

# “THE TALK OF TOWNLEY”

*Monthly Newsletter*  
**APRIL 2024**

*<sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

*John 10:14-16*

## **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

3 Lois Tangowski  
9 Carole Gordon  
28 Irene Schoenwalder

## **PASTOR’S MESSAGE:**

### **Branches versus Sticks**

Spring is irresistibly enchanting in the Garden State when lush cherry blossoms adorn local towns and cities. The delicate pink and white flowers make their debut in New Jersey around late March and peak by mid-April. Within this short-lasting time, a visit to the celebrated Branch Brook Park in Newark is a must. By the time you visit, the park will have already been spruced up by its crew led by a seasoned arborist. The arborist gives directions on the appropriate tree care methods and provides disease diagnosis, pruning and trimming instruction. In short, the arborist can readily tell the difference between branches and sticks.

How about you? No, I am not asking you to give me an assessment of the trees on my property. I am asking you to assess what is going on in your walk of faith. All of us want to be fruitful (cherry blossoms count). But in order to be fruitful, a branch must be connected to the vine. Sound familiar? So if I were to do a self-assessment, I would consider what fruit, or signs of fruit are present in my life. Is my branch healthy? Or is it disconnected? Am I spiritually connected or spiritually disconnected to Jesus?

How do you tell the difference between a branch and a stick? In John 15:1, Jesus says “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” The word true, translates as “real,” indicates the presence of other vines that aren’t true or real. Imitation vines promise to give us the nutrients we need to produce and grow, but they don’t. Connecting with an imitation vine only brings imitation fruit. Fake fruit promises to bring authentic joy, but it only brings momentary pleasure. Fake fruit promises to bring true purpose, but it only brings temporary distraction. Fake fruit promises to bring real peace, but it only brings a brief diversion, usually followed by deep emptiness. Fake fruit promises to bring genuine success, but it only brings shallow victory and passing admiration. Sounds like a stick to me.

Jesus makes it clear that His fruit is produced by the Spirit when we are connected with Him. Galatians 5:22, 23 says “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”. This fruit cannot be produced by self-effort. If we try to produce joy in our lives without being connected with the Vine, we end up feeling discouraged and sad because the harder we try, the more elusive it becomes. If we try to produce peace on our own, instead of serenity flowing from a connection with the Vine, we end up feeling stressed. If we try to grow in patience on our own, we will soon feel frustrated and impatient with our lack of progress. If we try to grow in goodness without being connected with the Vine, whatever fruit we produce will likely end up rotten and ruined by ugly self-righteousness. A branch is connected to Jesus.

# He is Risen

DEATH COULD NOT HOLD HIM.

Rejoice in the resurrection of

*Jesus Christ.*



WISHING YOU A BLESSED AND JOY FILLED EASTER!

## 2024 SESSION LEADERS AND COMMITTEES: TOWNLEY TASK FORCES

### SUPPORT

Buildings & Grounds  
Finances & Budget  
Personnel  
Rentals (leases)

### PROGRAM

Congregational Care  
Evangelism  
Fellowship  
Media Outreach  
(Advertising, Facebook, Newsletter,  
Webpage)  
Mission/Outreach  
Roadhouse  
Stewardship

### VOCATION

Christian Education  
(Bible Study, Confirmation Classes,  
Prayer Group, Sunday School, Youth  
Activities, etc.)  
Leadership Development  
Music  
Worship

### **SESSION LEADERS (RULING ELDERS):**

Chair: Janet Sangekar  
Irene Schoenwalder

Chair: Lisa Heims  
Linda Zehner

Chair:  
Diane Smith  
Bill Jensen  
Karen Brelowski

### CLASS OF 2024

Irene Schoenwalder  
Diane Smith  
Bill Jensen

### CLASS OF 2025

Karen Brelowski  
Janet Sangekar  
Linda Zehner

### CLASS OF 2026

Lisa Heims

**SUNDAY ASSIGNMENTS:**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>*ELDER-IN-CHARGE</u>	<u>*LAY LEADER</u>	<u>COMMUNION</u>
April 7	Lois Tangowski	Karen Brelowski	Lois & Karen
April 14	Kathy Kreie	Bruce Tangowski	
April 21	Irene Schoenwalder	Vyonnia Thompson	
April 28	Lisa Heims	Santiago Guzman	
May 5	Marty Lindner	Diane Smith	Marty & Diane
May 12	Linda Zehner	Diane Smith	
May 19	Janet Sangekar	Lynn Bailey	
May 26	Carole Gordon	Lisa Heims	



**\* If you are unable to be Elder-in-Charge or Lay Leader for your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone and inform Pastor Ron. If you switch a month or more in advance, please also contact Cecelia, so the Sunday assignments can be listed correctly in the following month's newsletter. Please give yourself enough time to set up prior to worship, 30 minutes is suggested.**



**COFFEE HOUR:** Volunteers are needed to bring baked goods for Coffee Hour on Sunday mornings after worship. There is a sign-up sheet in the kitchen. If you have any questions, you may contact Linda Zehner.

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| April 7 – Ruth Ammerman     | May 5 – Vyonnia Thompson |
| April 14 – Marie Lindner    | May 12 -                 |
| April 21 – Vyonnia Thompson | May 19 – Kathy Kreie     |
| April 28 – Bill Jensen      | May 26 – Janet Sangekar  |

**NURSING HOME VISITATION:** Our nursing home ministry is held at AristaCare, located at 400 W. Stimpson Avenue in Linden on every **second Sunday** at 2:00pm of each month. Please see Pastor Ron if you are interested in being a part of this ministry.

**SESSION MEETING:** The next session meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**, at 7:30 pm in the upstairs meeting room. (Session meetings are usually held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.)



**THE PRESBYTERY OF NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY:** The next meeting of the Presbytery is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024, from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. Website <https://pnenj.org>

**PROGRAM / MISSION:**

**CONNECTICUT FARMS FOOD PANTRY:** In March, we donated \$150 to their food bank.

**SPRING RUMMAGE SALE** – Our Spring Rummage Sale will be held on **Friday, April 26, 2024, and Saturday, April 27, 2024**. It is very important that we have enough workers to 1) help set up, 2) put out donations during the week, 3) work on the sale dates, and 4) clean-up on Saturday. As many volunteers as possible are needed. Come out and enjoy a feeling of camaraderie working alongside fellow church members for a rewarding experience that not only helps the community but also our church. Please review the schedule below and if you are able to help, let me know when you will be available. You can call, email, or text me at 908-472-1924.

1. Saturday, April 20th: setting up tables for the rummage sale in Bailey Hall from 10:30 am - 12:00 noon.
2. Sunday, April 21st: organizing donations in Bailey Hall for a short time after church.
3. Monday, April 22nd thru Thursday, April 25th: organizing donations in Bailey Hall from 10:30 am - 2:00 pm during the day and 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm during the evening.
4. Friday, April 26th: Sale Day, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm.
5. Saturday, April 27th: BAG DAY 9:00 am - 12:00 noon. At the end of the sale at 12:00 noon, we especially need workers to help pack up the items that didn't sell.

Thank you! Rummage Sale Committee: Janet Sangekar and Linda & Glen Zehner

**PLEASE REMEMBER THE CONNECTICUT FARMS FOOD PANTRY.** You are encouraged to support this ministry with a monthly donation of \$4.00 (just \$1.00 a week). The food bank prefers a monetary donation so they can purchase what is needed.

**PER CAPITA:** As you know, every December the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey presents the Presbytery's budget for the coming year. The budget includes Per Capita received from its congregations. This money is used to develop programs, such as training for congregations and their leaders and supporting the work of Commission on Ministry. The complete budget can be viewed on the Presbytery website. ***The 2024 Per Capita for Townley is \$38.00 per member.*** Please submit your check for this amount payable to Townley Presbyterian Church. We look forward to your participation in per capita giving, an expression of your commitment to ministry both within our congregation and beyond. Thank you. Janet, Church Treasurer

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN:**

Townley Church needs help to fund several significant repairs. We appreciate your donations to our "Cherish The Church" Capital Improvement Campaign.

**NOTE FROM YOUR TREASURER:** Our Cherish the Church Fund amount is \$26,942 as of 3/20/2024. We are not only getting donations from our congregation but also from friends of Townley. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 in 18 months (June 2024). These funds are to be used for our capital improvements. A red mailbox to accept donations and a thermometer to track progress are in Bailey Hall. Donation envelopes are next to the mailbox. Thank you to all who have donated so far to help us reach our goal!

**THE SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ** – March 9<sup>th</sup> was our first show this year. We had 26 people in attendance. \$90 in donations were received. 10% of the proceeds will be donated to the YMCA summer camp.

On **Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 8:00 pm, Carrie Jackson**, the quintessential jazz vocalist, will present "What is Jazz?" With a dynamic backup group featuring keyboards, bass, drums and saxophone to back up her musical travels through the history of jazz, Carrie will also have a question-and-answer period after the music for all patrons at the show to participate in. All of this is in celebration of April – National Jazz History Month. This is expected to be a full house show. Doors will open at 7:15 pm. From the golden era of Jazz to the present, Carrie brings her clear, unique jazz vocal styles to life. Her smooth, sultry sound has captivated thousands, garnering a very loyal following. As always, the Salem Roadhouse Café is lively, intimate, up front, and personal. All ages are welcome. The venue is held in Bailey Hall. See attached flier.



**GIVING TO TOWNLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:** You can also support our church using your credit or debit card by using this QR Code or by clicking the “Give Now” button on our church website at [www.townleychurch.org](http://www.townleychurch.org).



**WE HAVE A FACEBOOK PAGE!** “Like” our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/TownleyChurch>) to get the latest updates on your wall. Share your Townley comments, photos and videos. If you want pictures added or notices posted, please send an email to the church office ([townleychurch@yahoo.com](mailto:townleychurch@yahoo.com)). Away or missed a service? Catch our Livestream!

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** If you have any items you would like to have included in May’s (monthly) newsletter, please e-mail them to [CeceliaH@comcast.net](mailto:CeceliaH@comcast.net).

**SESSION WORKS**



“Session Works” is a monthly communication of significant decisions made by Townley Session. From March’s meeting, the following items were approved/discussed:

- ✓ Task Force and Pastor’s Reports
- ✓ Possible Book Donation Bin being explored
- ✓ Family & Friend’s Day confirmed for June 9 (mark your calendars)
- ✓ Task Forces reorganized for 2024

Please note that you do not have to be on Session to work on a committee. Your talents are needed.

**REGARDING RULING ELDERS: A MONTHLY SERIES FOR SERVING FAITHFULLY**

*Responding to God’s Activity in the World through Service to Others*  
by Marissa Galvan-Valle – March 15, 2024



If one were to inquire of an Artificial Intelligence tool, “What is God’s activity in the world?”, it would respond by acknowledging the complexity of the topic and suggesting approaches from biblical, theological, and experiential perspectives. Ultimately, the AI would conclude that God’s activity in the world remains a mystery that transcends human understanding.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to pay attention to God’s activity in the world when serving others. What God does, we are called to do. Therefore, it is vital for ruling elders and the churches they lead to comprehend God’s character and activity and then discern God’s will for the world.

The 197th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted "[A Declaration of Faith](#)." The section “God makes himself known in Jesus Christ” can help us understand God’s action through God’s son:

“Jesus’ involvement in the human condition is God’s involvement. His compassion for all kinds of people is God’s compassion. His demand for justice, truth, and faithfulness is God’s

demand. His willingness to suffer rejection is God's willingness. Jesus' love for the very people who reject him is God's love."

If we understand the Jesus of the Bible to be truly human, then we can serve by seeing Jesus' face in others and knowing that everyone is deserving of God's love. If we understand that Jesus' compassion for those who are sick, rejected and oppressed is God's compassion, then we can act with the same empathy toward those who are rejected by society and subjected to its violence. If we see Jesus' actions toward women, children, his religion and the empire that colonized his people as demands for justice, then we can comprehend God's kingdom and work toward it. If we read the Bible and see Jesus' actions as countercultural, then we can understand that some of our actions of service in the name of God may not be understood by others.

It is critical for ruling elders to think about the message that the church is proclaiming. What aspects of God are you preaching — not just on Sunday mornings, but through everything that the church does to serve and impact the lives of those around it? If your service to others does not reflect all aspects of Jesus' life, not just healing but restoring people to their whole lives or serving people while denouncing the systems that keep them sick, rejected, or isolated, then there is something missing in the way you are understanding God's activity in the world.

Russell Moore, the editor-in-chief of Christianity Today, shared in an interview that some pastors have approached him, expressing their experience of delivering sermons on "turning the other cheek." To their surprise, members of their congregations dismissed the idea, deeming it ineffective and weak. This response occurred even though the pastors told them that they were quoting Jesus' words.

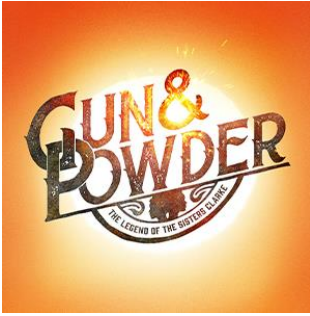
Are we truly grasping who Jesus was? Are we understanding God's activity in the world? Are we comprehending the way God, through Jesus Christ, manifested in the world? Are we actively participating in an incarnational discipleship that follows Jesus' life through our actions and words, or are we inadvertently promoting a discipleship that upholds alternative values, potentially misconstruing God's activities in the world?

Ruling elders have a responsibility to provide opportunities for both those interested in joining the church and those already part of it, encouraging them to explore and deepen their faith by understanding God's activity in the world. Through exploration in worship, discipleship, and service, those in the congregation have the chance to actively be the hands and feet of God in the world.

---

Marissa Galván-Valle is a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She is the senior editor for Spanish Language Resources in the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and temporary pastor at Beechmont Presbyterian Church, an intercultural church that worships each Sunday in Spanish and English. She was ordained as a ruling elder when she was 21 years old.

**PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE: APR 4–MAY 5, 2024**, *Gun & Powder* is a new musical inspired by the true story of Mary and Martha Clarke, African American twin sisters who take extraordinary measures to settle their mother’s sharecropper debt and save her home. In 1893 Texas, the Sisters Clarke—passing as white—embark on a remarkable Wild West adventure that examines race, family, and identity with two electrifying women who transformed from farm girls to outlaws to legends. Featuring book and lyrics by Angelica Chéri (a real-life descendant of Mary and Martha Clarke), music by Ross Baum, and direction by Obie winner Stevie Walker-Webb (*Ain’t No Mo’*).



***Townley Presbyterian Church, 829 Salem Road, Union, NJ 07083***  
***Office:(908) 686-1028 / Email: [TownleyChurch@yahoo.com](mailto:TownleyChurch@yahoo.com)***  
***Website: [TownleyChurch.org](http://TownleyChurch.org) / Facebook: Like us on “Townley Church”***