

# Oak Leaves

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February 2023



## *Dear Congregation...*

*by Rev. Dr. Paul J. Kirbas*

As we enter the door into this new year, we have also entered the first phase of my work with you as your Interim Pastor. This phase, planned from the time I began on December 1 and going forward until the end of February, is focused on building relationships and pastoral listening. In this pastor article, I would like to share with you the progress we have been making in this first phase.

It was a wonderful dinner event that was put together to welcome Jennifer and me on Friday evening, January 13. Although Friday the 13th is suspected to bring bad luck, nothing could have been more different for our experience that evening. The food and fellowship were delightful. I found everyone carefully listening when I presented the Interim period map. Following my presentation, great questions and comments were offered, which demonstrated to me that this congregation truly wishes to be engaged in this transitional project.

As the weeks have gone by, I have been learning names, and hearing stories. People have been very open and transparent as they have shared their experiences and views of where the church has been, and where they see it going. Hopes and concerns have been shared. All of this is very helpful for me to get a sense of the general health of Rumson Presbyterian Church. I want to thank those who have taken the initiative to meet with me. If you would like to participate in this listening time, please call or email me. I would love to meet with you.



As we approach the end of phase one, toward the end of February, we will need to build a new and important team that will be essential for a successful interim period. It is called the Transition Team.

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This team of church members will work with me as we plan the next events in our transition work, and will eventually prepare the all-important Mission Study Report that will become the cornerstone of the church's search for a new permanent pastor. This team should consist of about 5 to 7 members, who represent the membership well. If you would like to suggest a name for this committee, or if you would like to put your own name into consideration, please call or email me.

We are off to a good start, and time will move quickly. We have much to do, but let's not lose sight of the fun we can have along the way. This is an exciting time for the Rumson Presbyterian Church. Jennifer and I are very happy to be with you in this journey.

In God's Love,  
Paul J Kirbas

## *Worship*



## *Worship News*

On the Liturgical Calendar, the month of February 2023 ushers in some important liturgical days for us to celebrate here in the worship life of Rumson Presbyterian Church.

Sunday, February 19 is known as Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday. It is always the last Sunday before the beginning of the season of Lent, and it focuses on the story of Jesus climbing the mountain and being transformed before the wide eyes of the disciples. This is a story of Transcendence, and we will consider what transcendence meant for Jesus, and what it means for us.

Wednesday, February 22, is Ash Wednesday. It is the day that signifies the season of Lent. On this day, it has been traditional throughout the ages to offer the imposition of ashes as a reminder of our mortality. Here at Rumson Presbyterian Church, we will hold our Ash Wednesday service at 7:30 PM. As many local churches do not have services on Ash Wednesday, this is a good service to invite friends and neighbors to join you.

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Sunday, February 26 is the First Sunday in Lent. This Lent, Pastor Paul Kirbas will be offering a worship series based on the Beatitudes. Each Sunday, we will focus on one of the beatitudes, and find the deeper understanding of what Jesus was truly teaching. This worship series, entitled "Living the Blessed Life", will offer a theme hymn that we will sing together each Sunday. The series will continue through the 5 Sundays of Lent, to lead us to Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

February is an important time for worship. We invite you and encourage you to be here in the sanctuary to experience this important liturgical time.

## *Worshipping Together in February*

### **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, February 5th, 2023 @ 9:45 AM (Communion)**

Sermon: "Down the Drain" by Rev. Dr. Paul J. Kirbas

Scripture: **Psalm 133; 1 Corinthians 13**

What can truly rain on the parade of our gifts and abilities? One of the most famous passages of the Bible shows us the answer!

### **Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, February 12th, 2023 @ 9:45 AM**

Sermon: "I Pledge my Allegiance, to...." by Rev. Dr. Paul J. Kirbas

Scripture: **Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

Loyalty is generally a good thing, as long as we place it in a proper direction. This Valentine's Day, let's reclaim our proper love and allegiance, not to people, but to a higher power.

### **Transfiguration Sunday, February 19th, 2023 @ 9:45 AM**

Sermon: "The Gift of Transcendence" by Rev. Dr. Paul J. Kirbas

Scripture: **Exodus 24:12-18; Matthew 17:1-9**

On this Transfiguration Sunday, we witness the transformation and transcendence of Jesus Christ. What does transcendence really mean, and why do we need it now more than ever?

### **Ash Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023 @ 7:30 PM**

Sermon: "The Gift of Transcendence" by Rev. Dr. Paul J. Kirbas

Scripture: **Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

As we begin the season of Lent, we learn that actions in themselves are empty, unless the motives of those actions are pure.

### **First Sunday of Lent, February 26th, 2023 @ 9:45 AM**

Series: "Living the Blessed Life: A Walk Through the Beatitudes"

Sermon: "Poor in Spirit, Rich in Joy" by Rev. Dr. Paul J. Kirbas

Scripture: **2 Kings 5:1-14; Matthew 5:1-2**

Today we begin a Lenten sermon series on the Beatitudes. What leads to a blessed life? The answers are not always what we think.

For updates & more services, visit [rumsonpresbyterian.org/upcoming-services](http://rumsonpresbyterian.org/upcoming-services)

# *Church School*



Hello everyone!

The word February comes from the Latin word februa, which means “to cleanse”. Here at Church School we will be clearing out old, unused supplies and rehoming them. I have a few places who can always use craft supplies but if anyone else has a recommendation, I am open to suggestions. I have spent this last year trying to use mostly what we already have but there are so many older items we will never use.

We are also in search of our yearly service project. Last year we made dog toys for the animal rescue and cards for senior citizens but are looking for something different. If you know of a need we can assist with please reach out. Please email me directly at [churchschool@rumsonpresbyterian.org](mailto:churchschool@rumsonpresbyterian.org) or text me at (732) 768-9913 with any questions or concerns.

Warm Regards,  
Sandi Van Cleve, Director of Christian Education

As always, looking for “volunteers” for the Nursery. Please reach out to me at [churchschool@rumsonpresbyterian.org](mailto: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.

# *Music Program*



Happy February, everyone.

As we enter Lent at the end of the month, there are a few dates to remember:

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- **Ash Wednesday:** Wednesday February 22nd, service at 7:30 pm
- **First Sunday of Lent:** February 26th

As always, we'd love to invite youth and adults to sing with us, as your schedules allow.

**Adult choir:** For now, we are removing Thursday evening rehearsals and meeting early on Sundays.

**Youth:** For those interested, we can meet for a rehearsal after Sunday worship in the choir room. Please reach out if you are interested.

Warm regards,  
Andreea Fegan, Music Director

## *Mission News*



The Mission Commission is expanding our community support by assisting two dedicated, hard-working groups that help those in need. We are conducting a drive for The Furniture Bank, and raising awareness for help needed by the Blessings Bag Brigade.

### **The Furniture Bank**

A hard-working shoestring operation based in Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Manasquan, the Furniture Bank (FB) finds people with good quality used furniture and matches it with people who need it. The donations are picked up from the donor and delivered to the client. Agencies from all over Monmouth and Ocean County refer clients to the FB, particularly those folks with Section 8 housing who now have an apartment but can't afford to put anything in it.

Rumson Presbyterian Church is conducting a drive to help the FB collect the items they need. Smaller items, like linens and kitchen stuff, can be brought to the church and put into the collection bin in the lobby. For larger items, please call the church office at (732) 842-0429. We can store some large items in the church until pick-up time.

Only essential basic items should be donated, as most clients have very small apartments. The two FB general "rules of thumb" are that:

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- the bigger it is, the less they want it; and
- while items don't have to be in perfect condition, please don't donate something you would be embarrassed to give a friend.

Here are a few items that we DO NOT take:

Big armoires, buffets, china cabinets or hutches, entertainment units, TVs that aren't flat screen, king size beds or linens, wooden bed frames or platforms, headboards, sofa beds, double reclining sofas or love seats, big dressers, pictures and other decorative items, and medical items such as hospital beds, walkers, and wheel chairs.

We DO take the following items:

Smaller-sized sofas and love seats, chairs, end tables, coffee tables, lamps, beds (if mattress is stained, FB can still use the box spring), dressers or chests, night stands, kitchen tables and chairs (favorites are small drop leaf tables with 2 chairs), dining room tables (not too big - best are 60" or less and <40" wide without the leaves; with 4-8 chairs), small appliances like coffee pots, toasters, toaster ovens, countertop microwaves, pots & pans, kitchen gadgets like spatulas and cooking spoons, dishes (only if they're sets, but can be missing few pieces, favorite is Corelle), flatware, queen/double/single bed linens, and bathroom towels.

While FB volunteers will pick up our donations from Rumson, they have limited resources and are happy if you would like to bring your donations directly to the FB. Items can be stored in the shed behind the Methodist church in Manasquan at 23 Church Street (it will be open). Please call FB Manager Cynthia Mussinan at 732-259-7652 or email her at [cynthia.mussinan@yahoo.com](mailto:cynthia.mussinan@yahoo.com) before you drop off your donations to ensure there's available storage room.

## **Blessing Bag Brigade**

The Blessing Bag Brigade (BBB) is a wonderful non-profit organization dedicated to showing compassion and helping the homeless. The mission is to help them find comfort by providing snacks, toiletries, and socks to people experiencing homelessness, especially veterans. BBB also works with local soup kitchens, food pantries, and churches to provide meals, weekend lunches for schoolkids, and supplies to the needy. This is a shoestring operation begun by Kevin Garrison, a former homeless veteran, and they never turn anyone away.

BBB is holding a fundraising gala on Friday, March 10 at 7:00 pm at Jacques Reception Hall in Middletown. Tickets are \$100 pp and include a buffet dinner, wine/beer/soda. They have asked not only for attendees, but also for help with this fundraiser. Contact Bonnie Wenzel for gala questions at [bonniebbbnj@gmail.com](mailto:bonniebbbnj@gmail.com), and questions about BBB can be emailed to founder Kevin Garrison at [blessingbagbrigadenj@gmail.com](mailto:blessingbagbrigadenj@gmail.com).

Here are the ways to help:

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1. **Help with basket wrapping for the gift auction** beginning after February 17 (specific dates to be announced in February). Volunteers can help for just an hour or all 4 hours. The baskets will be all done and ready to wrap during wrapping days at the Kindness Center located at 55 South Avenue, Atlantic Highlands.
2. **Donate new items for the gift auction.** These can be small items like candles, kitchen items, costume jewelry, gloves/hats/scarves, games, knickknacks, gift cards, etc. - perhaps a gift given to you that you wouldn't use, but want to go to a good home. Larger new items are also happily accepted, such as sports/workout equipment, restaurant or hotel gift certificates, luggage, household items, etc. These can all be dropped off at the BBB Kindness Center located at 55 South Avenue, Atlantic Highlands; items can be deposited in the boxes out front of the school after hours.
3. **Solicit for gift auction donations from local businesses and/or family & friends** for both donations and for sponsorships. BBB has a letter to use for solicitations, and volunteers need to contact BBB so they can provide you with a specific list of businesses to avoid duplicate solicitations.
4. **Attend the gala on March 10th.** Tickets can be purchased through Venmo at @Blessingbag-brigade, or by mailing a check made payable to Blessing Bag Brigade to 410 Main Street Middletown, Attn: Bonnie Wenzel.
5. For gala attendees, BBB could use folks to **volunteer one hour of time to during the event** to assist with the gala itself.

BBB is always looking for donations of bottled water, individually packaged snacks like granola bars, socks, deodorant, disposable razors, toothbrushes, and travel-size toiletries like toothpaste, soap/body wash, lotion, shampoo, and other personal hygiene items. These can be brought to the Kindness Center located at 55 South Avenue, Atlantic Highlands.

## *Other Church News*



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Giving

**GIVEPLUS<sup>+</sup>**

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/#](http://www.nnjaa.org/#)  
For information about A.A. visit [www.nnjaa.org](http://www.nnjaa.org)

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

## Waterspirit Event Calendar for February



### **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. There are two ways to meditate with us: (1) In-person in the Sanctuary at Rumson Presbyterian Church (2) Online on our YouTube channel. No matter where you are in the world, you can join us as we meditate for our Earth!

### **2023 Summit on Mental Health and Climate Change** Thu., Feb. 2 @ 12:00 PM (Virtual)

Waterspirit will share a pre-recorded poster presentation entitled “Faith Communities & Climate Emotions” during this online conference.

### **Eco-Anxiety Support Group Info Session** Thu., Feb. 2 from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (Virtual)

Waterspirit hosts eco-anxiety peer support groups using the Good Grief Network’s “10 Steps to Personal Resilience and Empowerment in a Chaotic Climate” method. Please join us for this informational session that will introduce the group's methodology, giving you an opportunity to meet the facilitators and ask any questions prior to committing to the 10 weeks.

### **Lament With Earth: Heart of Winter** Thu., Feb. 2 from 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM (Virtual)

We invite you to join us for an evening to explore our ecological grief in community, as we delve into themes of earth and grounding in our February Lament with Earth offering.

### **Climate Pastoral Care Course Drop-In Session** Fri., Feb. 3 from 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Students who are enrolled in the Climate Pastoral Care Course are invited to join us for an informal drop-in session to meet other students and ask questions about course material.

### **Volunteer Orientation 2023** Sat., Feb. 11 from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (Virtual)

Are you ready to become a Waterspirit ambassador 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 2023!

### **Seal Monitoring at Sandy Hook** Wed., Feb. 15 @ 9:00 AM & Tue., Feb. 21 @ 2:30 PM

Join Waterspirit’s Program Manager, Anne Price, as she monitors seals at Sandy Hook.

### **Waterspirit's Book Club** Mon., Feb. 27 from 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (Virtual)

For our next meeting on February 27, we have chosen the book *An Fen, Bog & Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis* by Annie Proulx (2022).

All are welcome. Please visit their website ([waterspirit.org](http://waterspirit.org))  
for more information about these events.

**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](http://www.rumsonpresbyterian.org) for calendar updates~

**FEBRUARY 2023**

Feb 1-28		<b>Black History Month</b>	
Feb 2	Thu	<b>Groundhog Day</b>	
Feb 7	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 13	Mon	Rumson Seniors	11:00AM
Feb 14	Tue	<b>Valentine's Day</b>	
Feb 14	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 19	Sun	<b>Transfiguration Sunday</b>	
Feb 20	Mon	<b>Presidents' Day</b>	
Feb 21	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Feb 21	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Feb 22	Wed	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	
Feb 27	Mon	Rumson Seniors	11:00AM
Feb 27	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30PM
Feb 28	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM

**MARCH 2023**

Mar 3	Fri	<b>World Day of Prayer</b>	
Mar 7	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 12	Sun	<b>Daylight Saving Time begins</b>	
Mar 13	Mon	Rumson Seniors	11:00AM
Mar 14	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 17	Fri	<b>St. Patrick's Day</b>	
Mar 20	Mon	<b>First Day of Spring</b>	
Mar 20	Mon	<b>Spring Equinox Celebration*</b>	7:00PM
Mar 21	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM
Mar 21	Tue	Session	7:00pm
Mar 27	Mon	Rumson Seniors	11:00AM
Mar 27	Mon	Mission Commission	7:30PM
Mar 28	Tue	Meditation for Earth*	12:15PM

*\*Waterspirit sponsored event. All are welcome.*

*Please visit the Waterspirit website ([waterspirit.org](http://waterspirit.org)) for more information.*



[www.rumsonprebyterian.org](http://www.rumsonprebyterian.org)