

# “THE TALK OF TOWNLEY”

*Monthly Newsletter*

**FEBRUARY 2021**

## **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

7 Marie Lindner  
18 Lisa Heims



*For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. [Galatians 5:13](#)*

## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE:**

### **Preaching and Teaching**

Our Book of Order (G-2.0501) defines my role as Minister of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders and pastors). It requires me to be committed to teaching “the faith in word and deed and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12), preaching and teaching the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service.”

Preaching at the start of a new year, is a time to suggest starting over and creating afresh- through resolutions, hopes, and dreams. This presents us with an opportunity to explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus in a new calendar year. An opportunity to realize our Christian identities in a new way. The intention of my preaching, during this Season of Epiphany, is to hopefully lead us to spiritual awakenings or one Big epiphany. Think of it as a light shining on new and creative ways to be Christians in the world today.

On the teaching front – we will begin *A Lenten Study on Forgiveness* on February 17, 2021. Lent, a time to reflect on our Christian journey, is an appropriate time to deepen our understanding and practice of forgiveness. We'll take a close look at our understanding of forgiveness and address such questions as: Is forgiveness a Christian duty under all circumstances? Or are there situations when Christians do not need to forgive? Is forgiveness a matter between individuals, or is it meaningful only in the context of communities? Is forgiving the best route to healing for the injured? How do we get past emotional barriers to real forgiveness? Join us on Wednesday evenings 6:30-7:30 PM on Zoom beginning February 17. Please contact me for the book and Zoom info.

**SUNDAY SERVICE:** We will continue enhanced online Sunday worship services on Townley Church's Facebook page at 10:00 am, until further notice (**pending status of COVID-19**). Pastor will email the Sunday bulletin and Zoom info ahead of time.

**SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP:** After service, please join us for fellowship on Zoom while sipping on your favorite beverage. Don't have a computer? No problem, call in on your home telephone and connect with your fellow church members.

**WORSHIP TEAM:** A worship team consisting of the Pastor, Music Director, Lay Leader, Elder-in-Charge, Song Leader, and Sound/video Technicians meet at the church on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am to livestream our online worship services. This worship team **does not exceed 10 members** on any given day and all safety precautions are observed. Please contact Pastor Ron if you would like to be a part of this team or if you would like to visit during production.

**SUNDAY ASSIGNMENTS FOR FEBRUARY:** Pastor Ron is asking those assigned for their assistance, if you are not considered high risk, with our enhanced Facebook Sunday worship services. **Please arrive by 9:40.**

DATE	ELDER-IN-CHARGE	LAY LEADER
FEB. 7	Lisa Heims	Maryann Cove
FEB. 14	Linda Zehner	Cynthia Manno
FEB. 21	Carruthers Tumfour	Lynn Bailey
FEB. 28	Kathy Kreie	Irene Schoenwalder
MAR. 7	Carol Gordon	Kathy Kreie



**"TIME FOR PRAYER":** We are praying by teleconference on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm. All may call in to pray and/or make prayer requests: Dial-in using your phone: 1 717-275-8940. Access code: 367 0530

**MISSION:** June D. asks everyone to please remember the Connecticut Farms Food Pantry. In lieu of shopping, please consider setting aside \$1.00 (or more) per week and mail it to Townley Church for distribution.

Our new mission project: We will be providing winter socks, gloves and hats to the homeless. Those who wish to participate are asked to purchase these items and place them in the outside container by the church office doors (near our 9/11 garden). The items will be given to Operation Warm Heart for distribution to the homeless.

**THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** of Townley Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2021 at 11:00 am. It will be a hybrid meeting – info to follow. We will be electing officers, presenting the budget, and any other business that may properly come before the meeting.



**PER CAPITA:** As you know, every December the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery of Elizabeth 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 its leaders and supporting the work of Commission on Ministry. The complete budget can be viewed on the Presbytery website. ***The Per Capita for 2021 for Townley is \$45.00 per member (same as last year).*** Please submit your check for this amount before February 1st, payable to Townley Presbyterian Church and mail it to the church.

You can also pay your per capita from the Townley website, Townleychurch.org. Click on the "give now" button found on the home page of the website. It is not necessary to log in. You will see the per capita button under donations. Enter the amount and continue to the next page. Once submitted, you will receive an email confirmation and Townley will too.

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

### **A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER**

Your Session sincerely appreciates how you have continued to let giving complete your lives.

Please continue to **mail your weekly offerings** to the church office. **Bill Pay and other online banking** options should also be considered. Online contributions may also be made through our church's website "**Give Now**" button:

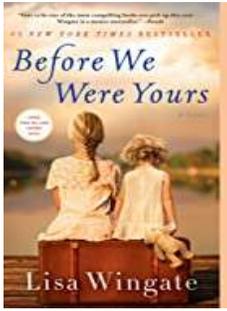


Our church's Donation Page can also be reached using the **Quick Response (QR) Code** below. A QR Code is a two-dimensional, modular barcode that, when scanned by a smart phone (most phones use the camera to do this) will connect you to our Donation Page.



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

**TOWNLEY BOOK CLUB:** Our next book is *Before We Were Yours: A Novel by Lisa*



*Wingate*. Thank you, Carole Gordon, for the suggestion. We will discuss it on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 7:30 pm for approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours via Zoom. We've changed the meeting time to the evening to better accommodate everyone. At the end of that meeting we will be looking for suggestions for our next book, date and time. The book may be available via curbside pick-up at your library. It is available for purchase through Amazon.com (\$12.99 - \$13.58) and Barnes & Noble (\$12.99-\$13.99). Cecelia Harrison

**Program Task Force Report - January 20, 2021:**

In December two boxes of food were left at our church. Pastor Thompson delivered one box to the Connecticut Farms Food Pantry and gave the second box to Mt. Olive Church.

We received a thank you letter from Samaritan's Purse (Operation Christmas Child) for our \$150 donation.

Respectfully submitted,  
June Donahue

**ELIZABETH PRESBYTERY:** The 691<sup>st</sup> (Final) Stated Meeting will be via Zoom on Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>. Weather Emergency Date is Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**NORTH EAST PRESBYTERY:** Pastors and church leaders continue to meet weekly on Thursdays (joining with colleagues from the Newark and Palisades Presbyteries) from 10:30-11:30am on Zoom. The link below will connect you to the appropriate Zoom room. Thursdays at 10:30am – [CLICK TO JOIN](#)

**Save the Date:  
Saturday, February 13, 2021**

For an Initial Presbytery meeting to elect officers, learn about the new presbytery's initial provisional structure and operations manual, learn about the process to pick a name for the new presbytery and more! Stay tuned for more information and instructions for registration.

Questions regarding the North East Presbytery process may be directed to *Rev. Jeremy Campbell* or the *Rev. Ron Thompson* .

**NEXT CHURCH: 2021 NATIONAL GATHERING - BREAKING, BLESSING,**

**BUILDING:** A Call For the Common Good. A FREE Live-Streamed Gathering for ALL Church Leaders on March 5-7, 2021. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

## Regarding Ruling Elders: A Monthly Series for Serving Faithfully

### *Leaders Listen by Rodger Nishioka - January 15, 2021*

Several years ago, I led a group of young adults from the United States on a journey to explore our relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. After a wonderful worship service and dinner hosted by a congregation in Tema, we were sitting at tables with the church leaders. One of the congregation's elders turned to me and said he was impressed that I listened so well. I thanked him and asked him more about his kind compliment. He smiled and said that in his experience Americans are not the best listeners. He said that often when you see two Ghanaians together, one is talking and the other is listening. When you see two Americans together, one is talking and the other is waiting to talk.

For 15 years I was privileged to serve as a professor at Columbia Theological Seminary. One of the last courses the seniors are required to take before they graduate is titled Final Things. In it, we professors try to prepare them for whatever ministry to which God is calling them. One essential practice we highlight is listening.

***"Be the one who is listening, not the one who is simply waiting to talk."***

Too often, new pastors enter a congregation already certain they know what the people need and what needs to happen. Instead of acting on these assumptions right away, we encouraged the seniors to just listen. When one of the students pressed us and asked how long they should "just listen," my colleague who was co-teaching with me said "about a year." The class laughed out loud and then became quiet as they realized he was serious. He encouraged them to visit the older members of the congregation and listen to their stories. He encouraged them to sit on the floor with the younger members of the congregation and listen to their hopes. He encouraged them to listen and to preach and teach what is being heard from the people and from God.

Time and again throughout the Gospels, Jesus shows us that he is a good listener. When he goes off by himself to pray, he shows us the importance of taking time to listen to God. When he is confronted with a woman caught in adultery by the religious leaders and they ask Jesus to condemn her, he kneels down and draws in the dirt. A New Testament professor friend of mine says she thinks Jesus was listening. He was listening to the self-righteous voices of the religious leaders, listening to the beating heart of the humiliated woman, and listening to the Holy Spirit. To the rich young ruler, to Jairus whose daughter had died, to Mary and Martha whose brother Lazarus had died ... to all of these and more, Jesus listened.

Leaders listen. It is a spiritual practice. To listen to another is to honor them as a child of the living God. As a Japanese American, my culture values "face," and one way to lose face is to interrupt another while they are speaking. This is an act of arrogance because you believe what you have to say is more important than the one who is speaking.

As a leader in Christ's church, think about the high compliment of someone describing you as a "good listener." To sit and listen to another, to really listen and hear them, is countercultural in our social media society. To be truly heard is a gift. Work at giving the gift of being heard in the days and weeks ahead. As the Ghanaian elder illustrated for us, be the one who is listening, not the one who is simply waiting to talk. Good leaders are good listeners.

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*Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka serves as the senior associate pastor and director of adult faith formation at Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas. Prior to joining the staff at Village Church, he served as a professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.*

This article is the first in a 12-part series focusing on PC(USA) leader formation as a part of the Year of Leader Formation: Investing in Ruling Elders and Deacons. Additional resources are available at [www.pcusa.org/leader-formation/](http://www.pcusa.org/leader-formation/).

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**Facebook: Like us on "Townley Church"**