

Oak Leaves

Vol. LXIV, Number 10

June 2022



In Search of More

by Pastor John

As I write, Rosanne and I are preparing for our week with Cynthia Bourgeault and others in Stonington, Maine. I know that the week will be powerful and supportive to our near and far aims of consciously growing toward union with God through daily conscious work. As is always the case with Cynthia's wisdom gatherings, the learning will involve all three of our centers—intellectual, feeling, and moving. Meaningful spiritual work requires the whole of ourselves in balance with each other.

I wish that I could easily describe the path that we are on. But I cannot. It is rigorous. It is intellectually challenging, but the intellect is only one piece of the work, and by no means the most important part. There are meditative exercises, complicated body movement sessions, some physical work, mixed in with periods of rest for deeper assimilation. Perhaps most of all, is an openness to dimensions of what we might call invisible or spiritual realms.

We live in a post-enlightenment world. We are children of that experiment, begun in the west in which people decided to abandon Medieval religion and religious power for faith in reason and scientific/technical and secular power. Yes, these past several hundred years have brought many blessings to our world, but in the process, we have a sense that we also have lost something very important. I believe that what we have lost is a tradition of spiritual wisdom to infuse our lives with trust and meaning.

In placing our trust only in rationality, we have reduced what can be seen and experienced by us. I remember how Rosanne has said for years that she feels closer to her parents in death than in life. She would say that she knew that her parents were with her. I thought that she was speaking metaphorically and simplistically. As a "professional" theologian, I could not speak in such a way. Since my dad's death in March, I have come to see that what

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she was saying is true. Work between me and my dad has been going on for weeks now, and I don't mean that only as a work of my imagination. Invisible, spiritual realms are real, and we do well to start learning how to navigate them now, before we die. And to do this with some wisdom and protection from self-delusion, we need some trustworthy and accomplished guides. It is this guidance that we have lost in the west and which we desperately need to recover. That's what Rosanne and I will be up to as we are away. See you when we get back in church!

Worshipping Together in June



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

Communion Sunday, June 5, 2022 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: **"Witness"** by Rev. Sue Smith

Scripture: **Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21**

The scriptures today tell the stories of the Tower of Babel and Pentecost. Both stories have a focus of differing languages. What is God's purpose? Diversity or confusion? How do we respond?

Congregational Meeting immediately following service

Sunday, June 12, 2022 @ 9:45 AM

Sermon: **"Getting in the Flow"** by Rev. John W. Monroe III

Scripture: **Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; John 16:12-15**

The Greek word for God comes from another word for flow. God is flow. The doctrine of the Trinity helps us to stop thinking about God as an object, and to think of God as a verb, as a flow of creativity and healing in which we participate.

Church Picnic immediately following service, weather permitting

Sunday, June 19, 2022 @ 9:15 AM

Sermon: **"Defined by Love"** by Rev. John W. Monroe III

Scripture: **Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39**

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In Galatians, we are told that we are God's children. In Luke, we read of a man whom Jesus heals from his possession by the identities and energies of the culture. We are not defined by any human culture. We are defined by God's love for us.

Sunday, June 26, 2022 @ 9:15 AM

Sermon: "**Jesus' Definition of Freedom**" by **Rev. John W. Monroe III**

Scripture: **Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62**

Both readings make clear that Jesus' definition of freedom is freedom from self-identification and freedom for sharing in the love of God.

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

Church School



I can't believe we are approaching summer so quickly. I would love to plan another Ice Cream Social over the summer, let me know if anyone would be interested. We are still collecting unwanted (unstained) t-shirts to repurpose and make dog toys for Animal Rescue Groups. Please consider donating for a good cause. We have placed a drop box in Wilson Hall. Please contact me with any questions or concerns, I am always here and would love to support you in any way needed.

June 5th: "When the World Becomes Holy": Monthly Nourishment Recipe Book

June 12th: "Getting in the Flow" : Father's Day Cards/ chalk messages

***** Church Picnic*****

June 19th: "Defined by Love": Mindfulness, outdoor walk

June 26th: "Jesus' Definition of Freedom": Family Worship

July 3rd: Monthly Nourishment Recipe Book

As always, looking for "volunteers" for the Nursery. Please reach out to me at churchschool@rumsonpresbyterian.org or (732)768-9913 if you know someone who may be interested. The pay is \$25 per session or credit for volunteer hours.

Thank You!

Sandi Van Cleve, Director of Christian Education

Music Program

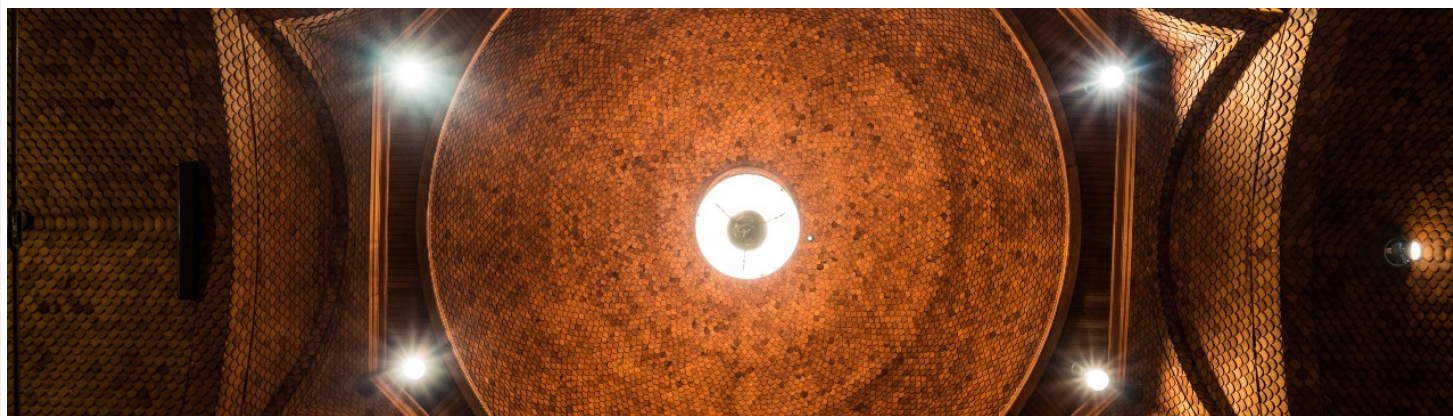


A great big thank you to everyone who continuously gave their musical gifts in service this past year, which includes special soloists and the adult choir! As we look forward to the summer, I'm always looking for music soloists. Please reach out if you'd like to join in the music worship. It be vocal or instrumental, and all are welcome.

Blessings to you and your family,

Andreea Fegan, Music Director

Mission News



The Mission Commission decisions this month centered on recommendations from our committee members. After a favorable experience that our Mission member, Jodi Sackett, had with the “The Furniture Bank”, we are advancing a donation to this group through the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Manasquan. The Furniture Bank is powered by a small team of volunteers which connects donors and households and facilitates free retrieval and delivery services for essential furniture and home goods. We also discussed the possibility of doing a Fall drive for surplus kitchen, bed and bath items that are greatly in need.

As we look forward to the summer months, we agreed to donate to the Boys & Girls Club of America. Though we may think of this organization as providing summer camp opportunities, the mission is “To enable all young people, especially those who need us the most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens” by promoting safe, posi-

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tive and inclusive environments. We are also donating to the Horizon Student Enrichment Program at the Jersey Shore which has operated on the Rumson Country Day School campus for over two decades. The six-week academic and enrichment program offers ~250 students a tuition free summer program designed to prevent summer learning loss, foster lifelong desire for learning, provide cultural experiences and social growth and ensure all children learn to swim!

Our Peacemaking Scholarship team led by Susan Bostic and Jody Sackett has approved scholarships for five dedicated and talented high school seniors as part of the annual campaign. Each year the schools providing candidates marvel at the unique criteria for this scholarship focused on commitment to community, giving and kindness. We look forward to hearing some of their stories later this summer.

Finally, the church provides support annually to the Parker Family Health Center and decided to take action earlier this year given the criticality of health care services illuminated so starkly by the persistence of Covid infections. The Parker Family Health Center continues the extraordinary mission of father and son doctors – Drs James Parker Sr and Jr, who founded the clinic to provide medical services to uninsured individuals. Dr Parker Sr started in Red Bank during the 1919 influenza epidemic, treating patients in their homes since none of the local hospitals would accept an African-American doctor on their staff. The clinic offers exceptional services to our community through a network of volunteers and specialists representing 20 disciplines and we are pleased to continue our support for this organization.

Mission Commission meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30pm. We welcome anyone who is interested to join at any time.

Anita Waters, Mission Chair

Other Church News



Peacemaking Awards

This year we have five recipients of the Peacemaking Award. These students have shown commitment to promoting the ideals and goals put forth in our mission statement. These

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goals include but are not limited to, tolerance of diversity, empathy for others, social justice for all, and protection of the earth.



Gabriella Campo is our first recipient. She is graduating from Ocean Township High School and will be attending Rowan University in the fall. When growing up her mother told her she “didn’t have to change to fit in and didn’t have to do what everyone else was doing....just “Be Bella!”” Being passionate about the visual and performing arts she sees how one can be considered not cool or not being accepted by the mainstream. Thus #beBELLA (Because Everyone’s Legacy is Limitless and Accepted) was created. It is forum for timid, or shy artists to express themselves without worrying about judgment. #beBELLA (@hashtag_bebella) is on Instagram.

The second recipient is Gillian Bedward. She is graduating from Asbury Park High School and will attend Monmouth University in the fall. She has helped organize and plan fundraisers and community service events for school organizations in which she has leadership roles. She has tutored students in Algebra 1 virtually, and is presently a teacher’s assistant. She is active in her church’s community service events, and she helped members of her church build a website.

Eva Herrera, who is graduating from Asbury Park High school, and Brookdale Community College with an associate degree in Social Science, and will attend Pace University in the fall, is the third recipient. She has assisted in food distribution at Fulfill, started a coin collection to purchase ShopRite gift cards for a family, collected funds for children with Leukemia, and promoted events for Autism Awareness and Breast Cancer Awareness. Her major at Pace University is communications/mass media studies with the goal of becoming an editor or publisher. She wants to help promote minority authors and be a mentor to those who wish to enter the world of writing or publishing.

Our fourth recipient is Skyler LaFisca who is graduating from Allentown High School and will attend Kean University in the fall. She has been very active in her school (athletics, clubs, National Honor Societies, Student Council) and volunteering in various areas of need. Her volunteer services have included Zani’s Furry Friends (animal adoption center), Special Olympics, Riding High Farm (Handicapped High Riders Club), local food pantries, tutoring, and mentoring younger athletes at softball clinics.

Our final recipient is Alyssa Lucci who is graduating for Rumson Fair Haven Regional High School and will be attending Clemson University this fall. She has been active with Habitat for Humanity as Vice President of the high school chapter and volunteering at local Home Builds and Brush for Kindness events; worked with the Monmouth County SPCA to coordinate donation drives and pet adoption drives; raised funds for the World Wildlife Fund

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through a virtual pet show; volunteered with RFH Booster Club at events to raise money; assisted teaching CCD classes and volunteering at Vacation Bible School.

Congratulations to each of the students and we wish them well as they set out on the next leg of their life's journey.

Peacemaking Committee

Giving

GIVEPLUS⁺

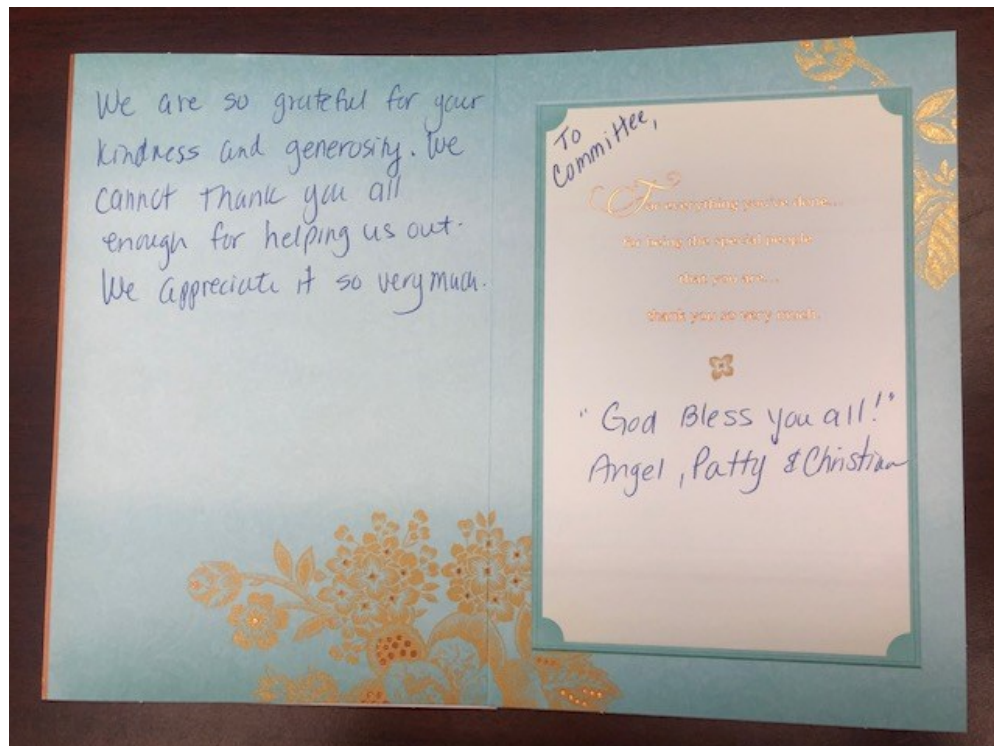
YOUR CHURCH GIVING APP

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.

A Note from Angel, Patty & Christian Caraballo



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

Waterspirit



Have a Great Meal at Joys of the Sea



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Please join us for Waterspirit's annual benefit, Joys of the Sea!
This year's event will feature an abundance of sustainable, plant-based food from Green Cart Catering. What a blessing it will be to break bread together again!

Date: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 (World Oceans Day)

Time: 4-7 p.m.

Location: 4 E. River Rd., Rumson, NJ 07760 (outdoors)

Tickets: \$85

This outdoor summer event will be filled with community-building conversations, delicious plant-based food & wine, beautiful music, and a special address by this year's winner of the Suzanne Golas CSJP Award, Maria Lopez-Nuñez of the Ironbound Community Corporation.

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 is approximately 30 minutes.

Community Advocacy Meeting **Thu., June 2** from **11:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Join together (in person or online) as we formulate final comments to submit to the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, urging the redesign of a back up power facility that focuses solely on 100% renewable energy options, across the larger energy grid.

Rally for the Two Rivers Eco-Fest **Sat., June 4** from **9:00 AM - 12:30 PM**

Catch Waterspirit at the 2022 Rally for the Two Rivers Eco-Fest! This free, family-friendly event is an environmental celebration of the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers. Join us for a morning of live music, hands-on activities, and beautiful river views.

Joys of the Sea **Wed., June 8** from **4:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

Waterspirit's annual benefit, Joys of the Sea, will once again be held in-person! Please join us outdoors in the Oak Grove at the First Presbyterian Church of Rumson to celebrate World Oceans Day together. This summer afternoon will be filled with community-building conversations, delicious plant-based food & wine, beautiful music, and a special guest speaker.

Waterspirit's Summer Solstice Celebration **Tue., June 21** from **7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

Join Waterspirit as we celebrate and welcome Summer during our annual Summer Solstice Celebration! Enjoy this evening of reflection and ritual in-person as we celebrate Summer, a season of new vitality and energy for Mother Earth and the human spirit. During this time of prayer and gratitude we pray also that we may transform and awaken to new energy and life within ourselves. Special guest performers, Core of Fire Dancers.

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've got to move Earth Day to 12 months a year'

by Darla Carter, Presbyterian News Service

(PNS) — Friday is the official day that many people will celebrate Earth Day. But being good stewards of God's Creation is a year-round priority for members of First Presbyterian Church in Lawrence, Kansas.

The church is an Earth Care Congregation (ECC) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and has an EcoTeam whose mission is to further the Earth care education and advocacy in the church and beyond. Churches that commit to PC(USA)'s four-part Earth Care Pledge and complete eco-friendly activities and projects tied to worship, education, facilities and outreach are eligible for ECC certification from the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

"Every year you go back and you check what you've done, and you're looking to what you might do; it's a good discipline," said Thad Holcombe, EcoTeam moderator at First Presbyterian Church.

The church's activities have included planting 14 indigenous trees and working to return a portion of the lawn back to native prairie landscape. It also has a pollinator garden and holds educational forums on Earth care topics, such as moving to green energy and improving lawn care.

The work stems from a recognition that the Earth is sacred and that salvation is not just about saving individuals but healing the whole planet, Holcombe said. The team also recognizes the importance of biodiversity and addressing the needs of more than just humans, from bees and butterflies to bluebirds. "We've got to move Earth Day to 12 months a year," he said.

Concerned about the world's declining bee population, the church has changed the way it keeps the grounds. "We decided we're going to take a



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portion of the lawn and un-mow it,” Holcombe said. The church has encouraged others in the community to reduce mowing as well.

The goal is not only to curtail the use of fossil fuel, but to allow “the early flowers, including dandelions that come up, to remain so that species of bees ... can come and be pollinators and survive,” Holcombe said.

In addition to taking care of its own land, First Presbyterian is a Matthew 25 church and is active in advocacy work in the community as part of an interfaith group called Lawrence Ecology Teams United in Sustainability, which goes by the acronym LET-US.

“The group LET-US takes on anything that any of the faith community groups would like to advocate in terms of public policy” at the city, county or state level, Holcombe said.

For example, “we were very instrumental in the new development plan, the overall development plan of the county,” and “getting the environment moved to a top priority,” he said. “We’ve also initiated banning single-use plastics, which has really been a struggle. We went to the state with that.”

In addition to its work with LET-US, the church has collaborated with the local Haskell Indian Nations University on projects, including erecting an acknowledgment of place sign on the

church grounds last year. The sign says, “We at First Presbyterian Church acknowledge that long before the church was built, these lands were cared for by Indigenous peoples including the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Pawnee, Osage, and Kanza. We honor their people, their wisdom, past and present.”

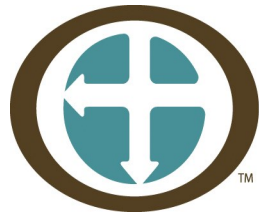


The church also has studied the book “Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants” by botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer, a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and hosted a multi-part series on Indigenous peoples that included participation by university students and staff.

“We have a history that we have to deal with,” Holcombe said. Given the country’s history, including colonization and the Doctrine of Discovery, it’s important to say, “This is where we’ve been” and “this is where we need to go.”

The Presbyterian News Service (PNS) is the official news agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

A Meditation



Center for
Action and
Contemplation

Struggling with Christianity : Staying Out Loud

by [Richard Rohr, OFM](#)

May 24, 2022

Over the decades Brian McLaren has had many conversations with faithful Christians who are also disillusioned by church and religion. After one evening spent in the company of two Roman Catholic sisters who have stayed in service to the church for over fifty years, McLaren reflects:

“There are more than two options,” I thought. “I don’t have to choose between staying Christian compliantly or leaving Christianity defiantly. I can *stay defiantly*, like Sr. Ann and Sr. Jean [not their real names]. I can intentionally, consciously, resolutely refuse to leave . . . and with equal intention and resolution, I can refuse to comply with the status quo. I can occupy Christianity with a different way of being Christian.”

When I say *stay defiantly*, I don’t mean *ungraciously*. Srs. Ann and Jean radiate such gentleness and inner calm that accusations of being ungracious simply don’t stick. No, with firm yet gracious defiance, they will keep speaking their truths and will continue doing so from the inside as long as they can.

McLaren finds encouragement to remain a committed Christian in Jesus’ own decision to stay and wrestle with his Jewish faith even as he was rejected:

I can no longer put a naïve trust in the structures of the Christian religion, seeing and knowing what I see and know now. But instead of rejecting my religious community, I remain paradoxically present to it, neither minimizing its faults nor hating it for its faults. . . .

Jesus, of course, counted this cost. He stayed out loud. And it’s worth noting where his staying led him. Not to winning. Not to success. It led him to the utter defeat and humiliation of the cross.

Was he a fool to keep faith through his dying breath, to translate his feeling of forsakenness into a prayer? Was he a fool to think that the legacy of the prophets, the legacy of his cousin John, and the legacy of his mother, Mary, were worth staying for, to save that legacy from corruption by the religious gatekeepers of his day?

Was he a fool to stay in the fray with the religious company men of his day, naming their corruption and toxicity with carefully chosen words like “whitewashed sepulchers” and “brood

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of vipers” [Matthew 23:27, 33]? Would he have been wiser to leave quietly for India and become Hindu, or to go quietly to China and become Buddhist instead of challenging the status quo of his own religion?

Was he a fool to think that the tiny handful of people who got only a tiny sliver of his message and saw some faint glimmer of what he saw could outlive him and do greater things than he had done?

Are you willing to be that kind of fool? Am I?

Today, at least, inspired by the example of Sr. Jean and Sr. Ann, I am.

Reference:

Brian D. McLaren, *Do I Stay Christian? A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned* (New York: St. Martin’s Essentials, 2022), 94, 96.

Pastor John’s Weekly E-Mail “Blasts”

Transforming Negative Emotion (May 5)

This Sunday, May 8, is the fourth Sunday of Easter. In our culture, of course, it is also Mother’s Day. Part of our work is to practice holding onto two realities at the same time—in this case, the cultural reality of Mother’s Day and the church calendar of the season of Easter. The Scripture readings are Acts 9: 36 – 43 and John 10: 22 – 30. The sermon title is “Jesus’ Mantle,” and the two hymns are “God of Grace and God of Glory” and “Will You Come and Follow Me.”

As I checked the news this morning, the leak of a draft of the upcoming decision concerning Roe v. Wade was the dominating story. I watched a few moments of competing ideological coverage. Watching how different cable stations cover the news made me laugh out loud. Not that the story is funny. But how the story is delivered so differently is funny, and tragic.

Last June, at a Wisdom gathering in Stonington, Maine, a former DOJ lawyer predicted exactly what seems to be happening. It looks as though the Supreme Court will overturn Roe and kick abortion decisions to the states. Tim Shriver, founder of UNITE, predicted that our Industrial Outrage Machine would stoke the fires of anger and division for profit and political gain. Either Shriver and this attorney were clairvoyant or simply very well informed about our systems and institutions.

Please don’t think that I am making light of this issue. I am not. Real lives are involved, and as usual, the most vulnerable among us will be the ones who most bear the cost. God is not

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pleased with our hypocrisy and our lack of awareness and compassion. The point that I want to lift up is the lifelessness and despair of our chronic dualistic bent of consciousness. Our culture wars will not produce life, no matter which side “wins” the latest skirmish. Powerful interests are invested in keeping us divided and enraged. When will we decide to get off of this death train and pursue another vehicle for life? When will we learn to seek for a reconciling force and for a greater wholeness which holds us all in love?

This issue is just one example of many which comes to us individually and collectively in any given day. The spiritual practice is to avoid expressions of negative emotion, and to gather ourselves until a higher presence can lead us to act in love and in truth. Let’s collectively take a breath and seek the Christ in us which loves all and trusts and seeks the path of wisdom—collectively and in our individual lives.

To Do and To Be (May 12)

This Sunday, May 15, is the 5th Sunday of Easter. The Scripture readings are Revelation 21: 1 – 6 and John 13: 31 – 35. The sermon title is “The Renewal of Earth” and the hymns will be “The World Is About to Turn” and “Love Is the Answer.”

As I have mentioned, my focus for this last year of ministry has been on the church calendar and to the greater realms to which they point. These spiritual realms are real and potentially present to us in this life, but they require work and preparation on our part to become aware of them. I have been experiencing this reality especially since my dad’s death in March. I was talking to my brother today and said that in some strange but real way I feel closer to my dad in death than in life. He said that he understood and could relate. Is this imagination or is it real? I think that it is real.

I also have signaled that after Easter, I might begin to communicate more about my coming retirement. This too is becoming more real as the months pass and the need to prepare is real. I felt a pull today to reflect on my twenty-four years here and to put thoughts down in writing which I will share with the Session soon. What is the work and purpose of the church? In our changing world how does the work of the church change? In many ways, trying to answer these questions has been the driving force of these past twenty-four years.

What I have learned is that the answers don’t always fit into the notions we have in mind. I am in that strange time where I am no longer trying to experiment with what the church of the future will be and do. I am in that time where I am preparing to hand off leadership and decision-making to others. In other words, I am letting go and preparing leadership to think about the tasks which lie ahead for them and the church.

So often we are consumed with questions of what do we need to do. Work for the church lies ahead. But equally as important is the question of who we are going to be. Are we going

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to be people in whom the presence of God dwells and radiates? Are we going to be those in whom the spiritual and earthy realms are made one?

Work lies ahead, but the work will be best if it is informed by wisdom from above. There is help coming to us at all times, if we are awake enough to see and receive it. To do well, we must be well. Blessings all!

Stargazing (May 19)

This Sunday, May 22, is the 6th Sunday of Easter. The Scripture readings are Revelation 21: 10, 22: 22 – 22: 5 and John 14: 23 – 29. The sermon title is “Our Far Aim” and the hymns are “I’ve Got Peace Like a River” and “Wedding Song” by Noel Paul Stookey.

As I mentioned last Sunday in the sermon, Rosanne and I took our granddaughter, Sedona, to the Liberty Science Center for an early birthday present. We saw a provocative and inspiring video on our solar system in their Imax theater, in which we flew through the solar system and circled around our sun, the planets, and their moons and down to their surfaces.

The presenter also remarked on the recent photograph of the black hole at the center of our galaxy, the lunar eclipse last Sunday, and the lining up of four planets in the early morning sky. These heavenly realities may not seem to be a big part of our daily concerns and immediate experience, but we are in relation with these cosmic realities. In a very real sense, these locate our home in the universe. They expand the way we think about our true address.

The ancients knew that they were in relationship with the heavens and that we live in them and they in us. We have lost this sense of a living connection with the stars, with the earth, and even with one another. I think that this experience is not unrelated to our lack of a vital sense of connection with God.

If we are truly awake to the greater reality of which we are a part, we will experience awe and joy more often. In a world which has cut down the meaning of life to economics and possessions, we need an infusion of awe and joy, which come only from a deep awareness of reality. As Thomas Aquinas said, we are capable of the universe. By that, he meant that if we do not wake ourselves up to who we truly are—children of the universe and children of God—then our lives will be less than whole, and we will be looking for wholeness in all the wrong places. Such is the soul-sickness which haunts our era.

This summer, feed your soul by stargazing and reading about the universe which is our home. In times of prayer and meditation, as you let go of self-preoccupation, perhaps you will experience that the unnamable also dwells in you, in your depths, or what our tradition has called our soul. Live from there. Blessings all!

Holding What Can't Be Held (May 25)

I will be away for the next two Sundays, May 29 and June 5. Rosanne and I will be attending a week of spiritual work with Cynthia Bourgeault and others in Stonington, Maine. Andy Kirkpatrick will preach and lead worship on May 29 and Sue Smith will preach, lead worship and Communion, and also moderate a brief Congregational Meeting after worship on June 5. At the Congregational Meeting, we will elect new members of Session and receive a financial report.

Like everyone, I am trying to process another horrific school shooting which occurred in Texas yesterday. These shootings are always traumatic and especially when they take place in a school of young children. I wish that I could offer words of healing and hope. It is hard to know what is an appropriate pastoral response. Leaders and people on both sides of our ideological divide offer our familiar and predictable responses. There is a time of collective handwringing, blame, and offering of partial solutions until the next shooting, whereupon we will repeat the same cycle of collective response.

I know what my ideas are for how to respond to this continuing crisis, and you know yours. We will turn to voices which mirror our own views and take comfort in being on the right side and attempt to make ourselves feel better by shaking our fingers at those who see things so differently than we do. Collectively, we remain stuck in this pattern of dualistic deadlock.

Anger is understandable and appropriate. Every-once-in-a-while, I allow myself to imagine my feelings if such a shooting were, God forbid, to happen to one of my grandchildren. It's unthinkable, of course. But in one way or another, all of us are forced to hold this on-going reality which cannot be held. I think that the only way for something new to happen among us is for a large number of us to really put ourselves imaginatively in the shoes of those who lose loved ones in this way.

This is a tall order. It's easier to retreat once again into our ideological silos than to offer our hearts on the altar of sacrifice. We live in a system where money and power rule. People are devalued. We live with a collective soul-sickness, and there are inevitable consequences to this reality. Jesus, I believe, would call for deep, nonattached, and collective repentance. In prayerful grief, Pastor John



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

Nonprofit Organization

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL ENCLOSED

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

JUNE 2022

Jun 2	Thu	Community Advocacy Meeting*	11:00 AM
Jun 4	Sat	Rally for the Two Rivers Eco-Fest*	9:00 AM
Jun 5	Sun	Day of Pentecost	
Jun 7	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM
Jun 8	Wed	Joys of the Sea*	4:00 PM
Jun 12	Sun	Trinity Sunday	
Jun 14	Tue	Flag Day	
Jun 14	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM
Jun 19	Sun	Father's Day	
		Summer worship hours begin	9:15 AM
Jun 21	Tue	Summer Begins	
Jun 21	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM
Jun 21	Tue	Summer Solstice Celebration*	7:00 PM
Jun 21	Tue	Session	7:00 PM
Jun 27	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30 PM
Jun 28	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM

JULY 2022

Jul 4	Mon	Independence Day	
Jul 5	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM
Jul 7	Thu	Eco Poetry Workshop*	4:00 PM
Jul 12	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM
Jul 19	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM
Jul 26	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15 PM

**Waterspirit sponsored event. All are welcome.*

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



www.rumsonprebyterian.org