

“THE TALK OF TOWNLEY”

Monthly Newsletter
JANUARY 2023

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved,^(a) with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:13-17)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

7 Akachukwu Obiako
31 Glenda Ramdeen

PASTOR’S MESSAGE:

We’ve all heard of the gift that keeps on giving. I do want you to know that the gift of Jesus truly is the gift that keeps on giving. Jesus is the greatest gift that has ever been given! However, the gift of Jesus is not a one-time gift. There are three ways that the gift of Jesus keeps on giving.

Firstly, through Jesus, God keeps on giving new life. God is in the business of giving new life. Many of you have received Jesus as your Lord and have received new life. You’ve been cleansed from your sins and set free from a sinful way of life. John 3:16 states: “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” May we never lose sight of this! God still offers new life!

Secondly, through Jesus, God keeps on giving in our lives. Not only does God give us new life. He keeps giving in our lives. He doesn’t leave us after we receive new life. He keeps on blessing! Lamentations 3:22-23 states: “Because of the Lord’s faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!” God’s blessings are new every morning! His grace provides abundant life for us! God gives in to our lives.

Thirdly, through Jesus, God keeps on giving through our lives. Did you know God actually changed us in part to do good works for the glory of His name? Ephesians 2:10 states: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” God prepared for us to do good works for Him before we even realized it. You are a blessing to your neighbors, your coworkers, your family, and others.

Two-thousand years ago when the precious baby Jesus was born, God was, indeed, giving the greatest gift the world has ever seen. And God is not done! God is still giving: God is still giving new life. God is still giving in our lives. God is still giving through our lives. The gift of Jesus is the ultimate gift that keeps on giving. As we enter 2023, let’s focus on God’s gift that we can enjoy long after the Christmas tree has been hauled away—that gift of God that will reveal Himself in new ways as time goes on.



SUNDAY ASSIGNMENTS FOR JANUARY:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>*ELDER-IN-CHARGE</u>	<u>*LAY LEADER</u>
January 1	Irene Schoenwalder	Kathy Kreie
January 8	Linda Zehner	Diane Smith
January 15	Carruthers Tumfour	Lisa Heims
January 22	Carol Gordon	Bruce Tangowski
January 29	Kathy Kreie	Vyonnia Thompson
February 5	June Donohue	Irene Schoenwalder
February 12	Janet Sangekar	Carruthers Tumfour
February 19	Lisa Heims	Cynthia Manno
February 26	Irene Schoenwalder	Lynn Bailey



*** 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 time.**



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. This is the current schedule:

January 1 – Pastor Ron
January 8 – Marie Lindner
January 15 – Karen Brelowski
January 22 – Lois Tangowski
January 29 – Cynthia Manno
February 5 – Kathy Kreie
February 12 – Linda Zehner

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 its leaders and supporting the work of Commission on Ministry. The complete budget can be viewed on the Presbytery website. ***The Per Capita for 2023 for Townley is \$40.00 per member*** (the same as last year). 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: Session has approved initiating a capital improvement campaign "Cherish Our Church" to help fund several significant and necessary repairs to the church to help offset the expense. Please see Lisa Heims or Kathy Kreie with fundraising suggestions.

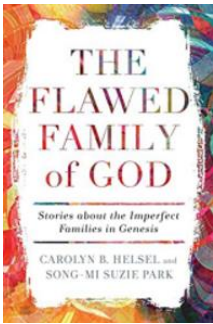
SESSION MEETING: The next session meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 16, 2023 at 7:30 pm. (Session meetings are the 3rd Monday of each month.)

SWEETHEART BRUNCH: Join us after worship service on Sunday, February 12, 2023 in Bailey Hall. Cost is \$20 per person. As always, there will be a Tricky Tray auction with proceeds going towards a mission project and our capital improvement campaign. Please RSVP to June Donohue.

THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING of Townley Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, February 26, 2023 immediately following the 10:00 am worship service for the purpose of electing officers, presenting the budget, and any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

WELCOMING COMMITTEE: Francia (*Bayona*) Landrau is looking for volunteers to serve with her on a new welcoming committee for our church. Let her know if you are interested.

TOWNLEY COMMUNITY GROUP



The “Townley Community Group” is meeting on **Thursday evenings from 7-9:00 PM** in the Prayer Room. The group has begun a meaningful discussion of a book entitled “The Flawed Family of God” – consisting of stories about the imperfect families found in the Book of Genesis. All are welcome to join the discussion and fellowship – snacks included! See Francia, Sandra, Santiago, or Pastor Ron for more info. **Please note** that this same book will be utilized for the Monday Noontime Study Group which reconvenes on **January 23rd**. Pastor Ron has a book for you.

MISSION:

- Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church thanked us for our ongoing support of their food pantry. In December they will be distributing turkeys and gift cards.
- The Christmas Party was held on December 10, and netted \$628.00. \$200 of the proceeds will be donated to the YWCA Domestic Violence Program. \$428.00 will go to our Capital Improvement Fund.
- 20 “care kits” consisting of hats, gloves, socks and toiletries were donated to the Union County Homeless Vigil on December 22. Thank you for your donations and help assembling.



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.



CHRISTMAS EVE AT TOWNLEY

A wonderful time was shared by all in attendance! Special thanks to Bill Jensen, the Townley Choir and our Guest Kayla Richardson. We also appreciate the many hours spent by Glenn Zehner, Robert Harrison, Bruce Tangowski and others in decorating our church. The evening was definitely one of those “Sights and Sounds” moments. Offerings for the event exceeded \$500.



Vyonna and Pastor Ron are grateful for the card and gift received from our church family. We promise to use it well.

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

BAILEY HALL RENTALS: Bailey Hall rentals are available for \$650.00 (\$450 for Hall, \$100 Sexton fee, and a \$100 refundable deposit).



SPRING RUMMAGE SALE: Our *tentative dates* for the spring rummage sale are April 28 & 29, 2023.



THE PRESBYTERY OF NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY: The next Stated Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 9:00am via Zoom. The legal address of our new Presbytery is 340 West Passaic Street, 3rd Floor, Rochelle Park, New Jersey 07662. Website <https://pnenj.org>

REGARDING RULING ELDERS: A MONTHLY SERIES FOR SERVING FAITHFULLY

Now What? by Julie Hester – December 15, 2022



The constitutional questions for ordination and installation have all been asked and answered. You said, "I do" or "I will" in a strong or trembling voice. Perhaps you knelt and had hands laid on your shoulders or back. You felt the weight of the promises you made as well as the support of those who have served before you, as a prayer for the guidance of the Spirit was prayed over you. You've been helped up, offered congratulations, and extended the "right hand of fellowship," or a Covid-era elbow-bump. You've made your way back to your regular seat in worship, to receive the benediction—the good word that sends you out to serve.

So, what happens next? What happens after you've been ordained and installed as a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

You might answer: a lot of meetings. You'd probably be correct! But that's not all.

You are embarking on a journey of faithful leadership that will enrich you, those with whom you serve, and the community in which you show and share the love and justice of Jesus Christ. That part is a given. The Holy Spirit will show up as you move forward. She already has.

When you answered the questions, we've been studying during this year's series of *Regarding Ruling Elders*, you made some public promises. As with any promises you make in a relationship, all those things to which you said "I do" and "I will," these are promises of active intention.

If you make resolutions for the upcoming new year, it's a good time to consider the promises you've already made—not just to yourself but also to others with whom you are in relationship. This includes the people in your community of faith. You made promises to them, and they in turn made promises to you. Remember?

They promised to accept you as a ruling elder, "chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead ... in the way of Jesus Christ." They vowed to pray for you, encourage you, respect your decisions, and follow as you guide them, serving Jesus Christ. They are supporting you as you put on the mantle of this particular call.

Whether you are newly ordained, or have been for years, hold on to the good news that you don't serve alone. In addition to your fellow church officers and congregation members, you have a host of others invested in your call. They want you to be equipped and empowered for service. You have presbytery, synod, and online gatherings and opportunities to explore. You have knowledge and resources in our national denominational offices just waiting to be discovered.

I admit that before being asked to write for this year's *Regarding Ruling Elder* series, I didn't know about it. I had never explored the vast resources within [Coming Alive in Christ: Training for PC\(USA\) Ruling Elders and Deacons Based on the Constitutional Questions](#), which we used to guide this series, or [Equip](#), the online training site offered by the PC(USA).

I was a little embarrassed about this at first. How did I miss it? I've not been living under a rock, and I do read my email. I suppose it's a little like all those church members wondering why they didn't know about something when it's been in the newsletter for weeks ... but what a happy discovery! After 30 years of ordained ministry, I am continually finding new resources to help me live out my own call and keep my promises. As in your own ministry and church community, those who provide resources for you to grow in faith keep on adapting and innovating.

So, how will you keep growing and learning as a church leader?

The Rev. Julie Coffman Hester is a pastor and writer in the [Presbytery of Western North Carolina](#). She is inspired by faithful ruling elders, like her parents, and the remarkable disciples with whom she has served in local congregations.

This article is the last of a 12-part series focusing on the constitutional questions that church leaders answer upon their ordination and installation, using some of the materials from "Coming Alive in Christ: Training for PC(USA) Ruling Elders and Deacons Based on the Constitutional Questions," which is available through [Equip](#), the church's online training platform.

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