

The Pastor's Pen - November 2023

Dear Church Family,

Well, I think we can all agree that October did not disappoint with the level of excitement (good and bad) and exhaustion. I first want to thank everyone for the Herculean efforts put out by so many in helping myself and my family move to the manse in Oak Ridge. It is starting to feel like a home; the fence is in the back yard for the dogs, I got a new dog, and our grandson has his own room when he comes on the weekends. And second, I want to thank everyone for the plethora of prayers that have been coming my way, and to Hala, to get safely home. She did arrive home, even after the drive, safely, and I'm happy to report that she likes the house and even how I've put things together. I tell you honestly, that in itself was an answer to lots of prayer.

This past month we've also had to say goodbye to a few big personalities of the church family. Although I didn't get to know them well, for Julia Held and Diane Erikson, I could clearly see that even though they were so different, they both loved their church and cherished the space that they filled in it. Judy Murza who I didn't meet I can tell, from just what folks have told me, was a person who knew the importance of our lives here and lived her life to the fullest, whether it be through her joy of family and friends or just where God had placed here in his creation. They'll all be missed.

And of course, October has also seen the world blowing up even more than usual. October 7th began a new war in the saga of Middle Eastern wars with barbaric actions carried out by Hamas, only to be followed with a much more barbaric response by Israel. We're coming upon the two year anniversary of the start of war in the Ukraine, and those are not the only wars that are currently being waged. Social problems only seem to be getting crazier, as well as the political strife among people all over the world, not just here. I think we really need to take Paul's words to heart at times like these when he declared to the Philippians that he could "do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

But now we have November ahead of us and we always need to look forward and be praying for not just God's mercy and grace, but also his wisdom. This month we have a few opportunities coming up that I hope folks will be participating in. First, on November 11th, we'll be hosting a community forum on the Middle East at 7 pm in the fellowship hall. This is open to the public. The second opportunity will be seeing to it that the families that are relying on the congregation's ministry of the Community Food Pantry are provided with the fixings for a joyous Thanksgiving. I know that for me and my family, we've always been blessed to not have to worry so much about how we would eat whenever we wanted to eat. However, I have seen many families that really aren't blessed in that way. I believe that when we bless, we receive blessing in return, and so let's get busy! And then the third great happening at WMPC this month is of course the Christmas Bazaar. This year will be bittersweet as this Christmas Bazaar was always Diane Erikson's pride and joy. She is and will continue to be missed, but I also know that her spirit is still very much here. I know it will be a special occasion.

I also wanted to mention one other thing. I've gotten some wonderful questions to focus our current sermon series on, but I would like more! I'm sure that everyone has at least one good question in them that we could then all learn so much from. So, please write a question on a card, or on a slip of paper, or put it in an email or even in a text, or perhaps even call me up and let me know it. This is how we begin to learn about Scripture in a very different way which is much more enlightening. And, I'll put in a plug too for bible study. Ask those who do attend, we always walk away having learned something completely new, as well as growing closer as a community. Invitation to start new is always there. See ya at church!

Be Good & Do Good,

Pastor Chris

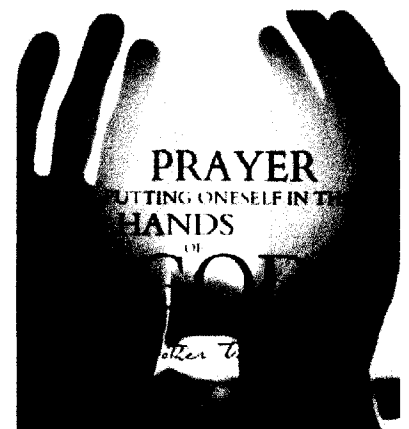
Joys & Concerns

Concerns:

- *Prayer for Bob Gunderman who was admitted to Chilton. Hopefully changing his meds and he'll be feeling better and getting home soon.
- *Prayers for those in Israel who are being attacked by Palestine forces.
- *Prayers for those in the world who are suffering losses and pain because of wars and natural disasters.
- *Sandy Smidt's mother-in law, Jean, (Helen), Passed away please keep the family in your prayers.
- *Berwin has a cardiac condition. He had a pacemaker put in a few weeks ago and had an aortic valve replacement as well as an arterial bypass . He is home very tired but should be fine.
- * Fran's friend Carol's son passed away prayers for the family.
- *Pastor Chris's aunt, Judith, whom he is very close to, is facing an ending ten-year battle with cancer. She recently had to put her dog to sleep. She is Chris's godmother.
- *Prayers for all of the areas that are in a crisis; political, natural disasters.
- *Allan beat cancer four times and now will undergo a triple bypass surgery.
- *Our organist, Beverley's brother's caretaker's brother was murdered a few years ago. The trial begins next week. Prayers for the troubled family.
- *Sandy's Mom had a stent put in on Friday Morning in Morristown prayers that she continues to get her strength back.

Joys:

- *Birthday wishes to Bob Gunderman
- *Rich and Irene are studying "The Chosen" and highly recommend it for us to read or view.
- *Audrey's joy was from a visit from her son who lives in Maine.
- *Linda's joy is that her family had a very happy wedding celebration for Eric and Chelsea.
- *Pam has a joy that she saw her nephew, Chris, and he recognized her. He is facing a long road in physical therapy.
- * Congratulations to Ken & Gladys Dykstra on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.



AN OPEN INVITATION TO OUR COMMUNITY

The West Milford & Oak Ridge Presbyterian Churches are inviting members of our community to a presentation/forum about the issues that are currently happening in what we commonly refer to as the Holy Land between Israelis and Palestinians.

Our shared pastor, Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle, studied, worked and lived in the Holy Land for nearly fifteen years and will be sharing with those gathered some of the history of that land, as well as his experiences and insights into what everyone in the world has been witnessing take place there.

This will be an evening of open discussion in which the hoped for result will be a better understanding of one of the most complex and confusing situations that everyone has been seeing play out now for multiple generations.

When : Saturday, November 11th @ 7 pm

**Where: West Milford Presbyterian Church
(ample parking is behind the church)**

****Tea & coffee will be served.**



SESSION'S REFLECTIONS

NOVEMBER 2023

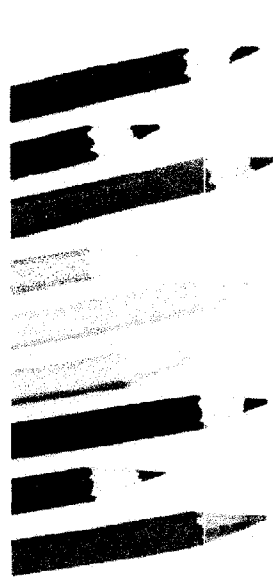
SUBMITTED BY BETSY ENGELHARDT, CLERK OF SESSION

Our Church has certainly been busy saying our final farewells to beloved members of our church. On October 6th, Deacons pulled together a wonderful repast for Diane Eriksen, complete with a sponge cake at each table depicting unique themes in Diane's life. Anyone who knew Diane understood how she LOVED to fool people on special occasions by hiding kitchen sponges in layers of icing so they looked like delicious cakes – until they tried to cut into one. Diane would be laughing the hardest as the recipients struggled to cut through the sponge. Julia Held was honored with a funeral service on October 28 followed by a celebration of life at the Upper Greenwood Lake Community Club. November 4th, we will join Judy Mazur's family in our sanctuary for her memorial service, followed by a repast in Fellowship Hall. Special thanks go out to our hard-working Deacons who make every one of these occasions as memorable for the families as possible.

Betsy Engelhardt attended a 3 ½ hour Clerk of Session training seminar offered by our Presbytery. During the 2022 Presbyterian USA General Assembly, 33 amendments were voted into our Book of Order, some of which will impact the way we conduct business. Stressing the importance of following the Book of Order along with individual Bylaws in place for our various organizations were covered by both Betsy and Pastor Chris. Our Finance Committee leaders will be attending a Financial Training seminar offered by our Presbytery on Nov 4th. In the meantime, they are working on completing the auditing of 2022 records for all Church bank accounts before the end of the year. Pastor Chris has invited a special guest from the Presbyterian Foundation to our November 13 regular Session meeting to help us spearhead a "Bequest Project". Rose Niles will aid us in ways to encourage the congregation to remember our church in their wills and financial planning.

Don Wright had many property projects to report. By now everyone should have seen the shiny floors throughout the ground floor of Fellowship Hall after being stripped and polished. This project was funded in full by the Wm. Association. Many other maintenance projects were completed within the past month. Next on our to-do-list is to get quotes on replacing the ceiling tiles throughout Fellowship Hall and to obtain a new mason to work on repairing the cement walkways and steps up to the entrance of our sanctuary. Last month we started a conversation with the Farmer's Market on the possibility of hosting an indoor Winter Market in Fellowship Hall, one day each month, through April. Organizers have decided to hold off on the concept for this year.

A special joint reorganization meeting was also held in October including Elders, Deacons, and anyone interested in contributing to goals and objectives for the new year. Five areas of concern were drafted by the attendees which included: GROWING THE CHURCH / SINCERELY LISTENING / INCREASING LEADERSHIP / INCREASING PARTICIPATION / ENGAGING FAMILIES & YOUTH. Of course, it will take the active participation of our entire church family to turn these into reality. Please let us know what role you can play in these efforts.



LEADERSHIP

- ✓ Inspire People
- Empower People
- ✓ Shared Vision
- ✓ Lead Change

A NEW BEGINNING

We have spoken frequently these past 6 months about the new beginning for our church. During the Meet & Greet sponsored by the PNC to introduce Pastor Chris to our congregation in March, this theme was at the forefront. We've experienced a new beginning with our shared relationship with our sister church, Oak Ridge Presbyterian. We've embraced the changes in our worship hours, enjoyed worship at the Oak Ridge locations, adjusted to a shared Pastor relationship, and reaped the financial benefits of this change. Our pledge committee for 2024 chose A NEW BEGINNING as their theme for this year's pledge drive.

What can everyone in our church family do to contribute to this new beginning? We ask that our members try something new. If you've never served on Session or have taken a break from being an Elder, talk with God and ask what leadership gift and talents can be shared in this new beginning. Secure a front row seat in what we believe is an exciting and vibrant future for our church. Contact Pastor Chris or Clerk of Session with your interest in joining Session's class of 2026.

**DOING THE WORK OF THE LORD
GIVES BACK MORE THAN IT TAKES!**

DEACONS DOINGS



Deacons serve the church and the church family.

After the service for Diane Ericksen, the deacons provided the repast for the family and friends.

Sandy Zimmer provided sandwiches and salads, deacons augmented this and, with offerings from the church ladies, served many delicious desserts. Each of the eight tables had a centerpiece of a sponge cake and a theme to remind us of Diane, such as knitting needles, paint brushes, a cat, protractor, ride on mower and an American flag.

There will be a memorial service for Julia Held on October 28th, followed by a gathering at the Upper Greenwood Lake Clubhouse.

On Saturday, November 4th, following the service for Judy Mazur, deacons will host the repast for her.

Her daughter, Laura Milo, will provide the main dishes and deacons will serve desserts and beverages.

We outlined a busy schedule for November and December. The Thanksgiving alter will be set then it will be time for Advent.

Deacons will again provide the famous Deacons' Café at the Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, November 18th. This year, we will remember Diane, who created and ran the bazaar for many years.

Deacons are a caring group, but we can always use your help. It may be in the form of a dessert for a repast, making sandwiches for the bazaar, and/or helping to decorate the alter for Advent. These can be one-time offerings. Let us know. Your help is welcome.

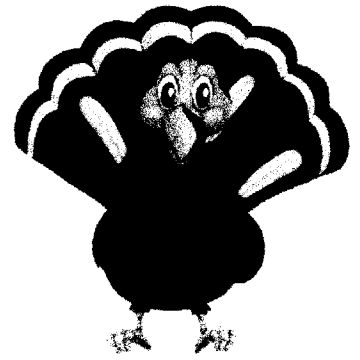
Marty Tappan

Deacon moderator

martytappan@hotmail.com



WA NEWS NOVEMBER 2023



November already!

We have been very busy lately. Sadly we had to say goodbye to our dear friend Diane, we will miss her immensely.

We are carrying on her work for the upcoming Christmas Bazaar on the eighteenth. We have 36 vendors on board and hope to see all of you there. Also maybe you can contribute something yummy for the sweet stop.

We are happy to report that The Women's Association was able to pay for the final three windows in the fellowship building.

The floors in fellowship hall, the kitchen and the pantry were stripped and had six coats of wax applied. This is something the WA has paid to have done each year after the rummage sale but with covid and all it hasn't been done in four years. They look really nice and we need to avoid dragging chairs and tables on them.

Aunt Jenny's Attic is running a 1/2 price sale so come in and get some bargains.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Thanksgiving.

Linda and Pam





News From the Pantry- November

We all subscribe to the Golden Rule that tells us to “do unto others....” and to the verse “ I am my brother’s keeper,” We desire to help those less fortunate and no month brings out that urge more than the month leading up to Thanksgiving when we reflect on our own gratitude for all our blessings. It prompts us to remember with renewed focus those who aren’t having the TV special Thanksgiving showing tables laden with food and joyful family members seated around. Maybe they are alone, grieving, ill, anxious, not trusting that the future holds anything good for them. This includes children whose lives have changed not in a particularly good way, with things they have no control over like the divorce of parents, loss of their parent’s job, leaving their old home and friends, bullying, We know how simple acts such as a smile, a warm hello, a gentle word can change a person’s day into a happier one. Knowing that others care can be a strong medicine. As we at the pantry (and you are always more than welcome to join us) fill bags of food for Thanksgiving meals, maybe you’d like to share a store bought dessert, sweet treat, Shoprite gift card, a special grace that you use in your home, a card filled with words of kindness that you’ve written, that we can include in their bags. This can be the warm hug that can’t be given in person, but instead can pass on in the pantry bags they’ll get for the holiday.

Thank you in advance for anything you’d like to share, your Pantry Team



**Helping
hand**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 2023-2024

November 2023

During our first lessons together, the theme that “God’s created us for a reason” was explored along with a review of “the Creation” via Bible verse Genesis 1: 1-2. In the following weeks, the children understood the importance and loving rewards they would receive in following God’s Plan for them and how jealousy can change into the blessings of forgiveness. Once again, the teachers used the Bible stories of the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11: 103 and Joseph’s Dream and forgiveness of his brothers Genesis 37:3-4 to be the basis for their lessons, discussions, and projects.

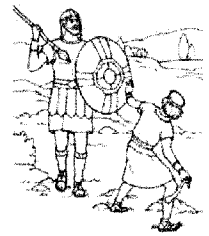


In October, the children learned of the importance of obeying God’s laws via a discussion of the Ten Commandments with a review of Moses and the Exodus of his people from Egypt to freedom. Throughout this year emphasis will be placed on the importance to live God’s laws and understand that His Commandments were given to them because God wanted them to know His love for them and keep them all happy, healthy, and safe via Exodus 20:1-3.



Throughout October our children continue to learn to trust and obey God, to know that with God at their side there is nothing to fear, and that God always keeps his promises and provides help to them when they are in need. These themes were explored through Joshua 1:10-11, and Joshua 6: 5 in which they learned about Joshua as he Enters the promised Land and the Battle of Jericho. Then, by reading Ruth 1:16, the children will meet Ruth and Naomi and learn how God rewards kindness when it is shown to each other, and how happy God is when He sees kindness given to his people by others.

At the end of October, the children will come to know about David and Goliath, Samuel 17: 49-50, and how God protects his people who trust in him. Again, the children understand that they are loved by God, protected by God against difficulties, and that God’s love is always there for them and within them at all times of need.



In November, the lessons will continue to reinforce how the children can continue to praise God by following his “words to live by,” and by recognizing how all powerful and loving He is to the people who believe in Him. In the last class in November the children will learn of God’s promise of a Savior, and they now know God always keeps his promises!!!!

Please note that Sunday, November 26, is a Family Service and there will be no Sunday School that day. Also, be sure to mark your calendar for Sunday, **December 17** as that will be the **Children’s Christmas Pageant**. The rehearsal will be the day before (Saturday, December 16) in the morning.

Also, there are still many caring rocks in our Kindness Garden – feel free to take one and pass it along or make one and leave it for another.

Remember that all children are welcome to come to Sunday School whether their families are members or not.



**West Milford
Presbyterian Church
Christmas Bazaar
November 18th 2023
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

**Over 40 Vendors Plus the Sweet
Stop,
The Deacons Café will be selling
lunch**

**Come have a wonderful day and get
all your Christmas shopping done
early!!!**

1452 Union Valley Rd



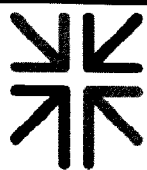
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WANTED

By

THE WEST MILFORD LIONS CLUB

If you have eyeglasses or hearing aids you no longer use, please donate them to the Lions Club. The items are cleaned and measured and given free of charge to individuals in need of these items. They are distributed throughout the United States as well as the world. There is a basket on the piano in Fellowship Hall for you to deposit them in. **THANK YOU SO MUCH!!**



SPECIAL OFFERINGS



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Here's Help

Ever wish you had a cheat sheet to help with all the things you need to keep track of? We do! And, we hope the information included on this sheet will help with questions you may have about Special Offerings.

What exactly are Special Offerings?

The Special Offerings of the PC(USA) are celebrations of specific ways God has been made known to us. Each is connected to a season of the church year and mandated by the General Assembly to help the whole Church join together in response to God's grace. They represent the largest, collective way Presbyterians come together to work for a better world. The Offerings actively engage congregations in ministries of compassion, justice, hunger, Christian formation, education, peacemaking, and global witness.

How many are there? Four.

One Great Hour of Sharing – promoted and received during the season of Lent

Pentecost Offering – promoted and received on Pentecost Sunday
(or any other youth-focused Sunday)

Peace & Global Witness Offering – promoted during *A Season of Peace* (September)
and received on World Communion Sunday (the first Sunday in October)

Christmas Joy Offering – promoted and received during the season of Advent

Where do I find resources about the Offerings?

One Great Hour of Sharing, presbyterianmission.org/oghs

Pentecost Offering, presbyterianmission.org/pentecost

Peace & Global Witness Offering, presbyterianmission.org/peace-global

Christmas Joy Offering, presbyterianmission.org/christmasjoy

How can I order resources?

Visit pcusastore.com or contact customer service by calling 800-533-4371
or emailing customer_service@presbypub.com.

