

“THE TALK OF TOWNLEY”

Monthly Newsletter
FEBRUARY 2026

“You shall love the LORD your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his commandments always. Deuteronomy 11:1

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

7 – Marie Lindner
16 – Tonya Moses
18 – Lisa Heims
25 – Karen Brelowski

PASTOR’S MESSAGE:

This Is A Moment That Demands Lament.

Rev. Dr. SanDawna Gaulman Ashley
Leader, Synod of the Northeast of the PCUSA

Across our nation, families and communities are grieving lives lost in the wake of immigration enforcement. We name with sorrow and righteous indignation the deaths connected to ICE actions—deaths that have torn families apart, traumatized communities, and violated the dignity of those made in God’s image. These are not political abstractions. They are human lives, beloved by God.

At our recent Leadership Retreat, our Communications Specialist, Mark Bennett, offered words that have stayed with me: “I cannot but hope.” His words land precisely where many of us find ourselves—echoing the psalmist’s cry, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? Hope in God.” These words are not spoken to contradict or dismiss the anger, grief, or pain of this moment. Rather, they are words of comfort that name where we ultimately arrive emotionally and spiritually when the weight of injustice presses in.

Lament is not a denial of reality; it is truth-telling before God. Scripture gives us language for both grief and protest. Jesus wept. The prophets raged. The psalms cry out, “How long, O Lord?” As the church, we refuse to normalize violence, fear, or death as the cost of political systems. We grieve the harm done to immigrant communities, and we grieve a nation increasingly numb to suffering at its margins.

Our 2026 Synod theme—Becoming What God Is Calling Forth—asks us who we are becoming in this moment of moral testing. God is calling forth a church that does not look away, that names evil clearly, and that allows righteous indignation to sharpen our faith rather than harden our hearts.

Richard Rohr reminds us that “evil depends on a good disguise.” If the perspectives of the majority of U.S. citizens who can vote, speak, and advocate do not change, then there is little hope for the country we love. Evil flourishes when it is hidden, normalized, or excused. Faith calls us to unmask it.

Rohr further writes that God is a “Great Allowor” who seldom controls the show in this world. Jesus himself says that “the ruler of this world” has power for a time, yet that power is already exposed and condemned (John 14:30; 16:11). The kingdom Jesus proclaims is the world as it would be if God fully ruled—always coming, never fully here. This is why faith, trust, and perseverance are required. Hope is not naïveté; it is spiritual discipline.

Becoming what God is calling forth requires embodied action:

- Naming lament publicly in worship and prayer, refusing silence in the face of injustice.
- Standing in accompaniment with immigrant neighbors and congregations harmed by enforcement actions.
- Educating and equipping communities with accurate information, partnerships, and resources.
- Advocating lawfully and persistently for humane policies that protect life, dignity, and due process.
- Supporting ministries of mercy and justice, including legal aid, immigrant-led organizations, and sanctuary efforts.
- Examining our own hearts and practices, ensuring our churches are places of welcome rather than fear.

For those seeking deeper theological grounding in this moment, I commend Richard Rohr's books *What Do We Do With Evil?* and *The Naked Now*. Both offer wisdom for understanding the times we are living in and for remaining spiritually awake without surrendering to despair.

We cannot deny the pain of this moment. We cannot excuse the harm being done. And yet—rooted in faith—we cannot but hope. Not because the world gives us reason, but because God is still calling something forth among us.

May we have the courage to lament honestly, the clarity to name evil without disguise, and the faith to become—together—what God is calling forth.

Inclement Weather

No doubt, winter is here. In the event of a significant winter storm, you will be contacted via telephone/text/email as to whether the church will be open for worship service. If the church is not open, please join in on our Facebook Livestream at 10 AM.

Morning Message

A short, less than 60 second, message of scripture and encouragement is available for members and friends. Text Pastor Ron – 908 477-4706 if you are interested.

SUNDAY ASSIGNMENTS:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>*ELDER-IN-CHARGE</u>	<u>*LAY LEADER</u>	<u>COMMUNION</u>
February 1	Irene Schoenwalder	Lisa Heims	Irene & Lisa
February 8	Lisa Heims	Karen Brelowski	
February 15	Marty Lindner	Irene Schoenwalder	
February 22	Linda Zehner	Bruce Tangowski	
March 1	Janet Sangekar	Lynn Bailey	Janet & Lynn
March 8	Carol Gordon	Vyonnia Thompson	
March 15	Karen Brelowski	Cynthia Manno	
March 22	Lois Tangowski	Kathy Kreie	
March 29	Irene Schoenwalder	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.

February 1 – Pastor Ron
February 8 – Lynn Bailey
February 15
February 22 -

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING of Townley Presbyterian Church will be held on **Sunday, February 1, 2026**, immediately following the 10:00am worship service for the purpose of electing officers, presenting the budget, and any other business that may properly come before the meeting. Installation of new officers will take place on February 15, 2026, during worship service.

BIBLE STUDY: Join us on **Wednesdays** at noon for our current Bible Study called “Rahab, Hagar & Naomi.”

CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION: *The Blessing Room* is open to Union County residents **who need** essential items. Patrons should park in the rear lot and enter through the rear door. We will have clothing and household items available for distribution at no cost. Patrons should bring proof of residence and bag(s) to carry out their items. The Townley Blessing Room is the location where a ministry dedicated to providing essential items to individuals and families in need takes place. Townley acts as the conduit. As God blesses Townley, we bless others.

The Blessing Room will be open on the **1st Saturday of each month** from 9 am to 11 am. in the Chapel Basement. Set up and last-minute sorting will start at 8:00 am that morning. Donations and volunteers will continue to be needed. Upcoming distribution dates are **February 7th & March 7th**.

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

SWEETHEART BRUNCH – will be held on **Sunday, February 15, 2026**, in Bailey Hall after worship service. This is a free event, all are invited. Please join us for a wonderful fellowship!

SESSION MEETING: The next Session meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 17, 2026**, at 7:30 pm **via Zoom**. (Session meetings are usually held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.)

ASH WEDNESDAY: There will be an Ash Wednesday service on **Wednesday, February 18, 2026** at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary, preceded by a 6:00 pm meatless potluck dinner in Bailey Hall. Bill Jensen will have a sign-up sheet in Bailey Hall to let us know what meatless dish you would like to bring, so there are no duplicate dishes.

SPRING RUMMAGE SALE: is tentatively scheduled for Friday, May 22 & Saturday, May 23, 2026.

THE PRESBYTERY OF NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY: The next meeting of the Presbytery is scheduled for **Saturday, May 30, 2026**, at 9:30am – 11:30am In-Person only at: True Light Presbyterian Church, 18 Essex Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652. Website: <https://pnenj.org>

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



- ✓ Task Force Reports
- ✓ Session had a discussion with Lorraine Cuffie, who is one of Townley’s COM Representatives, for Worshipful Work
- ✓ Reviewed the Task Force Worksheet, adding Youth Sundays and Rummage Sale dates
- ✓ Annual PC(USA) Statistical Report Approved
- ✓ 2026 Budget Approved
- ✓ Pastors Terms of Call reviewed
- ✓ Proceeds of the 2025 Christmas Basket Sales going to Capital Improvement Fund.
- ✓ Moratorium placed on Sanctuary Rentals during the month of December

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

PER CAPITA: Recently, the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey presented the Presbytery’s budget for 2026. 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. ***Townley’s Per Capita for 2026 is \$37.00 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

CHRISTMAS PARTY DONATIONS: Proceeds of the Christmas basket sales in the amount of \$875.00 have been earmarked for a future Capital Improvement Fund.

NEW LEGACY BOOKS: We received \$45.07 for December 2025.

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.

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



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.



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). Away or missed a service? Catch our Livestream!

COMMUNITY NEWS



PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE - will be featuring the Tony Award-winning musical, “Come From Away” from February 4, 2026, through March 1, 2026. This musical shares the remarkable true story of 7,000 airline passengers from all over the world who were grounded in the small Canadian town of Gander in the wake of 9/11. Experience this uplifting story set to a dynamic score and a vibrant, fast-paced narrative, as spirited locals and global passengers come together to forge friendships that will stay with them forever and leave audiences celebrating the power of community.

Paper Mill Playhouse - Coming up in 2026:

“1776” – April 1, 2026, through May 2, 2026
“West Side Story” – May 28, 2026, through June 28, 2026



UNION TOWNSHIP VALENTINE'S DAY POP UP EVENTS - Celebrate love in style! Join us for various events filled with romantic ambiance, unique gifts, and delightful experiences—perfect for couples, friends, and families. Bring your loved ones and let's create beautiful memories together this Valentine's Season! All events cost \$30, and tickets must be purchased online. **[Click here for tickets.](#)**

Speed-Meet Networking Mingle - Thursday, February 5, 2026 - 6:00-9:00PM at House Of Playokee, 1050 Stuyvesant Avenue. Join us for an evening to meet and connect with Union's driven young professionals. Whether you're looking to make friends, expand your network, or spark a potential romantic connection, arrive with an open mind and a positive attitude! Tickets include appetizers and refreshments. Must be 21+ to attend.

Paint & Sip: Galentine's – Friday, February 13, 2026 – 6:00-8:00pm at Union Arts Center, 1980 Morris Avenue. Join us for a special painting session where you can unleash your creativity with delicious sips, laughter, and good company. Grab your besties and celebrate Galentine's Day in style as you enjoy a relaxed afternoon of painting and fun! Tickets include appetizers and refreshments. Must be 21+ to attend.

Candle Making with Urban Glo – Saturday, February 14, 2026 – 1PM & 5PM – Urban Glo, 1419A Stuyvesant Ave. Spend the afternoon with friends, a partner, or come solo to create your own unique and beautiful hand-poured 10oz candle. With over 10 fragrances to choose from, it's the perfect way to make memories and express your creativity! Tickets include appetizers and refreshments. Must be 21+ to attend.

Plant & Sip with Behind The Vine – Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 6:00-8:00pm - Behind The Vine, 971 Lehigh Ave. Grab a bestie or loved one and join us for an evening of hands-on potting as you create your own beautiful succulent arrangement. Tickets include appetizers and refreshments. Must be 21+ to attend.

Townley Presbyterian Church, 829 Salem Road, Union, NJ 07083
Office:(908) 686-1028 Email: TownleyChurch@yahoo.com Website: TownleyChurch.org
Facebook: Like us on "Townley Church"

CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION

AT THE
TOWNLEY BLESSING ROOM
829 SALEM ROAD

February 7, 2026

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Parking and entrance located behind the church (off Huguenot St.)

Who is eligible?

County residents

What should you bring?

Proof of residence

A bag to carry your items

A ministry in which needed items reach the hands of those in need. We offer clothing and small household items to families and individuals in our surrounding community on a monthly basis.