

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS



“And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?’ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back.” (Mark 16:2-4)

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Jesus is alive! We’ve just celebrated the joy of the resurrection on Easter and I hope you’re still excited because the celebration is just getting started! Easter is not just a one day celebration. For the next 50 days until Pentecost we will be in the season of Easter known as Eastertide. In fact, as Jesus’ disciples we are Easter people living our lives based on this life-changing event. It is what our Christian faith is based on. How does it shape our every day lives especially those times when life is challenging and we may be feeling empty.

The tomb where Jesus was laid to rest was empty. The women who went to anoint Jesus’ dead body with oils were shocked. The giant stone that sealed it had been rolled away. How? Where was he? The women were anxious about so many things. They worried about who would roll the stone away. Then they worried about where he was. They were the first ones to experience the risen Christ, so their astonishment was understandable. Yet, we have the gift of their account, and still react the same way as individuals and collectively as the church. We become anxious and worried about so many things and we wonder who will help us.

The Easter message is that the God who rolled the stone away that first Easter morning continues to away the stones from our lives today. Christ is alive. He appeared to the disciples in the flesh and we have their stories to infuse us with faith today. There may be periods in our lives that are difficult, yet keeping in mind that Christ overcame death and the grave, we can face them with hope-filled hearts. That’s why this year we are once-again celebrating Holy Humor Sunday, on April 7th. You can read more about it in this newsletter. It’s a day set-aside to really celebrate the joy of the resurrection and what that means in our lives. Yes, there are some real heavy things to deal with in life, but if the stone was not too heavy for God to move, if death was not too heavy for God to overcome, then these heavy burdens are not too much for God to transform as well.

Jesus is alive! We need to continue to live as Easter people infused with the joy of the resurrection. That is how people will come to know Christ. That is how people will come to worship in our churches again. Easter is not just a one day or even a 50 day event. It is a life-long celebration in the life of every Christian. The tomb was empty, but we are not. We are filled....with joy!

Blessings and Peace, Pastor Edwina

WORSHIP LEADERS & RECORDERS

DATE	LAYREADER	RECORDER	SPECIAL NOTE
04/07	Keith Butters	Shari Fish	Holy Humor Sunday
04/14	Caily Armstrong	Don Hanson	Communion
04/21	Heather Tucker	Val Wood-McRae	Creation Care Sunday
04/28	Mary Yates	Jay Fish	

FOR SALE BY THE CRAFTY LADIES

Need a Nice, Quick Gift?

Towel holders, cell phone holders, microwave bowls.

Available to purchase for \$6 each. If interested

please see Lenora or Gail 😊



CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays

- Skip Briggs 04/02
- Grace Huntzinger..... 04/03
- Paul Berger 04/03
- Patty Dunham..... 04/03
- Samantha Roush..... 04/03
- Gerry Storms 04/08
- Ron Owens 04/11
- Angela Spinelli-Alcaraz 04/13
- Brian Burke..... 04/14
- Monica Taylor..... 04/14
- Brenden Hatzinger..... 04/14
- Amy Garcia 04/15
- Sonepith Keoviengsamay 04/16
- Nancy Hester 04/17
- Donna Needham 04/18
- Roberta Bert 04/19
- Don Davidson 04/19

Birthdays Continued

- John Nethaway..... 04/20
- Doug Davidson 04/22
- Erik O'Meara 04/23
- Brian Hickernell 04/24
- Shirley Brownnewell..... 04/25
- Mary Wrege 04/25
- Susan O'Meara 04/27
- Mellony Spinelli 04/28
- Charlie Sexton 04/28
- Cooper Engelbert 04/29
- Mike Little 04/30

Anniversaries

- Skip & Lenora Merithew..... 04/16
- Mike & Amy Garcia..... 04/20
- Paul & Suzie Abreu 04/20
- Josh & Jillian Olney..... 04/21
- Dan & Marcie Ferens 04/28

NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

- Farm Week
- Transportation Week
- Recycling and Keep Our Earth Clean Week
- Our Community Week
- Spring Break – April 19-26, 2024
- Parent/Teacher Conferences – April 8, 2024



MUSIC & WORSHIP

Thank you to the Joyful Ringers Handbell Choir and everyone who participated in the Passion Play on Palm Sunday. It was truly moving!

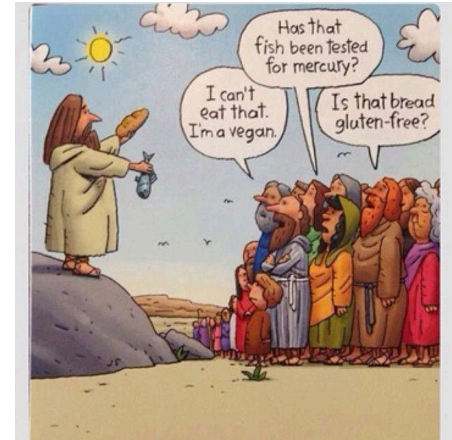


Calendar:

- Joyful Ringers rehearse each Wednesday in March at 6:20
- Senior Choir rehearses each Wednesday in March at 7:30, but no Choir Rehearsals on Wed. April 3
- Youth Tone Chimes will begin rehearsing April 28th after worship. Stay tuned for more information

HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY – APRIL 7TH

Come and celebrate the joy of the resurrection on Holy Humor Sunday. **Wear a funny hat, bright clothes, a costume, or even your pajamas!** Be ready to tell jokes at different points in the service. You can bring your own and some will also be provided. A special uplifting **camp sing-a-long** will take the place of the sermon, and some members of the choir will be presenting some really special music. **There may even be kazoo!** You don't want to miss this exciting fun-filled service!



And now....a little about the history of Holy Humor Sunday. "Many American churches are resurrecting an old Easter custom begun by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity-"Holy Humor Sunday" celebrations of Jesus' resurrection on the Sunday after Easter.

For centuries in Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday, including "Bright Sunday" (the Sunday after Easter), was observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced.

The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. "*Risus paschalis* - the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it.

Holy Humor Sunday services not only give Christians an opportunity for ongoing celebrations of the greatest miracle in human history - Jesus' resurrection - it also gives each of us an opportunity to celebrate, and give thanks for, our own smaller resurrections in this world and this life." (From the Joyful Noiseletter)

Photo License: <https://www.westconcordunionchurch.org/sermons/holy-humor/2237>

HAWAII MISSION TRIP PRESENTATION – SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH

Your waiting is over! Martie Talley will be presenting her experience from her mission trip to Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii on Sunday, April 14th after worship. Martie went with All Hands and Hearts on this trip in February to help rebuild from the damage caused by the devastating fires. Please make plans to be here to see and hear all she experienced.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS - The Ecumenical Youth Group continues to have fun each month with anywhere from 10 -12 youth. Last month we played Bean Bag Golf thanks to Amy Garcia for helping with that. Helen Adsit led us in making a suncatcher craft with beads. There were also some St. Patrick's Day activities. Thank you to Carrie Scaccia for providing tacos for our meal. The next Youth Group will meet on **Sunday, April 14th at Trinity Church** from 5:00 – 7:30pm.

Faith and Fitness

What does fitness have to do with our faith? St. Paul tells us that our “bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor. 6:19-20) This means that we need to be good stewards of these temples.

To help with this holy stewardship, Feidy Miner, Director of the Rome Refugee Services, has also started holding fitness classes called “Be You” right here in our Fellowship Hall at FPC. She offers the following programs:

- Monday 6-7 pm - Kettlebell Class – Tone up with kettlebell weights and some great music.
- Wednesday 6-7 pm – Zumba Toning – Dance your way into great shape with upbeat music!
- Saturday 9-10 am - Pound Fit – Workout with drumsticks to the rhythm of the music.

The cost is \$8.00 for one class or you can purchase a punch card of 12 cards for \$72.00. Proceeds from the classes go to support the Rome Refugee Services and First Presbyterian Church. So be the best you can be and sign up for some fun and lively fitness classes today!

FINANCIAL NEWS FROM SUSAN HATZINGER

	2024 Year-to-Date			
	February	Actual	Budget	Budget
Operating Budget:				
Receipts	\$ 38,561.04	\$ 93,193.04	\$ 69,412.29	\$ 391,273.69
Expenditures	\$ (36,220.91)	\$ (65,814.63)	\$ (69,324.73)	\$ (391,273.69)
Change in Net Assets	\$ 2,340.13	\$ 27,378.41	\$ 87.56	\$ -
February Collections:				
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 275.00			
Pentecost	\$ 25.00			
Peace & Global Witness	\$ 25.00			
OGHS	\$ 160.00			
Memorials				
Mary Mowry Scholarship				
February Fund Disbursements				

CELEBRATE CREATION CARE SUNDAY—APRIL, 21st

Come celebrate our amazing home that God has created for us—and which God has asked us to care for with love. We will have a special Creation Care Worship Service, followed by a congregation-wide event. We will have Creation Care Exhibits with food and other activities. There will be earth related crafts, tips on recycling and conservation, and more. Take seeds to plant for pollinators. See the faces of young environmental activists. Carrie Scaccia will even be bringing her worm farm to show us how they aid in composting. Don't miss Creation Care Sunday!



MISSION NEWS

Thank You to all who donated food to our food pantry. We have many who come to our Mission Closet who also have food insecurity. The congregation was very generous in replenishing our supplies.

On-Going Food Collection for our Emergency Pantry : Always appreciated – peanut butter, jams & jellies, ramen noodles, sauces & pasta, cereal, breakfast bars, oatmeal, canned fruits & vegetables (especially snack size-applesauce, etc) Cleaning out your house or garage? We will accept donations for the closet and/or June Rummage Sale. Please place donation outside the closet room rather than inside it!

Community Closet: We have so many people who come to our Community Closet each week for clothing, household items, and hygiene items. Many also have food insecurity. Thank you to all who continue to donate to our emergency food pantry. We can always use donations of sheets (all sizes) blankets, towels, and children's & men's casual clothes and shoes. Please consider personal hygiene items including: *shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, bars of soap, toilet paper and tooth paste*: Thank you! With so many people utilizing this ministry, we really need more help. Please prayerfully consider helping out at the Community Closet on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays from 9:30am – noon. Come and meet the people in our community whom we serve, hear their stories, and share the love of Christ.

Rescue Mission Cooking: cook captains are Amy Garcia and Liz Clough on 04/16 & 04/23 – Meal details & times to follow. We're always looking for more help with cooking - call or talk to Liz if you can help. We can adjust cooking times to fit your schedule!!

Rummage Sale - It's time for spring cleaning! You can donate your items for the upcoming June Rummage Sale now. The sale will take place on Sat. June 15th from 9 am – 2pm. The half-price sale will be on Friday, June 21st from 4-6 pm, and the Bag Sale will be held on Sat. June 22nd from 9- noon. All proceeds go toward mission projects. Please leave donations at the top of either stairway or in the room behind the books downstairs.

[NEWS FROM STONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH](#)

Two friends were discussing where they were going to shop one day. The first lady said, "I know where there is a great shop that has fabulous one-of-a-kind gift items reasonably priced." The second lady said, "Where is that?" The first lady replied, "The Fair Trade Shop in Clinton." The second lady said, "Let's go!"

This is absolutely true! Whatever occasion you need a gift for, we've got you covered! Building on the simple idea of a cow's bell, artisans in northern India use recycled iron to create the frame of our Beaded Lattice Wind Chime, accented with brass bells and colorful glass beads. It can be suspended or hung from the wall, for use indoors or out. Go from the sink to the table in our handcrafted ceramic Bowl of Berries Colander.

Whether it's blueberries, strawberries, raspberries or cherries, rinse your berries and serve them in this sweet blue and white ceramic colander bowl. These and MANY, MANY MORE uniquely handcrafted gift items from 38 different countries can be found at our

FAIR TRADE SHOP, STONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 8 SO. PARK ROW, CLINTON.

Our regular hours are 10am to 4pm every Thursday and **SECOND SATURDAYS.**

Purchasing fair trade items ensures artisans and small farmers fair wages and healthy working conditions, providing dignity, sustainable development and hope for marginalized people. **LET US BE YOUR GO-TO GIFT SHOP!**

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<https://buildingstoneshoppe.square.site>

or

www.facebook.com/buildingstonesfairtradeshoppe.

The Robert O'Meara Scholarship has a new name.....

Rev. Robert O'Meara and Selma O'Meara Scholarship

The Rev. Robert A. O'Meara dedicated his life to the betterment of peoples everywhere. This memorial scholarship reflects his expressed desire to help others improve the human condition. He wanted to help those adults who wished to enhance their current human services skills, to re-enter the human services, or to change their career to human services.

Award Priority

First priority will be given to adult members of the First Presbyterian Church who plan to prepare for a second career or enter a program of career advancement in human services. Second priority will be given to undergraduate student (2nd, 3rd, or 4th year) members of the First Presbyterian Church who are attending an accredited undergraduate school. Third priority will be given to qualified members of the First Presbyterian Church who are graduating from high school and planning to attend an accredited undergraduate school.

Award Requirements

All applicants must be a member on the active role of the First Presbyterian Church of Rome, NY. Adult applicants must be currently employed in the human services field or wanting to enter the human services field, or needing to upgrade skills, and a high school graduate. All undergraduates must have successfully completed 24 credit hours at an accredited university or college and maintain a 3.0 or better academic average. June high school graduates must be accepted at an accredited university, college, or professional school for the human services (e.g.: nursing school). The scholarship shall be used for an accredited training or education program within one calendar year of the award or it shall be returned. Applicants may receive the award more than once, but the application form must be submitted each year.

Award Information

Application deadline May 15, 2024. Award amount: \$ 1500.00

To complete an application click on the link below or go to our website.

<http://business.romechamber.com/form/view/32595>

SERENITY MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE

Not long ago, a dear friend of mine asked “why does God make people suffer?” She was remembering the last few weeks of her grandmother’s life. Her grandmother was a gentle, kind soul, devout, lived a good and generous life. But the last few weeks of her life were filled with horrendous pain and suffering. She was so good, my friend said – why does God do this to such people? When we are in pain, or see those we love struggle, or watch a violent conflict unfold on the other side of the world, naturally these questions weigh upon us... We crave some kind of explanation or justification for the suffering. We ask questions that could never have a satisfying answer. There are no guarantees in this life that we will not experience pain in some form. That is simply life... but – the ONE guarantee that God gives us all is the reassurance that we will never, ever be alone.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 promised a new covenant that would turn the people to face forward and help them live life as it came toward them. His description is quite compelling: God would set aside the old covenant, with its foundation based on written laws and regulations. And in its place God would give the people a new covenant. The Lord would put his spirit directly into the hearts of people. This new covenant would be based on God’s nearness – not on laws and rules. People were not forced to learn of God. Instead, they would know God naturally. God wants to be known by us, and by people everywhere. God yearns to be in relationship with us. One of the many names of God is Emmanuel, which translates to ‘God is with us.’ God is not in some far-away place observing us, God is here with us, experiencing everything as we do.

As we hold onto the promise of Emmanuel, we too must help others see the hope that is extended to them. We don’t have to have answers for their circumstances, even Jesus didn’t offer that. Rather our call is to be present. As God is present with us, we too are present with others. At any given moment, what we all most want to know is that we are loved, and that there is meaning. The knowledge of God that Jeremiah talked about goes beyond just what we know to what we need to feel, to understand—not just in the cerebral pathways of our brains but in the deepest fibers of our very being.

Imagine how different our world could be if we all truly knew just how much we are loved ... There is no distance between us and God. Imagine if we embraced this knowledge, if we lived in to this purest form of love and acceptance... Would we still be so scared? So doubtful? So consumed the need to know “why?” What if? What’s next? The only answer we truly need is to know that God is as close as our next breath. The most faith-filled thing you can do is to live in the present moment. Seek the light and joy and beauty in this moment right now. No regrets from the

past, no worries about the future. Be here now. This world is temporal, God’s world is eternal. Our faith in God is no guarantee that we will not suffer or face challenges or trauma, but our faith does guarantee God is with us every step of the way.

Here is a prayer to help you feel closer to God: O God of my Heart, You yearn to be so close to me, so that I can know you in every breath, in every hope, in every relationship. Meet me here in this moment today and teach me to recognize the covenant of justice, peace and love you have written on my heart. May my desires become your desires, my work become your work, and my community become the place where you are sought and found.

Amen.



FUSED-GLASS
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RELAY FOR LIFE

TUES APRIL 02
6:00 - 8:00 pm
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At The Door
Projects Range...
\$25-\$40
Glass is pre-cut
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\$20 Admission Fee

- * Includes Light Munchies & Two 10-Pack Bingo Cards
- * Limited Seating
- * Advance Ticket Sales Preferred
Few Available at the Door
- * Additional Two 10-Pack Cards - \$10 each
- * Bring Markers & We'll Have a Few Daubers On Hand



Hosted by Relay for Life Teams
Rainbow of Faith & Hope First Pres Rome
All Profits to American Cancer Society/Relay for Life

Questions or More Info? Contact Sue Hanson (336-6251)

Tickets Available at 1st Pres Church (108 W Court) and
Engelbert's Jewelers Gone Coastal

Can't Make the Party ??- Place An Order Online at:
www.pamperedchef.biz/mspina - Host: Relay Life

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
April 2024	1 Church Office Closed for Holiday 12:30-3pm PEO Chapel 4pm Serenity Circle	2 9:30am Community Closet 10am Crafty Ladies 6-8pm-Relay for Life - SongByrd Fused Glass	3 6:20 pm Bell Choir	4 9:30am Community 3:30p BIB packing, TUCC 6:30pm-W&M Mtg.	5 Church Office Closed	6 
	7 HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY: 10am Worship/Coffee Hour FF Classes for Youth, Teens & Adults	8 8:30am- Nursery School Library 10 am-Bible Study 4pm Serenity Circle	9 9:30am Community Closet 10am Crafty Ladies	10 5:15 Faith Formation Mtg. 6:20 pm Bell Choir 7: 30 pm Senior Choir	11 9:30am Community Closet 3:30p BIB packing, TUCC 7pm- DEACONS Mtg.	12
14 10am Worship & COMMUNION - Coffee Hour 11:15am-Hawaii Mission trip presentation 5-7:30pm – Youth Group	15 4pm Serenity Circle	16 – 9:30am Com. Closet 10am Crafty Ladies 1pm Mission Mtg. 4pm-Bldg & Grounds Mtg. 5:00pm-Rescue M. Cook	17 TBD-Rescue Mission- Pick up 6:20 pm Bell Choir 7: 30 pm Senior Choir	18 9:30am Community Closet 10AM-Bible Study 3:30p BIB packing, TUCC	19 Copperspire Deadline	20
21 - Creation Care Sunday 10am Worship Coffee Hour Creation Care Activities	22 4pm Serenity Circle 6:30 pm Session Mtg.	23 9:30-Noon-CWS Hygiene Kits DROP OFF 9:30am Community Closet- & Healthy Heart Tour 10am Crafty Ladies 10:00am-Rescue M. Cook	24 12:00-3:00pm-CWS Hygiene K. DROP OFF Rescue M.-Pick up 6:20 pm Bell Choir 7: 30 pm Senior Choir	25 9:30-Noon-CWS Hygiene Kits DROP OFF 9:30am Com Closet 3:30p BIB Back Packing	26	27- 11:00 am Memorial Service Howard Sears
28- 10am Worship/ BAPTISM Youth Tone Chimes Coffee Hour FF Classes for Youth, Teens & Adults	29 4pm Serenity Circle	30 11:00-1:00pm-CWS Hygiene Kits- PICK UP	MONDAYS - 8:00 pm – AA MONDAYS – 6-7 pm – FITNESS CLASS-(KETTLE BELL) TUESDAYS – 7:30 pm – NA TUESDAYS – 4-5:00 pm – GIRLS SCOUT TUESDAYS – 9:30 am & 6:00 pm – E S L CLASSES WEDNESDAYS – 6-7 pm – FITNESS CLASS (ZUMBA) THURSDAYS – 3:30pm – BIB (BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK-Trinity Church) SATURDAYS – 9-10 am – FITNESS CLASS (POUND FIT)			