

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS



"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

(John 1:5)

The season of Epiphany is quickly coming to a close ending on Transfiguration Sunday on February 15th. The first great epiphany (revealing of Christ) began when the magi were led by a star to the infant Jesus. The Baptism of Jesus, the Miracle at the Wedding at Cana, healings, teachings, and eventually the Transfiguration all revealed who Jesus truly is – the Son of God, the Word made Flesh, the Light of the World. As Jesus' followers we carry this divine Light in us and with us. It is what makes our congregation shine and that is our purpose: to shine God's Light for all to see.

As the days slowly become longer, we simultaneously enter a period in the Church year of shadows, the increasing darkness of Holy Week, and the crucifixion before the Light again returns at Easter. It may seem strange to move from a season of light into a season of increasing darkness, yet we need this often underexamined season of Epiphany to lead us into the Light. We need the Light of Christ to guide us into a closer walk with him. We need the illumination of the Light to shine into and through the darkness so we don't enter the darkness alone. Christ is with us as we experience the darkness, pain, and suffering he felt in order for each and every one of us - and for each and every person in the world - to be saved. God loves the world that much!



We are all experiencing a darkness in our lives right now due to the spreading darkness of evil, suffering, violence and death in our world due from a love of power instead of the power of love. At times, it may be hard to see how we can move forward. However, we are not lost in the darkness; we have the Light of Christ with us to guide us from the darkness into the light. Lent is a time to draw close to Christ. Listening to Him means being present to those who need love in the midst of this hurting world.

The Light of Christ continues to be revealed in the kindness of strangers, the courage to stand up for those who are oppressed, and the unconditional love we live out in Christ's name. Epiphanies still abound. As Mr. Rogers said, "look for the helpers." We need to be those helpers too.

Let us continue to be on the lookout for these ongoing epiphanies. We are called to be the Church that spreads the Light of Christ even in the darkest of places. We journey from the Season of Epiphany to the Season of Lent with a hope and confidence that the Season of Resurrection is lovingly woven through it all.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Edwina



LENT BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY

Join together for a brief worship services on Wednesday, February 18th at 7:00 pm. Our service will contain scripture reading, prayer, and the imposition of ashes as we enter into the season of Lent. Please note the earlier time that we hope will encourage more of you to come and join together as a faith community.

Celebrations®

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Maegan Fish.....02/04
 Bonnie Herter.....02/05
 Kyle Sexton.....02/09
 Mason David Mahosky....02/09
 Armen Roubian.....02/10
 Ann Cianfrocco.....02/10
 Kiki Hinman.....02/13
 Nikki Hinman Huntzinger..02/14
 Heather Tucker.....02/16
 Calvin Reed.....02/18
 Sharri Hartwell.....02/19
 Sue Seubert.....02/19

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED

Bob Alessi.....02/22
 Carrie Scaccia.....02/22
 Noah Sexton.....02/22
 Robert Alessi.....02/22
 Susan Hatzinger.....02/23
 Jennifer Proper.....02/25
 Barbara Rhodes.....02/26
 Dan Ferens.....02/26
 Eric Townsend.....02/27

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Jay & Shari Fish.....02/14
 Laura & Ken Dutton.....02/17
 Harry & Cathy Carpenter.....02/29

LAY READERS FOR FEBRUARY

<u>02/01</u>	<u>Jeff Evans</u>	<u>Communion</u>
<u>02/08</u>	<u>Carrie Scaccia</u>	
<u>02/15</u>	<u>Helen Adsit</u>	
<u>02/18</u>	<u>Helen Tracy</u>	<u>Ash Wednesday</u>
<u>02/22</u>	<u>Liz Clough</u>	<u>First Sunday in Lent</u>



Winter Weather Cancellation-In the event of an extreme weather event causing us to cancel service, we will send out an e-mail announcement. It will be listed on the WKTV-2 news announcements.

*PLEASE NOTE: this announcement may go out from the pastor's mail, so also check your spam folder.

NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

Feb. 2-6: February Fun Week and pre-k parent teacher conferences
 Feb. 9-13: Friendship and Valentines Week
 Feb. 16-20. Mid-winter Recess, No School
 Feb. 23-27: Dental Health Week

WORSHIP & MUSIC NEWS

Music News: Our Senior Choir and Chime Choir are working on several new songs and preparing for the season of Lent. Beginning each Sunday in March, Senior Choir will be presenting portions of "Whispers of the Passion" a cantata by Joseph Martin. This will feature special readings and props each week to enhance our Lenten worship experience.



Our Chime Choir will play in worship Feb. 8. Come and hear the joyful music! We are excited to have Andrea Falvo returning to sing for us during our March 1st worship service.

If you or anyone you know is interested in being part of our music program, contact Kim Nethaway at 315-725-8096 or knethaway@twcny.rr.com. We have been growing our numbers and hope to continue that trend!

GET READY FOR THE SOUPER BOWL!

That's right; you read this correctly. FPC is having a Souper Bowl. On Sunday, Feb. 8th – the same day as the Super Bowl - we are collecting cans of soup for the Blessing of the Backpacks program.



How will this work? There will be a table with the name of each team that will be in the Super Bowl. **Bring your cans of soup and place them on the side with the team you are supporting.** Let's see what team collects the most soup. No matter what team wins, everyone will be a winner with this outreach event. So bring your cans of soup and let's make this a great Souper Bowl of Caring!

Suggested Soups: Chicken Noodle, Chicken and Stars, Vegetable, Vegetable Beef...anything but creamed soups - children don't like them.



VS



MISSION NEWS

Blessings in a Backpack – The Mission Committee continues to need donations of food items for Blessings in a Backpack to help offset rising food prices. Suggested items include: canned vegetables, canned pasta such as ravioli or spaghetti o's, canned soup, granola bars, individual instant oatmeal packets, macaroni and cheese mix, applesauce or fruit cups, snack size boxes of raisins. Baskets for your donations are close to the doors of the sanctuary. If you prefer to make a cash donation, you can make a check payable to "First Presbyterian Church" and place it in the offering plate.

Rescue Mission Cooking – We continue to cook 2 hot meals for 50 -60 each month for the Rescue Mission. We always welcome more volunteers – no cooking skills are required! In February we are cooking in the kitchen at Zion at 10AM on both the 18th and the 25th. Call Liz Clough (315-335-0976) if you have any questions.

RELAY FOR LIFE NEWS

TEAM OF RAINBOWS OF FAITH & HOPE

Songbyrd Event

We will once again be offering a Songbyrd Studio event in April 7 from 6 pm to 8 pm. Get those creative juices flowing and join us. This time, jewelry making will be an option.



It's a Valentine's Day Bake Sale !

Pastor Edwina is holding a Valentine Day Bake Sale to benefit Relay for Life on **Sunday, February 15th** at the coffee hour between services at Zion. She will have specialty Valentine cookies for \$2.00 each, cupcakes, and a few other assorted items. Gluten-free options will also be available. Please come prepared to support our Relay for Life Team!

FAITH FORMATION

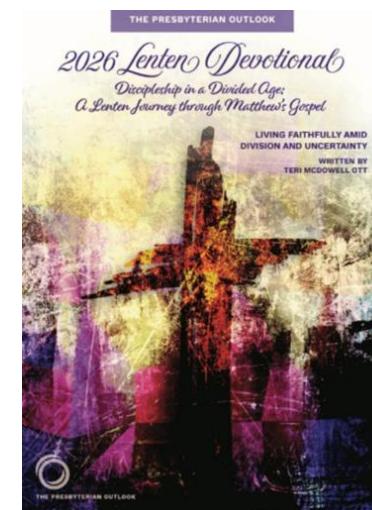
(Formerly known as Sunday School; because it's not just for Sundays!)



Carrie Scaccia will continue Youth Christian Education before service on Sundays. Please make sure they are here by 9:45 am so that they can learn and grow in faith.



The next youth group will be on Sunday, **February 15th** from 5:00 pm- 7:30 pm at Zion. We will begin with a meal that we provide followed by a devotion, crafts, and games. If you are able to help with providing a meal, or helping with games or crafts please let Pastor Edwina know. We want this to be a dynamic and fun time for the youth in our congregation and community. Please invite any youth you know.



ADULT FAITH FORMATION – After Worship each Sunday in the parlor.

During the season of Lent beginning Sunday, February 18th, join together in the parlor for a discussion of the new PCUSA Lenten Devotional – Discipleship in a Divided Age: A Lenten Journey through Matthew's Gospel by Rev. Teri McDowell Ott. In this devotional she explores how we can live faithfully amid the division and uncertainty of our time.

Through reflections, prayer, and visio divina "divine seeing" through artwork, Rev. Ott leads us in a meaningful Lenten practice. Come and see Christ in this Lenten Devotional discussion. These devotionals will be available beginning on Ash Wednesday.

MONTHLY FINANCIALS

OFFERINGS/PLEDGES

Please prayerfully consider increasing your pledge this year as we have more expenses than usual due to rising costs and the restoration of the church building. Remember, your financial support can also be paid via Venmo.

ENVELOPES New plain envelopes, stamped with our address, are now available for your offering. A box will be placed on the table in the sanctuary each week. If you would like some to be sent to you, please let Susan Hatzinger know, and we will mail some to you.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

In addition to your regular pledge/giving, here are some Special Offerings to consider:

- **Holidays** – Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve/Christmas.
- **PCUSA Specific Offerings** – One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Christmas Joy (See pcusa.org for more details on each).
- **Per Capita** – Used to support ministries of the Presbytery, Synod, and Wider Church, including grants, leadership & mission development (see synodne.org and presbyteryofutica.org for more details).

The Per Capita for 2025 is \$46 per member.

- **Capital Improvements.**
- **Restoration Fund.**

GO GREEN! Would you like to receive your quarterly financial statements via email and help save the environment? Contact Susan at fpcfinancial@gmail.com, and she'll make that happen for you!

ONLINE DONATE BUTTONS – We now have **donate buttons right on our website** to donate online via credit/bank card to the General Fund or the Restoration Fund. Check out our website today at firstpresrome.com

Make a General Donation



Fuel our faith community with a donation to our general fund.



Support the Restoration Project

Join us in restoring the beauty and integrity of our sacred space.

RESTORATION FUND NEWS... Thanks to Bev Johnson & family for the beautiful handcrafted church donation box for our Restoration Fund; located in the Zion sanctuary on Sunday Morning!

FINANCIALS

2025 YEAR-TO-DATE

<u>OPERATING BUDGET</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>2025 BUDGET</u>
Receipts	<u>\$18,912.04</u>	<u>\$250,482.29</u>	<u>359,801.91</u>	<u>\$359,801.91</u>
Expenditures	<u>\$(27,567.34)</u>	<u>\$(286,739.69)</u>	<u>\$(359,801.91)</u>	<u>\$(359,801.91)</u>
<u>Change in Net Assets</u>	<u>\$(8,655.30)</u>	<u>\$(36,257.40)</u>		
<u>August Collections:</u>				
Capital Improvement	<u>\$50.00</u>			
Christmas JOY	<u>\$275.00</u>			
Restoration Fund	<u>\$13,820.00</u>			
DECEMBER FUND DISBURSEMENTS				

STAY CONNECTED

See the latest news and events.
We are the Church together!

First Presbyterian Church of Rome, NY

WEBSITE: <https://firstpresrome.com/>

FACEBOOK:

<https://www.facebook.com/RomeFirstPresbyterian>

Mailing Address: PO Box 33 – Rome, NY - 13442

Email: firstpresrome@gmail.com

Presbertyofutica.org

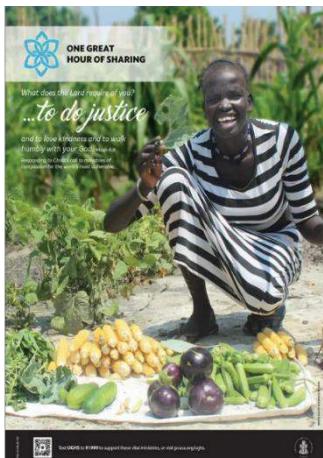
Synodne.org

Pcusa.org



THIS MONTH'S PCUSA SPECIAL OFFERING – ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

February 18 – April 5, 2026



Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees — serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Typically received during the season of Lent, this Offering helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. Please give as generously as possible to this PCUSA Mission Outreach.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Pledges

As of today, we have received a total of 62 pledges. If you have not pledged, please consider doing so today. Together, using all our resources, we can do the ministry that Christ has called this church to do.

Per Capita

In addition to pledging, please consider paying the per capita expense which is \$46.00 per member. If everyone gave this amount per year for the per capita it would save us over \$9000 in our budget! What is the per capita? Per capita connects Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations and mid councils with the work of the wider church. Per capita is how Presbyterians mutually and equitably share the costs of moving the church forward in the 21st century. General Assembly meetings, grant funding, and guidance for leaders and congregations are all supported from the per capita giving. The work of the PC(USA), and in particular the work of the General Assembly, is only possible because members of the church have said they are “all in” and committed to connection through per capita support. It is about joining together as a community and being one body, the body that is Christ’s church in the world.

Envelopes

We have envelopes for those who want to use them for regular giving and special occasions. For example, our Initial Offerings, Easter, Christmas, and other holiday givings are down due to people not being reminded to put these in a special envelope. Please pick up a bundle of envelopes today and be sure to give for these special offerings to help fund the ministry work of this church.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE CONTINUED...

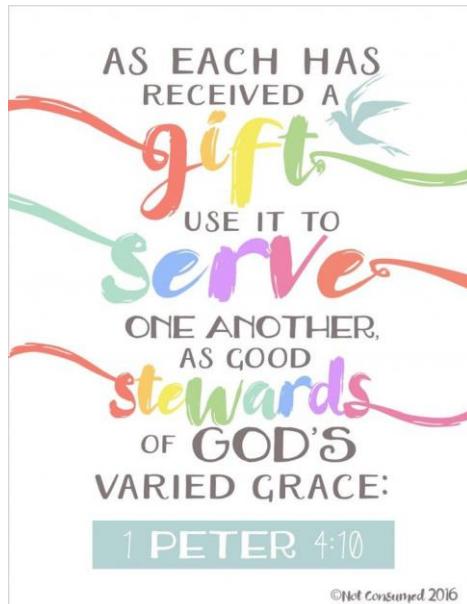
Time

Also, we have not heard back from everyone regarding your time commitments. There are many tasks that need to be done in the church. If joining a committee is too much time for you, please consider volunteering for a specific task. For example, we need help with Rescue Mission Cooking.

We also need a coordinator/chair for our Fellowship Committee. This person would help organize our other volunteers when we have potlucks, picnics, or other creative fellowship activities.

We really could use another person or two to help with fun activities with our Youth Group once a month.

Please prayerfully consider sharing whatever gifts you have to help rebuild our church by shining your light!



Our Christmas Pageant in December, "Shine Your Light" was created from this beautiful story about a church in Switzerland. We are posting it here again as a reminder of what we-the Church-are called to do-Shine Our Light, the Light of Christ. Let's shine brightly!

This is a story of a church that was built way up in the highest mountains of Switzerland. It was a beautiful church that had been built with great care by the villagers that lived nearby....but there was one thing the church didn't have. It didn't have any lights. You couldn't just go in and switch on the lights like we do here. Yet every Sunday evening the people who lived on the mountain-side opposite the tiny church saw something magical happen. The church bell would ring and worshippers would wend their way up the mountainside towards the church. They would enter the church and then all of a sudden the church would light up brightly. The people had to bring light with them-so they brought lanterns. When they arrived at church, they would light their lanterns and hang them in pegs on the walls so the light would spread all around. If only a few people came to church, the light would be very dim because there would only be a few lanterns....But when lots of people came to church there would be plenty of light! After the service, the people would use their lanterns to light their way home. At this time, to those who watched from a distance, it was as if a stream of light poured over the mountain side. For many, it was a sign that all was well. God's light was with them...and in them. The only time the little church was lit was when people were there.. That's when it truly became a church. That's when the light shone most brightly. The Bible tells us of that light in John 1 verse 5 " And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out" The coming of Christ brought light to the world shining in the darkness.

KINGS CAKE

During the season of Epiphany, Kings Cake or Twelfth Night Cake is popular, and there are many different recipes. Some recipes include a bean or small Christ child, and the finder receives luck for the year. This version is delicious!

Gateau des Rois (Twelfth Night Cake-- France)

2 cups flour

½ cup soft butter

½ cup sugar

1 cake yeast or 1 package or 1 tablespoon dry yeast

4 large eggs

1 teaspoon salt

Grated rind of one lemon OR 1teaspoon vanilla extract

If yeast cake is used, cream it with 1 or 2 teaspoons of the sugar. If dry yeast is used, dissolve it in as little as possible, preferably no more than 1 tablespoon.

Stir all ingredients together thoroughly, and then chill the dough in the refrigerator overnight. In the morning remove it from refrigerator and put it into a buttered 9-inch square pan. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 3 or 4 hours. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 to 35 minutes, or until browned and done. Cool the cake in the pan for about 10 minutes then remove from pan and cool on a rack. Frost with a light glaze and decorate with citron, candied cherries and almonds, if you wish.

Sweet Glaze

Blend thoroughly 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon soft butter, 1 ½ tablespoons milk, and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract.

LENTEN LUNCHEON SERIES

12 - 1 pm · Every Thursday in Lent

Join together in Christian fellowship for a delicious meal and brief Lenten Devotion.

Feb. 19 Trinity Church
215 W Court St., Rome, NY- Pastor Karen Marshall

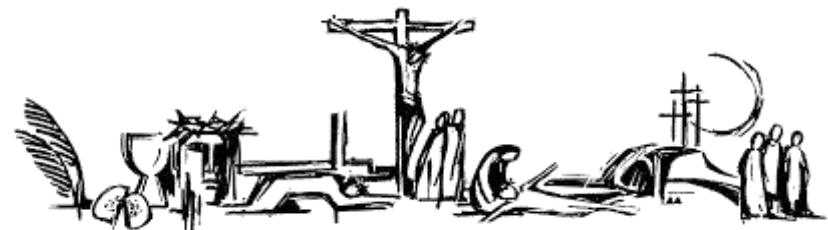
Feb. 26 First Methodist Church
400 N George St., Rome, NY - Pastor Shari

March 05 TBD

March 12 TBD

March 19 First Baptist Church
301 W. Embargo St., Rome, NY- Rev. Letta Palmer

March 26 TBD



FPC-February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45 am-Children/ Youth Faith Formation 10 am- No Coffee Hour w/ Zion 10:30 am Service/Communion 11:30 Adult Faith Formation 11:45 Confirmation class	2  4:00 pm Serenity Circle on Zoom	3 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House Rome United Churches Meeting, Noon at Trinity	4 6:15 PM Chimes Rehearsal @ Zion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal @ Zion	5 6:30 pm pm-Worship & Music Meeting	6	7
8 10 am – Coffee / Fellowship time 10:30 am-Worship Service. 11:15 am - ANNUAL MEETING followed by POTLUCK. <i>(Souper Bowl, bring cans of soup to donate)</i>	9 4:00 pm Serenity Circle on Zoom 6:00 pm Faith Foundation Meeting on Zoom	10 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House	11 6:15 pm Chimes Rehearsal @ Zion 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal @ Zion	12 7:00 pm Deacons Meeting	13	14 
15 9:45 am-Children/ Youth Faith Formation 10 am- Coffee/Fellowship 10:30am-Worship Service 11:45 Confirmation class	16 17-President's Day 4 pm Serenity Circle via Zoom Church Office Closed for Holiday	17 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House 12:00 Mission Committee Meeting-Spressos	18 10:00 am-Rescue Mission Cooking – Amy 6:15 pm Chimes Rehearsal @ Zion 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal @ Zion	19 12-1 pm Lenten Luncheon Trinity Church	20 3 pm March Copperspire Deadline	21
22 9:45 am-Children/ Youth Faith Formation 10 am- Coffee/Fellowship 10:30am-Worship Service 11:30 Adult Faith Formation 11:45 Confirmation class	23 4:00 pm Serenity Circle on Zoom 6:30 pm Session Mtg/Zion	24 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House	25 10:00 am-Rescue Mission Cooking	26 12-1 pm Lenten Luncheon First Methodist Church	27	28