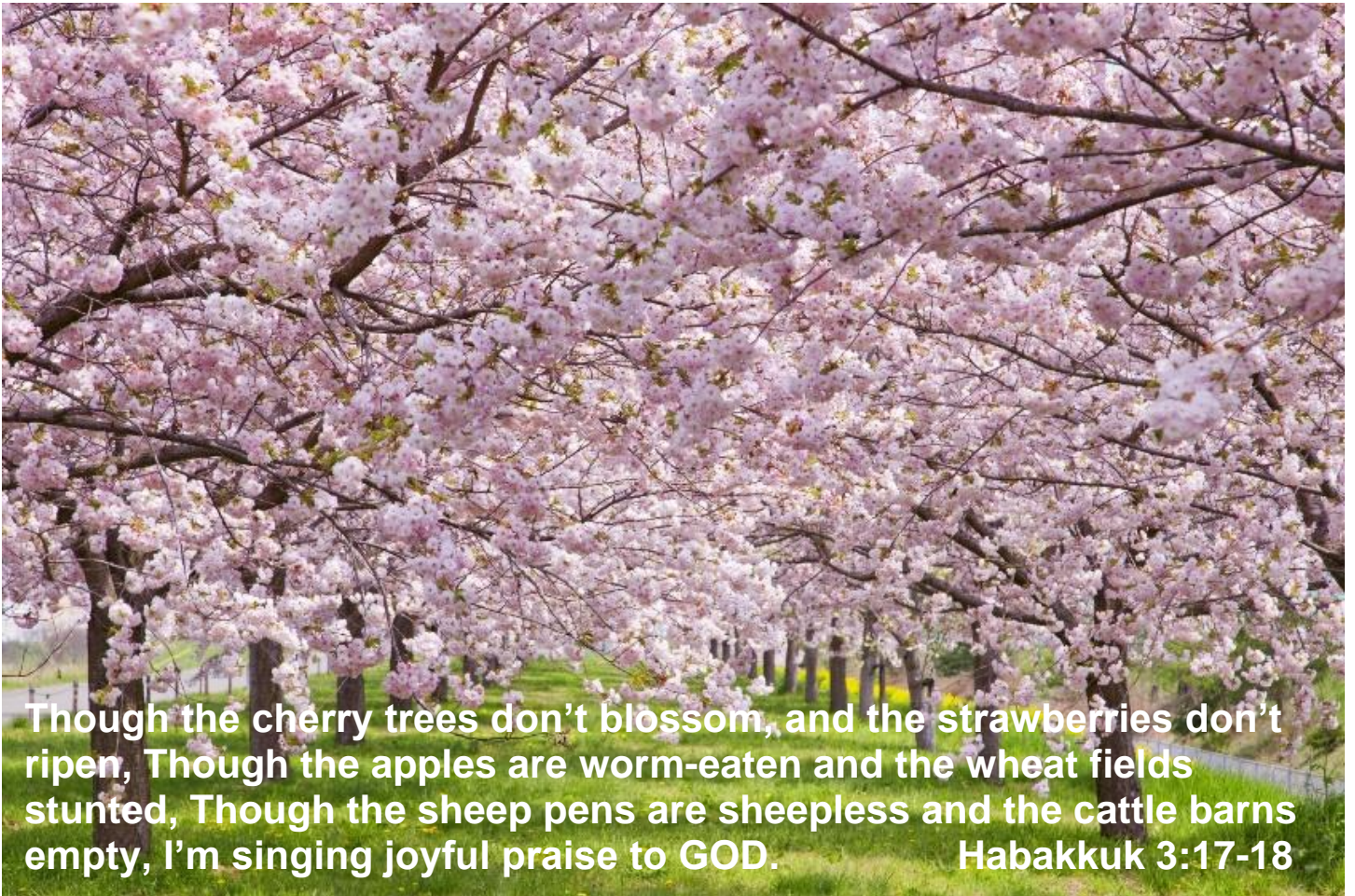




CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of the Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church—March 2023



Though the cherry trees don't blossom, and the strawberries don't ripen,
Though the apples are worm-eaten and the wheat fields stunted,
Though the sheep pens are sheepless and the cattle barns empty,
I'm singing joyful praise to GOD. Habakkuk 3:17-18



Our Vision

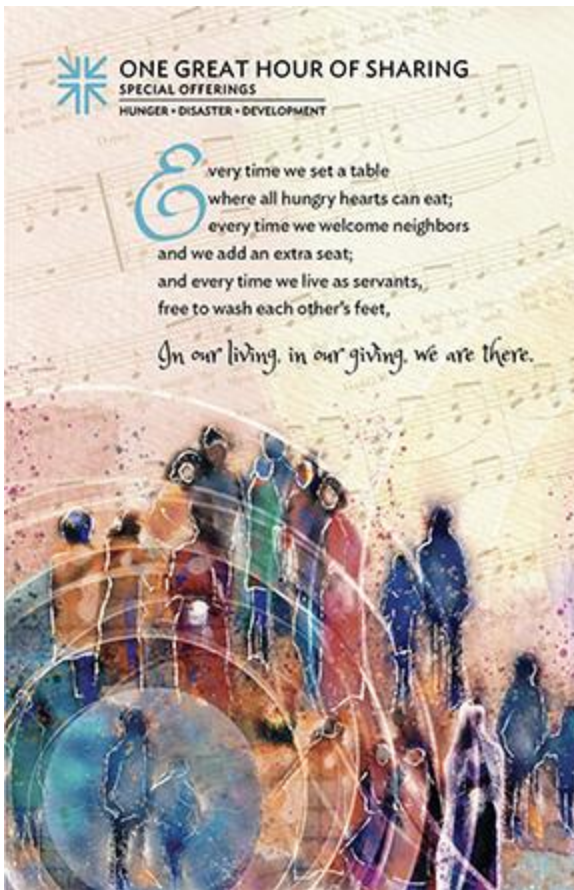
Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church is called to be a church where people seeking hope find the light and love of Christ and together joyfully serve the community with abiding love and purpose.

Our Mission – As a church

- **We find and share the light and love of Christ in prayer, in worship, in fellowship, and in service.**
- **We welcome the rainbow of God’s children, and we embrace our differences.**
- **We gather to develop relationships with God with each other and with the world.**
- **We are inspired by the Word of God as proclaimed through music and our love of music strengthens our relationship with the community.**
- **We empower others to embody grace, mercy, justice, and peace guided by the light and love of Christ.**
- **We purposely demonstrate compassion, understanding, and generosity to others inspired by the love of Christ.**
- **We open our hearts and our doors to those seeking hope, wholeness, wellness, acceptance, and a place to be seen.**

Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church

100 Scotch Rd. Ewing, NJ 08628 609.882.3673 churchoffice@ewingpres.org



One Great Hour of Sharing is the single largest way that Presbyterians join together to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world.

Each gift helps to improve the lives of the people in challenging situations through impactful programs:

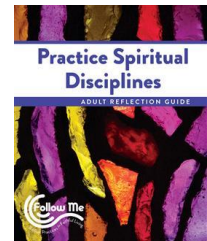
32% rebuilds hope through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance—helping after the devastation of natural or human-caused disaster.

36% goes to growing food security through the Presbyterian Hunger program—taking action to alleviate hunger and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed.

And 32% goes to Partnering in Progress—self-development of people. This program invests in communities responding to their experiences of racism, oppression, poverty and injustices and educates Presbyterians about the impact of their societal ills.

One Great Hour of Sharing runs through the season of Lent. There are boxes and envelopes available for you in the worship space and main office entrance way.

Adult Education in Lent February 26 – April 2



God's central invitation to followers of Jesus is to draw near to God in Christ and to allow God, through the Holy Spirit, to transform us into Christ's image. Christian spiritual disciplines and spiritual practices are ways in which we do that. Spiritual disciplines are usually thought of as those things that help us draw near to God and might include different forms of prayer, meditation, study, and service. Spiritual practices are seen as those things Jesus did, said, or embodied; we as Jesus' followers try to do so as well. Many of the spiritual disciplines covered in this unit have emerged over the centuries as Christians have experimented with ways to make space in their lives to be with Jesus and to allow Jesus to transform them.

You are invited to join more than a dozen other members of our church family as we grow in faith through the study, practice and sharing of spiritual practices. We will meet for six weeks during Lent, **February 26 through April 2**, exploring the following spiritual disciplines:

- Fast (Matthew 4:1–4, 6:16–18; Acts 13:2–3)
- Pray (Matthew 6:9–13; Philippians 1:3–11)
- Listen to God (1 Samuel 3:1–11; Mark 1:35–39)
- Embrace Simplicity (Matthew 6:19–21; Philippians 4:11–12)
- Unplug (Genesis 2:1–3; 6:30–34)
- Try Different Practices (Isaiah 43:19; Hebrews 4:15–16) –

March 2023 Worship

Preachers for the Month of March

3/5/2023	Rev. Dr. Byron Shafer	An emeritus professor of Biblical Studies at Fordham University and Pastor emeritus of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York City. He served on the committee that edited our denomination's A Brief Statement of Faith. In retirement, Dr. Shafer was for 4 semesters Visiting Professor of Biblical Studies at United Theological College in Bangalore, India. He now serves on the Commission on Preparation for Ministry of our Presbytery of the Coastlands.
3/12/2023	Rev. Byron Leasure	Byron Leasure is a retired Presbyterian pastor who has worked for a number of years as a transitional pastor in crisis situations. In the 90's he was a member of the New Brunswick Presbytery and is currently a member of the Philadelphia Presbytery.
3/19/2023	Rosa Ross	Rosa Ross thinks faith is a collage of different conversations: whispered words of comfort, shouts of social justice, discussions about what it means to be, and sometimes even jokes about the absurdity of God's beautiful creation. She is particularly passionate about the process of full, unyielding inclusion of all people in this holy collage. Rosa is a student at Princeton Theological Seminary and is seeking ordination in the PC(USA). Before moving to New Jersey, she grew up in Huntington, West Virginia and studied philosophy, religious studies, and classical studies at Marshall University where she is now an adjunct professor (teaching online). She can be spotted around Princeton reading books, eating food, and walking her dog - a pug named Pugg.
3/26/2023	Mark Van Bruggen	Mark lives in New Egypt, NJ with Lisa, his wife of 31 years. Mark and Lisa are the parents of two daughters (Emily & Krista) and have one granddaughter (Karaleigh). Mark was raised in the Presbyterian Church. His father, Rev. Dr. Vernon Van Bruggen, is a retired minister.

March Worship

2nd Sunday in Lent—March 5, 10:00am

Rev. Dr. Byron Shafer, guest preacher

Lectionary: Gen. 12:1-4a and Ps 121; Rom 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

3rd Sunday in Lent —March 12, 10:00am

Rev. Byron Leasure, guest preacher

Lectionary: Ex. 17:1-7 and Ps 95; Rom. 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

4th Sunday in Lent—March 19, 10:00am

Rosa Ross, guest preacher

Lectionary 1 Sam. 16:1-13 and Ps 23; Eph. 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

5th Sunday of Lent—March 26, 10:00am

Mark Van Bruggen, guest preacher

Lectionary: Ezek. 37:1-14 and Ps 130; Rom 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

CURRENT ZOOM LINK FOR WORSHIP at ECPC

Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church will continue to gather both in person and online for worship.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83261598872>

For those calling in by phone, call +1 929 205 6099 (same phone number!) and when asked, enter the new Webinar ID 832 6159 8872



EASTER FLOWERS

Tulips and Daffodils will be placed in the sanctuary on Easter as an honor or memorial to family and friends. If you wish to contribute toward the flowers, please complete the information below and place it in the offering plate or return it to the church office. Also, on Easter please be sure to take a plant home with you.

This year we are suggesting that you donate any amount of your choosing, as you are able. Please make checks payable to “Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church” and note “Easter Flowers” on the memo line.

The deadline for donations is Palm Sunday, April 2ND.

Easter Flower Donation

(Please print very clearly)

In Memory of _____

Given by _____

_____ I will take a plant following the 11 a.m. Easter Service

_____ I will NOT take a plant following the 11 a.m. Easter Service



Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

The ‘busy’ time is in full swing. We’ve been viewing lots of *Pastor Information Forms* and are in the process of obtaining further information where needed. Initial contact emails are in the process of being sent as we prayerfully consider the “PIF’s” of these candidates. It is a fascinating journey into video sermons. This is one of the pluses of Covid; online sermons giving us a flavor of some of these ministers. Please keep us in your prayers.

Vitality Team kicks off the Year 2023



The Vitality Team was enthused about the engagement of the congregation at its Town Hall meeting held on February 19 after worship. The consensus was to continue the conversation and pursue action items. We were blessed to have Rev. Molly Dykstra, who is trained in the *PC(USA) Vital Congregational Revitalization Initiatives*, moderated and led the discussion.

The following questions were asked:

- What does Vitality mean to you?
- What do you think it takes to become revitalized?
- Vitality is a team effort: Are we doing what God is calling us to do?

-

Some ideas that the congregation communicated were the following:

- Start a “Ministry Minute” where individuals take a couple minutes to share with the congregation why they volunteer in the church as well as an activity or passion they foster outside the church.
- Revitalize our Parish teams. Encourage our Parish leaders to check in with members of their parish to build relationship and find out if they need help.
- ACTs which stands for Aligning our Circles Together such as love of gardening, bowling, movie-going, love of running, or whatever.
- Create social opportunities such as a meal at a local restaurant to build relationships.
- There was a comment that someone might not engage in a particular worthy effort simply because they are involved in other ones they find more worthy. Rev. Dykstra asks that we look at our own sense of call and determine if we are willing to contribute to a new effort or are willing to give something up to build new energy? Maybe a reprioritization of effort might be necessary..

Seven (7) members of the church have committed to help support the congregation in living out the new Vision and Mission statements the church has adopted.

Vitality Team members

Sandra Austin, Barbara Brezak, Joanne Durham, Rick Durham, Ken Harvey, Carol Hecky, and Ralph Sims



Stewardship 2023:

“Being Good Stewards”

There is no doubt that Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church is a generous and caring congregation! What more can we do? Rather than trying to “one up” ourselves in a world of competition, we might do well to look at stewardship as a way of living that calls us ever more to live faithfully in response to God’s

loving provision.

Above all, maintain constant love for one another... Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:8-11)

Over the past couple of years, we have looked at our stewardship as loving God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and as following the Star of Christ to serve the Lord with hope, peace, joy, and love. This year we continue to bring our Vision and Mission statements to life as we focus on Matthew 25 as a guide to faithful living.

As you contemplate passages from Matthew 25 as well as our Vision and Mission statements, please consider how you can stretch your faithfulness this coming year. Being a good steward is living a life in response to God’s steadfast faithfulness, generosity, grace, and love.

It is not too late to bring your gifts of time, talents, and money that we intend to give to God this coming year.

Please Remit your Per Capita Assessment

The Per Capita Assessment is a fundamental way in which all of the nearly 10,000 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) connect, participate, and share in the work of the wider church. The Per Capita funds support the work and the missions of our own Presbytery of the Coastlands, the Synod of the Northeast, and the General Assembly.

For 2023, each church in the Presbytery will contribute \$40 per member. These funds cover our share of the costs of belonging to the denomination and is collected at the beginning of the new year.

Members of *Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church* are asked to make a \$40 contribution to cover the church’s cost for the assessment for each of the adult members of the congregation. Please use the blue Per Capita Apportionment envelope provided in your box of offering envelopes, or indicate “Per Capita” on the memo line of your check. (If you haven’t picked up your 2023 offering envelopes, they are available on the back table of the Worship space.)

If you have questions about the Per Capita Assessment, contact Treasurer Don Lovett (lovett@tcnj.edu) or Financial Administrator Kathy Jordan (kjordan@ewingpres.org)




To keep the prayer list timely,

listings will remain for 2 editions of the newsletter and then be taken off.

In the event you desire a listing to run longer, or for a shorter time, please advise the church office.



Prayer Request	Note
All people suffering because of the War in Ukraine	By church family
Bob Wilson	By church family
Brad Shropshire	Brother in-law of Carol & Doug Taylor
Charlie Magee	brother of Judy Carapezza
Dan Hough	By church family
Emily Greschak	Daughter of Barbara Greschak
George Renwick	By church family
Gun violence in the US	By church family
Kevin Hecky	By church family
Laura Wallin	By church family
Louise Burroughs	By church family
MaryEllen Bigley	Prayers from church family for Carol Hecky's Mom.
Mary Lou Seidel	By church family
Maryanne Eleuteri	friend of Judy Carapezza
Michael Brezak	Son of Barbara Brezak
Pam Miller	By church family
Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)	By church family
Rita Freilinghaus	sister of Judy Carapezza
Wayne Allen	By church family



But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.
Always be prepared to give an answer
to everyone who asks you to give the reason
for the hope that you have.
But do this with gentleness and respect...

1 PETER 3:15 NIV

MARCH 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 Worship 10am	6 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space 6:30-9:30 Central NJ Choral Society	7	8 6:30-8:30 pm Ruth & Tabitha Circles Lower Lounge	9 ECPC Bell Choir - 6:00-7:30 ECPC Choir - 7:30-9:00	10	11
12 Worship 10am	13 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space 6:30-9:30 Central NJ Choral Society	14 1:30-3:30 pm ESWA Mission Service Group Lower Lounge	15	16 Lunch together 11:45-1:30 Lower Lounge ECPC Bell Choir - 6:00-7:30 ECPC Choir - 7:30-9:00	17	18
19 Worship 10am	20 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space 6:30-9:30 Central NJ Choral Society 7:00 PM District 24/NA	21 Newsletter Articles are Due	22	23 ECPC Bell Choir - 6:00-7:30 ECPC Choir - 7:30-9:00	24	25
26 Worship 10am	27 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space 6:30-9:30 Central NJ Choral Society	28 1:30-3:30 pm ESWA Mission Service Group Lower Lounge Caregiver Support Group 10:00-11:30 Upper Mtg Room	29	30 ECPC Bell Choir - 6:00-7:30 ECPC Choir - 7:30-9:00	31	

Deadline for April newsletter is Tuesday, March 21, 2023

If you have an article or photo for the church's April newsletter, *Connections*, should send it to the church office by Tuesday, March 21. For more information, you can contact the Church Office at 609-882-3673 or email churchoffice@ewingpres.org or contact Joanne Durham on the Communications Committee at jedurham99@gmail.com