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HEAVEN'S

SAKE~

Volume 15 Issue 11

November 2022

Dear West Milford Family

By now you have received the news that my last Sunday in West Milford Presbyterian Church's pulpit will be November 13, 2022. My heart is saddened because of the goodbyes that need to be said. Pastor Stephen Rasmussen has shared some words of wisdom on saying goodbye to your pastor. Instead of recreating them I will share his words with you...

On Saying Goodbye to Your Pastor

By Pastor Stephen Rasmusson

Farewell. 'Tll we meet again. Later. Go with God. Saying goodbye is a spiritual practice. And like many spiritual practices, it does not pretend to be easy. Even though life is full of goodbyes, it does not mean that it is easier with practice. Even when we are surrounded by the powerful Easter promises of resurrection and new life, parting always feels like a moment eternally trapped in Holy Saturday, when Hope lies in the tomb and resurrection is not yet. It is a time of confusion for some, anger for others, hope for others, and intense grief for others still.

When a pastor leaves, the process of saying goodbye is even more difficult. The years of spiritual direction, the bedside visits, the moments of celebration and sorrow, of hurt and rejoicing that have shaped each of our experiences together betray the best and worst of human nature. Your pastor has had the privilege of presenting the person of Jesus in word and deed. And your pastor has shown you the deep brokenness of humans who dare to stand in the presence of God.

1. REJOICE: Recall the many times that you have been touched by a new insight into the grace and love of God that have been shown in the teaching and life of your pastor. Don't be afraid to say thank you in person or in a note to your leaving pastor. These moments will carry the spirit of your pastor into deeper service in Christ's name. Our church is a worldwide church, and your former pastor will bring a part of you into the new call. Rejoice that others will be blessed with the unique gift of grace proclaimed through her or his preaching and ministry.

- 2. RECONCILE: Hopefully your pastor has taught you how to repent, and to accept apologies. Reconciliation is at the center of all human relationships before Christ. We forgive as we have been forgiven. If there is any sorrow for brokenness in the relationship, now is the time to set it right through forgiveness and repentance.
- 3. RESPECT: Your pastor has had the privilege of serving for a period of time as the person who holds the official office of pastor for you and your friends and family. It is helpful to respect the person of your pastor by respecting the office that he or she has held. When your pastor takes leave, the office stays. This means that, though you will continue to pray for and love the person who is leaving, you do not call on your former pastor to visit you when you are ill, have a crisis, need a funeral or a wedding performed, or the like. The new pastor, the person God will call to fill the "Office of the Pastor" will bring the word of grace into those situations for you.
- 4. REMEMBER: God is good all the time. As you reflect in future months and years on the work of God in your faith community when your leaving pastor was among you, do so with an eye to the future. God will have new ventures ahead, new visions of service and deepening of faith, new opportunities that will come with your new pastoral leadership. Look for the hand of God at work in your faith community's past, so that you can more easily see the Spirit in your future.

And finally, don't forget the words at the center of the Reformation tradition – Soli Deo Gloria – To God only is the praise. Praise God from whom all blessings flow – now and forever.

I give thanks to God for my time here. Over the last four years, it has been my privilege to be in Christian ministry with you. From Sunday morning worship services to launching new ministries like West Milford Community Food Pantry, together we have listened to God's Word and done our best to put that Word into action in the world. Thank you for being so faithful. Thank you for being bold. Thank you for helping me grow as a pastor, leader, and child of God. You have been a blessing to the Choi family. May God's presence be with you always. In His Grace,

Pastor Justin Choi

Joy's & Concerns

Concerns:

- * Karen Straub Prayers for her friend Brian who had a blockage in his heart, had 2 stents put in, and is doing better. Also, her friend Tracy evacuated Florida and is safe with family in North Carolina.
- * Kathy Holley: Daughter Carolyn was able to evacuate Florida and her home was not damaged.
- * Prayers for all the people in Florida
- * Continued prayers for James Ester, Bob Gunderman, and Diane Eriksen.
- * Mary Macheska is recovering from a broken ankle.
- * Ken Dykstra's brother-in-law has serious case of emphysema.
- * Prayers for the Hepp family on the loss of their Husband, Father, Grandfather
- * George Stoft Jr. prayers for the family of his friend who died in a car accident on Skyline Drive in June.
- * Karen Willmott (dialysis)
- * Irene's dad is home from the hospital and is healing from surgery
- *Lee said his friend Julie who sings in the Choir sometimes has health issues
- *George Stoft Jr. was a passenger in car Sept 11th that got in an accident. All wore seatbelts and were not injured.
- * Prayers for Audrey as she is recovering, hopefully, from a bad a cold.
- * Prayers for Bobbie Del Sol who sustained an ankle injury in a car accident.
- * Julia Held is concerned for her neighbor who is having serious personal issues. Prayer for her and hoping that she will receive Christ in her life.
- * Kathy Holley's brother passed peacefully in his sleep. Prayers for Kathy and her family as they deal with this.
- * Myrtle wants prayers for her friend, Doris, who is ill
- * Judy, a visitor, needs prayers and comfort for her sister, Joan, only 59 years old, who is suffering from lung and brain cancer. Judy worships with us when she is here, visiting her son.

Joys:

- * Julia: finished radiation treatments. Feels fine. The Lord has blessed her and she's ready for many more years of health and happiness until He chooses to take her for Himself.
- * Julia will celebrate her 89th birthday next Friday......Oct. 28.
- * Joy that Don Wright was recognized for his service as a volunteer.
- * Mary Machesca Joy to be back in church and grateful for the prayers and cards.
- * Thank you to those that collected for the pantry during Autumn Lights
- * Joy for our choir
- * Jan asking for help at Deacons Café
- * Gladys and Ken Dykstra are celebrating their 59th wedding anniversary on November 2nd.
- * Rich Hepp's two adopted children, through DNA testing, have found their birth parents in Romania. They are flying to Romania on Thursday. Prayers for a safe trip and a great meeting.
- * Welcome to Melody (?) who has joined our choir.
- * George Stoft's son, George: Highlander Marching Band has taken first place in New Jersey. Congratulations to band members and staff.





SESSION'S REFLECTIONS

NOVEMBER 2022 SUBMITTED BY BETSY ENGELHARDT, CLERK OF SESSION

Despite the cold, rainy evening with dark slippery road conditions, Elders faithfully met for their October meeting in person or by Zoom. To provide details needed for the Nomination Committee to start its work, the number of vacancies were confirmed for both Session and Deacons with the start of the new year. Please consider taking a leadership position so the important work of the church can continue. We will be excited to see what new and creative things can be accomplished when we all work together as we rejoice in the love of our church and expansion in our faith as a community. Elders voted to devote our November 13 Sunday worship service to a special video presentation that will replace most of the time taken by Pastor Choi's sermon. Please see a special entry in this newsletter explaining in more detail how we each can answer the question "Who is the Church?". Come see how this special service can spur enthusiasm for our future.

Lee Tomboulian has offered his talents again for a musical concert approved to be scheduled for Friday, Dec 9 at 7:30 PM. It will be a night featuring all forms of music (not just jazz) with 2 additional band members to accompany him.

Property reported on the ongoing repair projects. Quotes are being sought to power wash the church exterior and repair persistent leaks in our roof. Solutions are needed for the continual clogging of the drain outside the boiler room. Wm. Association will be paying to remove the pine tree in front of the Parish house.

I & S reported on the pledge campaign. As of mid-October, \$5000 in 2022 pledge commitments will need to be paid to satisfy this year's pledge commitments. We encourage all to pay pledge amounts by December 31 along with per capita obligations for the year. We hope to have a successful pledge campaign to see us through the year 2023.

Wishing everyone a meaningful Thanksgiving holiday as we offer our thanks to God for all that we are.

PASTORAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE - BETSY ENGELHARDT, PNC MODERATOR

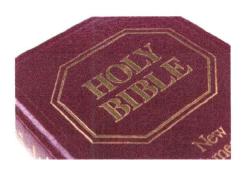
The end of August the committee invited a favorable candidate to spend the weekend with us in West Milford. The 2 days were spent touring our church grounds, a brief drive around the key points to our "downtown" districts, great fellowship sharing 2 meals, and attending a Sunday worship service officiated by our candidate at a neutral church. It was a magical weekend which left us knowing we would be forwarding a nomination offer to him as soon as possible. Upon his return home, he communicated his shared bond with us and was looking forward to continued dialog in the weeks ahead. An offering package was sent in mid-September. Weeks of discernment with himself and his family culminated in a decision relayed to me during a lengthy phone conversation in mid-October.

His final decision was to pull his name as a candidate. Accepting the position would require relocation from his home 4 hours away. After days of discernment and family meetings, ultimately, he couldn't convince his family that the timing was right for such a move at this time. Although he felt a strong calling to serve us, he summed up his decision perfectly. He is not whole without his family and cannot do the work the Lord has intended for him without their support. Needless to say, the committee is greatly disappointed by this decision, but also regretful that the congregation did not have an opportunity to meet this very special individual. We are confident he would have touched your hearts just as he did ours.

Although the work of the committee was put on hold while in negotiation, we will forge ahead with the task of finding a candidate to serve us. Please keep us in your prayers.



WHO IS THE CHURCH? SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE PLANNED SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13 REGULAR TIME: 10 AM



THE BIBLE TELLS US IN ROMANS Chapter 12 - Verses 6 to 8

We have different gifts, according to God's grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

We are changing the format for worship on November 13, and we encourage everyone to reserve time to attend this special service. A joint meeting of Deacons and Elders was held in September to discuss the future goals we see for our church. By unanimous vote, it was determined ample time should be devoted during a Sunday worship to share our thoughts. This special service will be devoted to a video presentation which will replace most of the time devoted to Pastor Choi's weekly sermon. The goal is to explain in detail how we can build a bright future and what role each of us can contribute to all the exciting things we can accomplish. Our hope is that this presentation will demonstrate that the love we share for our church, the use of our God given gifts and talents, and the hope for our future, will help us all grow in our faith and rejoice collectively in all we can accomplish when we ban together to do God's work. We strongly encourage attendance — come see how this video presentation can help shape our future.

TIME FOR RECOGNITION AND REFLECTION Pastor Justin Choi's Resignation

Session has plans in the works to sponsor a luncheon immediately following worship service on Sunday, November 13 to honor Pastor Choi's 4 years of service to our church. That particular Sunday will be the last service that he will be officiating as our Interim Pastor. Let's all join as a church community to celebrate his faithful commitment and dedication to serving the needs of West Milford Presbyterian Church and the community we support. He has baptized our children, grieved with us during funeral services, visited with us at our homes and by our hospital beds, and enjoyed teaching our confirmands. Come prepared to share your fond memories and appreciation for what he has meant to you and your families. Congregational Life will be coordinating the event and the church will be providing refreshments and finger sandwiches. We are asking for support to supplement the remainder of the luncheon with the following contributions:

If your last name begins with A through L - please consider contributing a side dish

If your last name begins with M through Z - please consider contributing a dessert item

Please contact the church office by November 10 to advise your contribution so the menu can be adequately managed.

NOTE: THERE WILL BE A <u>CARD BASKET</u> AVAILABLE AT THE LUNCHEON TO DEPOSIT MORE PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND RECOGNITION FOR JUSTIN TO REVIEW PRIVATELY WHEN HE RETURNS HOME._

FOOD PANTRY HELP

Our Food Pantry is making preparations for giving out Thanksgiving dinners for our pantry guests. We would love your help in making this possible. Following is a list of items we put in the bags and if you have any or would like to buy a few for us, please drop them off in the pantry by November 6th. Turkey gravy. Turkey or cornbread Stovetop Stuffing, cranberry sauce, cornbread mix, cans of corn and green beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes- fresh or canned, celery. carrots, apples, oranges, turkey or chicken. If you would like to help organize the food on November 7th and/or if you would enjoy giving out the bags on November 14, 15 or 16 please let us know. Thank you for all you do throughout the year to keep the pantry sustainable!



WA Doings

Don't forget to "fall back" on November 6th!

On November 16th we will be celebrating our Veterans in church. Please remember to say thank you to them. Aunt Jenny's Attic will close on November 11th in their honor.

Our church flag was very faded so Aunt Jenny's Attic purchased a new one. Long May she wave!

The store will close on 11/12 so we may pack up to make room for our wonderful Christmas Bazaar on November 19th. Diane Eriksen has been working on securing vendors for a few months now so come out and support it and bring your friends. The deacons will host their cafe and of course we will have our delicious Sweet Stop.

We will be taking stollen orders in December, closer to Christmas.

The week after the Bazaar is Thanksgiving-Enjoy your Blessings!

The following Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent. Busy times indeed.

Blessings, Linda and Pam





DEACON DOINGS

The Deacons will be quite busy during the next 2 months. November 6th brings us celebrating Communion and also we will remember those members who have passed into the Lord's arms this past year. We will also be remembering our veterans on November 13th. (a treat will be given to those who have served) On the 19th the Deacon's Café will be open for business during the Holiday Bazaar. Stop by for a bite to eat before or after visiting the over 40 vendors who will be showcasing their goods. Please watch for a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall that will list items the Deacons would love to have help in acquiring for the Café. The communion table in the sanctuary will become a bountiful harvest table on the 20th. If you have any items you wish to donate for the table please reach out to Carol Stanhope. The first Sunday of Advent is the 27th. Yikes!! We will have to remove the harvest table and set-up for Advent in a 2 day span. Again, if you wish to help with this project please see any of the Deacons. The set-up will occur on the 25th and 26th of November.

Poinsettia plants will once again be available for ordering. Please watch for the form in the December bulletins or call the office. As of now I do not know the deadline for ordering.

Again a reminder that prayer shawls are available for anyone who is in need of comfort. Let a Deacon know or the office. Don't forget our "Little Lending Library". Pantry patrons enjoy using it so if you have any books you've read please place in the box. Ushers and greeters are always needed for our services. Blessings to All!

GIVE

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2 Cor. 9:15

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.

Psalm 100:4

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Psalm 29:1

And Now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

1 Chron. 29:13

Let us Kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Psalm 95:6

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving, sing praises to our God.

Psalm 147:7

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

October 2022

In October, our children met many people who were believers in God's words. God spoke to them, and told them His plans for them, and their families. Children learned that following God's words was often difficult. However, because of their faith and acceptance of our loving God, they followed His word. Such was the case of Abram and Sarai (the original immigrants) whom God instructed to leave their homeland and move to Canaan. God's love did support them in their new land, despite many of their difficulties that resulted in the move.

Our children learned, through the story of Esau & Jacob, how trickery was used in their family to get money and blessings from their blind father. The rivalry, deceit, threats, and vile words said to each other resulted in threats on Jacob's life and the twins not seeing each other for many years. Yet through it all God's love and support and strength were always with them. Indeed, Jacob dedicated himself to God. God's love guided them to become brothers again. The children learned that *God is always with them*... even when everything may get scary, even in the dark, even when they do not know what to do, God will give them the courage to forgive and be forgiven and help them make good decisions along the way.



Jacob and his brother Esai

Similarly, the story of Joseph and his family explains how Joseph was his father's favorite and received God's gift of being able to interpret dreams. His brothers wanted him dead but sold him into slavery in Egypt. There he helped the king of Egypt through his dream interpretations and saved many lives by explaining the need to



store as much food as possible to enable the people to live through the famine. When his brothers came to him to buy food, he forgave their vicious act toward him, and explained that God had sent him to Egypt to save people's lives. Revenge, jealousy, and deceit led eventually to forgiveness, acceptance, and caring through God's love and blessings.

We end this month learning about the life of Moses, a Godly man, who also is one of God's chosen to share His word. Moses follows His directions, receives His blessings for his people, frees his fellow Hebrews from Egypt, and guides God's followers to their own land. Again, our children learn that with God's loving guidance and support, nothing is impossible.

As we leave Genesis and move into Exodus, we will then prepare ourselves for the Advent season and move into the New Testament with the birth of Jesus Christ. The children will present a pageant in church on December 18th.

There are still many caring rocks in our Kindness Garden – feel free to take one and pass it along. Please remember that all children are welcome to come to Sunday School whether their families are members or not.

Our very special Don Wright received a plaque from the sheriff for all the things he does for us. Congratulations Don, we love you!

About 20 years ago I met this nice man at church after he rang the bell. Since then, I have been lucky enough to call he and his wife, Pat, friends. His name is Don Wright.

He is really the backbone of our very active church. Some flooding near the Community Food Pantry-Don and Pat are mopping the floor.

We need music for a community dinner, a party, Fish & Chips dinner, a repast, a special event- call Don.

We want pictures of packing for the food drive, setting up the winter coat give away, the dinner we're hosting, the Farmer's Market, the Sunday School children, the church directory, Aunt Jenny's Attic, Troop 44B and Troop 44G-call Don

The side door is jammed, the garage needs to be organized, the computer is not working, we need tiles replaced in the ceiling, we need to get rid of critters in the attic, need a sign made and put up-call Don

Need some videos of a special event or the Sunday service-call Don.

Want to use the parking lot or the football/softball field for an event, need to clean up after the bear dumps the dumpster- call Don

In other words we call on Don for EVERYTHING! He does work with the other men but he is the one who is there every day. He is vital to our church and our church is important to our community.

The church sponsors the COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY, the Farmers Market, Girls on the Run, Troop 44 B&G, the bagpipers practice there every week, community theater, the winter coat drive. We help Friends of the Library with the book sale.

I feel Don Wright should get some recognition for all the good he does. I'm very proud to call him my friend.

RECIPE ROUND-UP

A quick and easy one-pot chicken pasta dish. Can be ready in 30 minutes! Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tablespoon vegetable oil	2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
2 (14 ounce) cans chopped tomatoes (don't drain)	1 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese
1 large onion, peeled and diced	1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 1/4 cups low-sodium chicken stock	1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley (optional)
3 to 4 boneless skinless chicken thighs cut into chunks	1 green, red, yellow, or orange pepper, seeded and chopped
1 / 2 cup milk	10 1 / 2 ounces pasta shapes, such as corkscrew, spirali or you could use elbows
Pinch salt and pepper	conscient, spiral of you could use croows
3 / 4 cup peas (don't have to defrost)	1 teaspoon dried oregano
	1 / 2 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Directions: Heat oil in a large frying pan or skillet over medium-high heat and cook onion for 3 minutes till it gets soft.

Salt and pepper the chicken and add to the onions. Cook for about 3 minutes. Add garlic, tomato puree, and bell pepper. Stir and add dry pasta.

Add the oregano, Worcestershire sauce, tomatoes, stock and milk. Stir, bring to a boil, and turn down to a simmer. Cover with a lid and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until pasta is cooked.

Add peas and stir till they are hot.

Sprinkle the pasta with cheese and let it melt a bit. If using, scatter chopped parsley over the top.