



March 2025

# The Presbyterian

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## LENTEN JOURNEYS

Lent is a time for reflection and self-examination. The scriptural readings for this season are filled with images of travel. We begin with Ash Wednesday and the reminder of our own mortality that we hear in the Book of Genesis: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). That’s a journey of sorts. This Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, our first reading is from the Book of Deuteronomy. It’s about the journey—literal and metaphorical—from slavery into freedom, and the responsibility that the Israelites bear. As they are about to enter their permanent home, the land that God promised their ancestor, Abraham, they are called to remember their past, as a people who wandered about the world, without a permanent home. The idea of a permanent home resonates with me, as so many things seem impermanent now.

2025 marks a sad anniversary for me. In 2005, I lost both of my grandmothers, as well as my Aunt Laurie, my mom’s younger sister. All three women were constant presences in my life and they all died in a space of about three months. It was a traumatic year and I’m blown away by the realization that it was twenty years ago!

How can it be twenty years?

I grew up with a strong sense of my family history. Though I never met either of my grandfathers, my parents told me lots of stories, as did other relatives. And my grandma Ora, my dad’s mom, came from a family of storytellers. She was one of ten kids and she and her sisters loved to tell stories about their immigrant parents, who

came to the United States from Belgium in the 1880s.

I grew up with a strong sense of connection to all that history. It was great! I was part of a much bigger story. But those connections began to fray when my grandmothers passed. My dad passed away in 2013, his sister, Diane, passed in 2019, and his brother, Dick, passed in 2022. I feel like I have been unmoored from most of my personal past.

I hope this isn’t making you too sad. Sometimes I get sad when I think about all of it, but I think that Lent is a season that calls us toward this sort of introspection. And I think it’s healthier to wrestle with difficult stories than to bury them and pretend that everything is better.

Though I feel unmoored, I’ve come to believe that permanence is an illusion. Our connections to the people we love are real. Our relationships with one another are real. And most importantly, the love of God and Christ for all of us are real.

I spent a big chunk of my life outside of the church. I didn’t see God at work in my life or in the world. Nor was I looking for God.

As awful as it was to lose my grandmothers and my Aunt Laurie, I’m certain that my longing for connection is what brought me back to church. Looking back on it, I’m sure that was also the Holy Spirit acting in my life, though surely, I couldn’t feel it at the time. Church has helped me find connection again, after all the losses. You folks have supported me as I continue to lose important people from my past, like Aunt Diane and Uncle Dick, and so many of my parents’ friends.

Church is a place where we can make real, lasting connections. Church is a place where we can share happy stories and difficult stories. We can invite the world outside of our walls to be part of a community that shares stories.

The fancy church word for that is witnessing. Our stories of struggle and triumph are a witness to the love of God in the world. Sharing those stories might be outside of your comfort zone, but I know that we grow the most when we let go of our fears and step outside of our comfort zones.

So, start small. At the next coffee hour—hey! Did I mention there's a coffee hour this Sunday? It's gonna be great! Did I mention that? At the next coffee hour, strike up a conversation with someone you don't typically socialize with. Then invite that person to share a story with you. Any story! Listening is a skill that all of us need to practice. Sharing stories is also a skill that gets better with practice. Start here, in this congregation, and then strike up conversations with people outside of the church. Offer them your ears. Listen to them. Listen for opportunities to share your faith. But first, listen.

Make that your practice during Lent.

Grace & Peace,



Pastor Alan

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD

### SESSION

**Bill Canning**

*Finance Commission*

**Berwin Guttormsen**

*Clerk of Session*

**Julie Heinsohn**

*Personnel Commission*

**Carol Matino**

*Worship Commission*

**Larry Moran**

*Property Commission*

**Vera Musser**

*Christian Education*

**Susan Pascullo**

*Worship Commission*

**Chuck Stapp**

*Mission/Outreach Commission*

**Sandra Whitehill**

*Mission/Outreach Commission*

*Nominating Commission*



### BOARD OF DEACONS

**Judi Cavicchio**

**Lenora Chu**

**Robin Fox**

**Peggy Guttormsen**

**Barbara Jean Keune**

**Jean Pennett**

**Marie Schlechtweg**

**Michele Williams**

CALENDAR NOTES



**Please join us on Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup> following worship for our next coffee hour.**

Coffee hour is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with your church family; to spend time with old friends and get to know some new ones. Coffee hour is monthly on the second Sunday following worship. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Worship Calendar:**

Pastor Alan will be away **March 10<sup>th</sup> through March 16<sup>th</sup>**. If you have a pastoral emergency while Pastor Alan is away, please contact the church office.

**Gifts of Women Sunday:**

On **March 16<sup>th</sup>**, we'll be celebrating the gifts of women as they lead worship for us. We have gifted women in our midst, using their creativity and talents, to bring the word of God to us in different ways in all humility. Don't miss this special worship service!

Lent



COMMUNITY LENTEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Greater Freehold Clergy Association*



Lenten prayer services will be celebrated on Wednesdays at 12:30 PM during Lent. Lunch will be provided at 12:00 PM prior to the prayer service and at 1:00 PM following the prayer service, except as noted below.

**March 12<sup>th</sup> at**

**St. Rose of Lima**

**16 McLean Street in Freehold**

**Speaker: Rev. Ruth Scott**

*(Lunch will be served at 1:00 PM only)*

**March 19<sup>th</sup> at**

**First Assembly of God**

**272 Jackson Mills Road in Freehold**

**Speaker: Bishop Fred Rubin**

**March 26<sup>th</sup> at**

**Co-Cathedral of St. Robert Bellarmine**

**61 Georgia Road in Freehold**

**Speaker: Rev. Dr. Alan Olson**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> at**

**Co-Cathedral of St. Robert Bellarmine**

**61 Georgia Road in Freehold**

**Speaker: Pastor Matt Jones**

**April 9<sup>th</sup> at**

**First United Methodist**

**86 West Main Street in Freehold**

**Speaker: Msgr. Sam Sirianni**

**Good Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at**

**Freehold Baptist Church**

**81 West Main Street in Freehold**

**Speaker: Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley**

*(Lunch will not be provided)*

FROM MISSION/OUTREACH

Please remember that on the first Sunday of each month we will celebrate **Communion and Casa**.



**Communion** to bring us into a closer union with the Lord in the Eucharist and



**Casa** to bring us into a loving response to our neighbors who need food.

We're looking forward to filling our sanctuary with happy, giving followers of Jesus every FIRST SUNDAY!

**'LOVE ONE ANOTHER'**



**Prayer Shawl Ministry**



As part of Jesus' instructions to **"Love one another"** we freely offer a hand-knit or crocheted **PRAYER SHAWL with our prayers** to hurting people, so they can feel loved and comforted in their

pain, worry, or sorrow. The person making the shawl prays as she works, and then the whole congregation prays over it, with their own special prayers as they lay a hand on the shawl after worship.

**YOU ARE NEEDED** - If you would like a shawl to be given to a friend, or co-worker, or a neighbor, because of their circumstances, either send an email to the church office with a few details, or talk to Sandra. It's helpful for us to know if the recipient is a

believer or not, to ensure the message on the tag attached to the shawl is appropriate. Also, please provide a mailing address if you want for us to mail the prayer shawl, or let us know if you will hand-deliver it.

These prayer shawls are soft and beautiful and they are themselves evangelists, delivering tangible messages about the closeness of God to those who really need to hear that.

**WE NEED YOU** – The people in the pews and in the world – bringing names and needs to us, so we can continue this quiet little ministry with a big impact, and a lot of love, so we can really **"Love one another"** in Jesus' name.



**Palm Sunday - One Great Hour of Sharing**



April 13<sup>th</sup> is when we observe **Palm Sunday** this year.

On Palm Sunday, we will be asking you to dig into your wallets for donations to **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING** – to give to the unbelievable needs of humanity at this time.

**More to follow...**

*I give you a new commandment,  
that you love one another.  
Just as I have loved you,  
you also should love one another.*

*John 13:34*

DEACONS MINISTRY

Peggy Guttormsen recently spent some time with **Dorothy Munnery** at Monmouth Crossing. They had a nice visit and Peggy shared this photo of Dorothy looking lovely.



As part of their ministry, the Deacons share fellowship with homebound members and the church community. Sometimes it's conversation, other times it's just listening or reading the Bible together and praying. In this way, the Deacons share God's love and grace and reconnect homebound members with their church family.

If you would like to schedule a visit or home Communion, please contact the Deacons or Pastor Alan. You can also reach out to the church office for assistance.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, VALENTINE ROLFE!



*Judi, Valentine and Lenora*

Judi Cavicchio and Lenora Chu were among those who joined Valentine as she celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday last month.

Valentine's party was held at her daughter Wendy Jaghab's home. Family and friends were there to celebrate, and a good time was had by all!

*Birthday Blessings*



**ADOPT-A-BILL**

At the Session meeting held on February 18, 2025, the Session approved two separate requests from the Worship Commission for adopt-a-bills to fund the purchases of the following:

**Request #1****Sheet Music Packets (Total Cost: \$135)**

The Music Ministry has a need for the following instrumental ensemble music:

- Sax quartet (\$45)
- Clarinet quartet (\$45)
- Flute ensemble (\$45)

Each of the three packets contain between six and ten songs, and the packets may be purchased separately.

**Request #2****Second Laptop for Live Streaming (Cost: \$725)**

Elder Susan Pascullo would like the church to purchase a second laptop for our production team in the balcony. Susan explains, the second laptop “will simplify our workflow by separating the production software from the presentation software. One laptop will handle video switching, managing camera feeds, transitions, and overlays in real-time. The new laptop will take care of tasks like playing announcement slideshows, video clips,

displaying lyrics, and showing graphics, without disrupting the live stream. It will also offer additional connections, enabling us to record audio directly from the mixing board, send video to a projector or recording device, and explore other options.”



Please consider adopting one of these requests, partially or in whole. Donations may be made during the offering at Sunday worship or mailed to the church office. Please indicate that your donation is for “Adopt-a-bill” and which of these items you are funding.

Thank you for your generosity and support as we look to continue to improve the worship experience for our church family and community.



## MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

### **Special Sundays & A Call for Choir Members**

As we journey into the upcoming months, our church music ministry is preparing for several meaningful worship services filled with inspiring music.

#### **March 16 – Gifts of Women Sunday**

On this special Sunday, we celebrate the gifts and leadership of women in worship. We are delighted to have **Kay Hatch** serving as our organist and **Susan Croft** as our choir director for the service. Their talents and dedication will help lead us in a beautiful time of worship.

#### **April 27 – Special Choir Presentation**

Mark your calendars! On April 27, our choir will present **Mendelssohn's Hear My Prayer** during the morning worship service. This beloved choral masterpiece, featuring the timeless plea, "O for the wings of a dove," is sure to be a moving and uplifting experience for all who attend.



#### **A Call to Join the Choir!**

Do you love to sing? Have you considered lending your voice to our choir? We welcome singers of all skill levels, and now is the perfect time to join! Whether you've sung in a choir before or simply enjoy making a joyful noise, we would love to have you. Rehearsals are filled with fun, fellowship, and the joy of making music together.

#### **Rehearsal Schedule:**

🎵 **Chancel Choir Practice:** Sundays at 9:00 AM (before worship)

🎵 **Special Choral Rehearsals:** Thursdays at 7:00 PM (for special event music)

For more information or to get involved, please see John Cavicchio after worship or email him at [cavicchiojohn@gmail.com](mailto:cavicchiojohn@gmail.com).

Let's make a joyful noise together! 🎵

Blessings,

John Cavicchio  
Director of Music Ministry, FPC  
732-558-7525

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

### **Kindergarten through 12th Grade**

**Classes are held in Rooms A/B and the nursery from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM. Come join us on Sunday mornings!**



Each week, the lessons are based on the Lectionary readings. Activities include playing games and making craft projects about the readings.

The children also enjoy playing the chimes to start the Sunday worship service and then with taking part in *A Time for Children*.

Please let us know if your children will be in Sunday School each week so we can plan accordingly. **Vera Musser can be reached at 732-685-3125 and Samantha Daesener at 732-547-2551.**

Let's grow in faith together!





# Presbyterian Youth Triennium 2025

Presbytery of the Coastlands

Cost: Coming Soon

Travel: Charter Bus leaving July 27th

Lodging: PYT Hotels adjacent to and near the  
Kentucky International Convention Center

July 28 – 31, 2025 

Louisville, KY 

YOUTH AND  
ADULTS  
COMPLETE THE  
INTEREST FORM

\*limited  
spaces

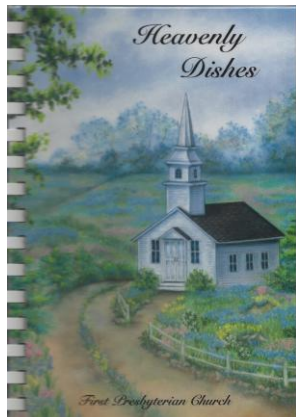
More information:

<https://coastlandspresbytery.org/synod-and-general-assembly-events>

INTEREST FORM 



**RECIPE CORNER**



In 2011, Presbyterian Women published **Heavenly Dishes**, a cookbook dedicated to all FPC members past and present who so generously supported PW over the years. Here, we'll look to share a recipe or two from that cookbook.

This month we shine the recipe spotlight on **Irish Soda Bread** and **Grammy O's 1-2-3-4 Cake**. Enjoy!

**IRISH SODA BREAD**

- 4 c. flour
- 5 T. sugar
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 T. butter
- 1½ c. buttermilk
- 1 box raisins

Mix dry ingredients in large bowl. Work in butter with pastry blender. Then, quickly stir the milk into the dough. Add raisins distributing as evenly as possible. Form dough into 2 round loaves. Cut X into top of each loaf. Place loaves on cookie sheet or pan and bake at 350° for 40 minutes or until light golden color.

*Dollie Kane*

**GRAMMY O'S 1-2-3-4 CAKE**

- 1 c. butter
- 2 c. sugar
- 3 c. flour
- 4 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 4 pinches of salt (if desired)

Cream butter, add sugar, and add eggs one at a time. Alternate flour, baking powder, and milk. Add vanilla. Bake at 325° for approximately 1 hour but as Gram said "Keep an eye on it."

*Don Ollwertier  
Nancy Ollwertier*



**WORD SEARCH PUZZLE**



Welcome to our word search puzzle! Take a moment to read and reflect on the passage and then find the words on the list below the puzzle. The solution will be in the next newsletter. Enjoy!

**Psalm 51:1-2**

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy,  
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.

G A I N I Q U I T Y B D  
E O L Y T U A L E C W O  
R G D J S O P F O R I T  
Z D I A F K R L T E E G  
W A S H M E M S T M I N  
S H E V Y A A S C V H I  
H I L X N F G O R U P D  
O W O C D G I J Q O W R  
B U V A Z O K M I L E O  
N F E N P E S N A E L C  
I T J F R T E T O N A C  
S C E K T N A D N U B A

- GOD
- ACCORDING TO
- STEADFAST
- LOVE
- ABUNDANT
- MERCY
- WASH ME
- INIQUITY
- CLEANSE
- SIN

**February 2025 Puzzle Solution**

M A Z T E A C H I N G S  
A I O B Y C E N H F O S  
N Q N R U I Y G R A C E  
Y S E I T L K M N I P N  
M A B D S L U L U T E L  
E C O O L T G X E H R U  
M E D F I A E K S A O F  
B I Y P S K V R W R Q R  
E G T T M U F J I E X E  
R B F P I N Y V D N F E  
S I N C E R I T Y V G H  
G D O W A O T S I R H C