to lay his head (Luke 9:58), which is another way to say he was homeless. Jesus was trained in carpentry—a form of manual labor akin to low-wage work today—and he relied on the hospitality of friends, many of whom were also poor, to share meals and lodging with him. Jesus, the disciples, and those to whom they ministered were poor, subjected, and oppressed. They were the expendables. . . .

“Jesus was a poor man” is a theological statement. It is more than saying “Jesus *cares about* the poor,”—how Matthew 25:31–46 is often interpreted. In Matthew 25, what is usually translated as “the least of these” is the Greek word *elachistoi*, which literally means “the smallest or most insignificant ones”: in other words, the expendables. Jesus’s identity as one of the least of these is not a romantic, charitable notion; it is Jesus’s reality. He is saying that the social class of expendables are his people. The homeless, the poor, the incarcerated are Jesus’s friends, family, disciples, and followers, and Jesus himself. . . .

Interpretations of Matthew 25:31–46 that diminish Jesus’s ministry to that of charity miss the gospel message and actually help to maintain inequality. But when we understand that the Roman Empire considered Jesus to be expendable—much the same way the United States considers poor and low-income people, nearly half of the population, to be expendable—we see that being a follower of Jesus means something deeper than charity. Being

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Christlike means joining a movement, led by the poor and dispossessed, to lift the load of poverty. [2]

Father Richard comments on Matthew 25, reminding us that: Jesus teaches there is a moral equivalency between himself and other people. Jesus says, “Whatever you do to others, you do to me” (Matthew 25:40). How you treat other human beings is how you treat Jesus. That’s nondual thinking. Many Christians would read this statement and firmly say, “This is the Word of the Lord.” But it isn’t their actual practice. As long as they remain at the dualistic level, they can go to church and worship Jesus and be greedy, selfish, and racist an hour later, not seeing any conflict with that at all. [3]

References:

[1] The 1968 Poor People’s Campaign, which Martin Luther King Jr. organized right before his death, led a caravan of mules to carry people to the nation’s capital to draw attention to the plight of poverty.

[2] Jessica C. Williams, “Jesus Was a Poor Man,” in *We Cry Justice: Reading the Bible with the Poor People’s Campaign*, ed. Liz Theoharis (Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2021), 17–18, 19.

[3] Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Franciscan Mysticism: I AM That Which I Am Seeking*, disc 3 (Albuquerque, NM: Center for Action and Contemplation, 2012), CD, MP3 download.

Explore Further. . .

- Read Dorothy Day and Pope Francis on solidarity with the poor.
- Read Bryan Stevenson on love and proximity to one’s neighbor.
- Meet the team behind the Daily Meditations.

Pastor John’s Weekly E-Mail “Blasts”

Reclaiming Epiphany (Jan. 6)

This Sunday, January 9, the church celebrates the Baptism of the Lord. The Scripture readings are Isaiah 43: 1 – 7 and Luke 3: 15 – 17, 21 – 22. The sermon title is “Knowing Who You Are” and the hymn after the sermon will be “Down to the River to Pray.”

I am writing this email blast on the morning of January 6 which marks the beginning of the church season of Epiphany. Epiphany is derived from a Greek word meaning appearance or manifestation. In western Christianity Epiphany is associated with the magi from Persia who saw a star signifying the birth of a great king and who went in search of the promised king.

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Why has this story of the magi captured our imagination? As we set up our creches at home and sing “We Three Kings,” something within us is stirred to awakening. What this story represents, I believe, lies deep within the human psyche and bears witness to the ancient search for spiritual wisdom which remains latent and often dormant within us millennia later, even in our skeptical and rationalistic times. Something in us remembers that there is wisdom in the stars, that we are a part of a much larger cosmos which is a great manifestation of a God of love. We live in mystery, and we are called to search for that from which all things come, and which is manifested in all creation, including ourselves. The story of Epiphany captures the essence of our call to know and to awaken to the full depths of who we are in God.

This search and knowing that Epiphany represents is more than an intellectual search. This is the great failing of the mental-rational structure of human consciousness. We think that we can think our way to God. Yes, our mind is an essential part of our search for God, but only one part. The knowing of our bodies and our hearts must also be respected and nurtured in our search. There are things that we can know that the mind cannot understand. The key is to create balance in all our centers of knowing. All stories of spiritual searching record moments of challenge and frustration when the searcher feels like giving up. This search is hard, not always easy or convenient, and requires of us faith.

As I sit in silent prayer, I feel upheld by an energy which I cannot explain, but this energy can be experienced and known as real and sustaining. I watch as my mind gets pulled in all directions by conflicting energies of fear or a desire for escape. But if I can gently return my attention to silence and presence, the calm, powerful, loving energy returns to my awareness and I know, in some very incomplete way, God. Not with my head, but with my whole self. The magi looked to the star which also has led our human ancestors in search for wisdom to look deeply within. God is being revealed constantly, if only we know how to look. Happy Epiphany!

More about Epiphany (Jan. 12)

This Sunday, January 16, I will be away on continuing education, working with Cynthia Bourgeault and some of her Wisdom community from across the globe. We will be together in West Virginia at the Claymont Retreat Center from January 13 – 19. Linda Goeddell will be leading worship and preaching. Thank you, Linda! I want to remind everyone that our Annual Congregational Meeting will be January 23 immediately after worship. If you choose not to worship in-person that Sunday, I encourage you to be on Zoom, so that we can be sure that we have a quorum and that you can participate. At the meeting, we receive Annual Reports, the 2022 budget and vote on my terms of call.

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Steve is including two links in this email blast. One is of a podcast and the other is an article about the podcast, which took place on January 6, Epiphany. The podcast features our newest member, Noushin Framke, who has been leading denominational efforts on Israel/Palestinian mission for years. I encourage you to listen to the podcast and read the article about it. We have a unique opportunity to learn about the church's work in this part of the world, with Noushin here in our midst. I am envisioning educational forums with Noushin in the coming year(s). What a blessing to have her among our fellowship!

Epiphany, as I mentioned last week, witnesses to an unveiling or manifestation of something significant. It acknowledges that we all have experiences where our eyes are opened, and we see something that we did not see before. It suggests that God is among us in ways that we do not see. Noushin and her work will give us an opportunity to see in ways that we have not before. A blessed Epiphany season to you all. And thanks to Noushin for her brave and faithful witness!

'A Matter of Faith' podcast:

<https://amatteroffaith.buzzsprout.com/1648090/9823879>

Presbyterian Mission article:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/an-epiphany-epiphany/>

The Gift of Challenge (Jan. 30)

This Sunday, January 30, the Scripture readings are 1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 13 and Luke 4: 21 – 30. The sermon title is “What Hallmark Doesn’t Know About Love.” The “hymn” after the sermon will be “Love Is the Answer” by England Dan and John Ford Coley.

If you come into worship, physically or virtually, this Sunday, you will see how challenging these two readings are. Jesus and Paul lived into and worked with all that was within them for a new humanity. They were perfectly aware of how difficult it would be for us to take the same path as they, but they lived and taught in hope, nonetheless. They were not afraid of challenging us or of dealing with the backlash from their challenge. They carried such magnificent hope!

For most of our lives, those of us in this country and in the West have had a sense of optimism and hope. The flow of history seemed to support us and the institutions which shaped our shared existence seemed equal to any task. All the sudden, the flow of history and the collapse of faith in our institutions apparently are leaving us standing on shaky ground. The future is uncertain, and trust is in short supply.

As unsettling as this is, my sense is that this moment is asking of us a deeper encounter of our spiritual roots for the strength and the grace which are required of us. My hope in exter-

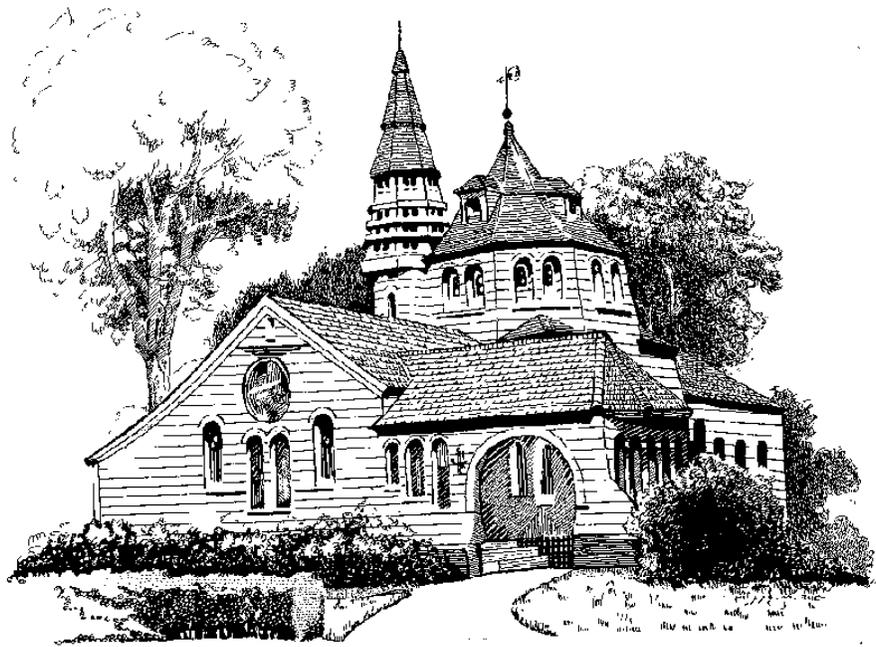
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nals is much less than before, but my hope in the inbreaking of the Spirit within and among us is greater. It seems that we humans turn to the spiritual only when all other options fail. It is no accident that some of the greatest spiritual movements occur in times of challenge.

Instead of allowing ourselves to be frozen in fear and denial, let us open ourselves fully to this moment and dig deeply into the resources of our spiritual tradition, perhaps, beginning to hear the depth of what is there for the first time. Blessings all. Take heart, for God is with us!

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Nonprofit Organization

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DATED MATERIAL ENCLOSED

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

FEBRUARY 2022

Feb 1-28		Black History Month	
Feb 1	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 2	Wed	Groundhog Day	
Feb 2	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Feb 8	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 9	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Feb 14	Mon	Valentine's Day	
Feb 15	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 15	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Feb 16	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Feb 21	Mon	Presidents' Day	
Feb 22	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 23	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Feb 27	Sun	Transfiguration Sunday	
Feb 28	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30PM

MARCH 2022

Mar 1	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 2	Wed	Ash Wednesday	
Mar 2	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Mar 4	Fri	World Day of Prayer	
Mar 8	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 9	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Mar 13	Sun	Daylight-Savings Time begins	
Mar 15	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 15	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Mar 16	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Mar 17	Thu	St. Patrick's Day	
Mar 20	Sun	First Day of Spring	
Mar 22	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 23	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm
Mar 28	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30PM
Mar 29	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 30	Wed	Wisdom Group	7:00pm

**Waterspirit sponsored event. All are welcome.*

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



www.rumsonprebyterian.org