

# “THE TALK OF TOWNLEY”

*Monthly Newsletter*  
**MARCH 2023**

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20*

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3 Eunice Amarabe

### PASTOR’S MESSAGE:

#### **Monuments**

A monument may be defined as lasting evidence, a reminder, or an example of someone or something notable or great. It can be a memorial stone, or a building erected in remembrance of a person or an event. We have witnessed, in our lifetimes, the closing of many church buildings. Each one having its own unique story. Many sharing the same ending: a building remains, but its occupants have moved on. Can we look at these closed buildings as monuments?

No one intentionally builds a church as a monument. The thinking at its inception is that it will be a lasting, functioning building. The drive to maintain the church building’s functionality is draining. In many cases, there are no resources to continue. In other cases, the facility outlasts its congregation. It just may become a monument to the notable achievements of that congregation.

We have not built, nor do we attempt to maintain a monument. What has been built and what we endeavor to maintain and grow, is a community of Christian believers. While our history is notable, we can not dwell in the past. While memories are good, they become no good if they don’t remind us to be an alive, fully functioning community. This is our current and future calling – to be alive and growing for Christ.

As we “Cherish the Church”, let us not think only in terms of raising money for the physical structure. Our focus must more importantly be on our Christian community – the real Church. Endeavor with me to grow larger through **evangelism**, warmer through **fellowship**, deeper through **discipleship**, broader through **ministry**, and stronger through **worship**. Or our building might just become a monument.



**SUNDAY ASSIGNMENTS FOR MARCH & APRIL:**

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>*ELDER-IN-CHARGE</u></b>	<b><u>*LAY LEADER</u></b>	<b><u>COMMUNION</u></b>
March 5	Linda Zehner	Lisa Heims	Linda Z. & Lisa H.
March 12	Carruthers Tumfour	Kathy Kreie	
March 19	Carol Gordon	Lisa Heims	
March 26	Kathy Kreie	Bruce Tangowski	
April 2	June Donohue	Vyonnia Thompson	June D. & Vyonnia T.
April 9	Janet Sangekar	Diane Smith	
April 16	Lisa Heims	Irene Schoenwalder	
April 23	Irene Schoenwalder	Carruthers Tumfour	
April 30	Linda Zehner	Cynthia Manno	



**\* 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:



- |                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| March 5 – Ruth Ammerman  | April 2 –  |
| March 12 – Cynthia Manno | April 9 –  |
| March 19 – Lynn Bailey   | April 16 – |
| March 26 –               | April 23 – |
|                          | April 30 - |

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING:** For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors around the world. Three programs supported by OGHS—Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self Development of People—work to serve individuals and communities in need. These programs provide relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the oppressed. If you would like to contribute to this special offering, there will be envelopes provided for your donation on the Sundays prior to Palm Sunday. Please bring your donation to Townley Church on Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023 or on Easter Sunday, April 9, 2023. Thank you for your support! Mission Division.

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



DONATE TO HELP RENOVATE



Help Us Reach Our Goal !



Online



Locally

Donations are tax deductible

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN:**

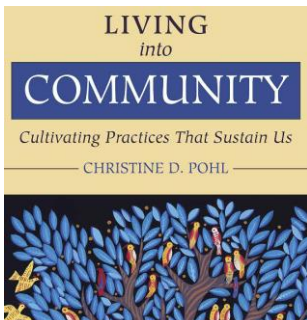
Session has approved initiating a capital improvement campaign “Cherish Our Church” to help fund several significant and necessary repairs to the church to help offset the expense. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 in the next 18 months. Please see Lisa Heims or Kathy Kreie with fundraising suggestions.

## HELP FOR THE HOMELESS

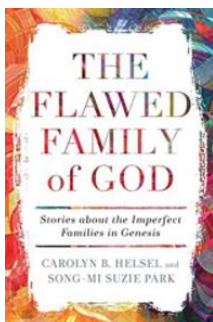


Zion Lutheran Church, Rahway, NJ is using its Fellowship Hall of the Church as a homeless shelter. Zion's shelter is primarily operated by volunteers from the church and community. Food, entertainment, and services are all provided by volunteers. The shelter reopened again on February 1, 2023! It is a communal space where our guests are fed a hot meal, dessert, and drinks. Our guests sleep on cots. Shelter is offered from 6pm to 7am the following morning where breakfast is served. Food can be homemade or bought from restaurants or donated from elsewhere. If food is prepared, it can be done so at the church with its two ovens and microwaves, or it can be prepared at home and heated up at the social hall of the church. All of the meals are provided to our guests by the community. We are always accepting donations of food for breakfast - cereal, instant oatmeal, fruit, bagels, donuts, coffee, and tea. This service is essential in keeping our most vulnerable people from sleeping on the street! This life saving work wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for you! Please see Pastor Ron if you are interested in volunteering or contributing to Zion, Rahway's Operation Warm Heart Homeless Shelter. Would you be interested in greeting and serving an evening dinner to these guests from **6:00 to 8:00 pm on Thursday, March 2, 2023**? If so, please let Pastor Ron know.

## TOWNLEY COMMUNITY GROUP



The "Townley Community Group" is meeting on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:30 PM in the Prayer Room. The group is having a meaningful discussion of a book entitled "Living into Community – Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us". – Christian community begins in gratitude, is sustained by our promises and truthfulness, and is expressed in hospitality. All are welcome to join the discussion and fellowship – snacks included! See Francia, Sandra, Santiago, or Pastor Ron for more info.



## TOWNLEY MONDAY NOONTIME BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study is held on Mondays at Noon in Bailey Hall. The "Flawed Family of God" is a 10-week study. This book consists of stories about the imperfect families found in the Book of Genesis. All are welcome to join the discussion. Please see Pastor Ron for more info.

**SESSION MEETING:** The next session meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 7:30 pm in the upstairs meeting room. (Session meetings are now held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.)

**NEW SESSION MEMBERS:** Welcome to our new Session Members, each for a 3-year term: Karen Brelowski, Bill Jensen, and Marty Lindner.

**SESSION RETREAT** – will be held on March 25, 2023 in Bailey Hall from 10:30 am – 2:30 pm.



**SPRING RUMMAGE SALE:** Our *tentative dates* for the spring rummage sale are April 28 & 29, 2023. 10% of the proceeds are earmarked for the Institute of Music for Children.

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS DAY** – Is tentatively being planned for June 4<sup>th</sup>, details to come.

## *Gospel Brunch*

Join us for Gospel Brunches on Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup> and September 10<sup>th</sup>. These will be services held in Bailey Hall the mornings after our Summer Roadhouse performances. Let's describe them as: "*Good News, Good Music, and Good Food*". Services start at 10:00 AM.

**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.

**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

## **MISSION:**

- The Sweetheart Brunch held on February 12<sup>th</sup> realized net proceeds of \$545.00. We will donate \$180 of the proceeds to Connecticut Farms Food Pantry, and the \$445 balance will be donated to Operation Warm Heart which is currently based at the Zion Lutheran Church in Rahway.
- In the Connecticut Farms February Newsletter edition, our support was acknowledged, and Shop Rite Gift Cards were distributed to those in need.



### **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 April's (monthly) newsletter, please e-mail them to [CeceliaH@comcast.net](mailto:CeceliaH@comcast.net).

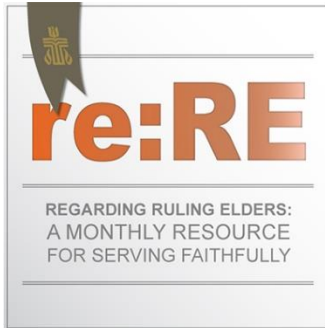
**BAILEY HALL RENTALS:** Bailey Hall rentals are available for \$650.00 (\$450 for Hall, \$100 Sexton fee, and a \$100 refundable deposit).



**THE PRESBYTERY OF NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY:** The next Stated Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2023 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**

### ***Discernment and Wonder by Valerie Izumi – February 15, 2023***



As a teenager and into her young adult years, my youngest daughter loved the Harry Potter book series. She prepared for the release of each upcoming Harry Potter book by rereading every previous volume, in order!

Somewhat like my daughter's Harry Potter practice, I commit to a morning practice as the new year approaches, from Christmas to Epiphany, of taking a look back and reflecting on the previous year. This period of assessment and discernment provides me with an opportunity to make adjustments that will strengthen my physical, mental, and spiritual being and my awareness of the people and world around me. It is also a time to more clearly see

God's activity and faithfulness in the world, in the church, and in my life, and to "measure" my personal and vocational fidelity to God.

At our January Office of the General Assembly staff retreat, we received the opportunity to pick an Epiphany star word as part of our closing worship service. As I randomly selected a paper star from the basket, I realized that it was actually two stars stuck together. Encouraged to keep both, I gently separated the stars and read out loud, "discernment" and "wonder." These are the words I am to reflect on during 2023.

Interestingly, these are two words that are well-used in my vocabulary. Helping people and groups discern is what I do for much of my ministry — both paid and unpaid. The Holy Spirit has prepared me for the work of discernment that God calls me to, and it is a gift and talent that I care for and develop through study and engagement with others. Asking folk to share their sense of awe and wonder often leads to interesting conversations and is an important part of the relationships I nurture with others.

Our capacity for awe and wonder feeds spiritual capacity within ourselves, with others, and with God. In turn, spiritual capacity heightens our awareness of compassion, emotional well-being, and our ability to recognize what is sacred in life.

In future articles, I will connect you with an amazing group of ruling elders, to engage with them and their journey of faith and hear how God calls them. We'll explore their calling in terms of how they live and serve, not only on their sessions and in their congregations, but beyond the walls of their churches as well.

You'll hear the faith stories of ruling elders such as Frances Lin, stated clerk of the [Presbytery of San Diego](#), who describes how God has put together the journey she has traveled. Raised as a Buddhist, Frances came to the United States from Taiwan when she was 14. She is now a Presbyterian, and Frances has responded "here I am" each time God has called her to serve. She has served the denomination in a variety of ways and places that she says were never intended or what she was seeking. I am still moved by her words: "It's incredible how God has been so faithful. God never quit. God was faithful and waited for me to catch up."

Ramona Williams, a commissioner to the General Assembly in 2022, will also share her story. Ramona, who had been hurt by the church, said, "Well, God, if you really want me in church, you're going to literally have to show me which church you want." After visiting several churches, she felt called to join and be baptized. Ramona now leads Bible studies and serves on session and several presbytery committees, all while working as a store manager for a major grocery store in Florissant, Missouri. "It has been an exciting spiritual journey," Ramona shares. "My hope is that my learnings, my love for Christ, shows in a way that I am attracting people."

For reflection:

- What inspires awe and wonder in your life, in the life of the session, and in the congregation where you are a member?
- What practices do you engage in to open yourself to discerning God's call in your life and in the life of the community in which you live and serve?
- How do you further develop the gifts you've been given?

*Valerie Izumi is a ruling elder serving the Office of the General Assembly as an assistant stated clerk, coordinating the General Assembly nominations process.*

Throughout 2023 and 2024, monthly "Regarding Ruling Elders" articles will alternate between a deep dive into the ways ruling elders discern and measure the life of a congregation through the ministry of members and stories about how ruling elders are using their call and gifts as they move about, within and beyond the walls of the congregation.

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# Lent Prayer for God to Bring Beauty from Ashes

by Debbie McDaniel



Dear God,

In this season of Lent, we're reminded of our own difficulties and struggles.

Sometimes the way has seemed too dark.

Sometimes we feel like our lives have been marked by such grief and pain,  
we don't see how our circumstances can ever change.

But in the midst of our weakness, we ask that you would be strong on our  
behalf.

Lord, rise up within us, let your Spirit shine out of every broken place we've  
walked through.

Allow your power to be manifest through our own weakness, so that others  
will recognize it is You who is at work on our behalf.

We ask that you would trade the ashes of our lives for the beauty of your  
Presence.

Trade our mourning and grief for the oil of joy and gladness from your Spirit.

Trade our despair for hope and praise.

We choose to give you thanks today and believe that this season of  
darkness will fade away.

Thank you that you are with us in whatever we face and that you are greater  
than this trial.

We know and recognize that you are Sovereign, we thank you for the victory  
that is ours because of Christ Jesus, and we are confident that you have  
good still in store for our future.

We thank you that you are at work right now, trading our ashes for greater  
beauty.

We praise you, for you make all things new.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



PRESBYTERY OF  
NORTHEAST  
NEW JERSEY



PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE

# Church Safety & Security Training Workshop

## Saturday, March 18th

### 9am to 4pm

@

United Presbyterian  
Church of West Orange

**20 Old Indian Road, West Orange, NJ 07052**

(Continental breakfast & Lunch will be served)

#### Training Includes:

- Risk of armed intruders at faith-based institutions
- Risk to churches from Hate Groups
- Security role of ushers and greeters
- ALICE Training Institute strategies and drills for surviving violent intruder situations
- Preventing mass shootings with threat assessments and mental health counseling
- Basics of "Stop the Bleed" first aid training
- Creating a Preparedness/Security Committee and developing a plan for your church

#### Register Today!!

<https://pnenj-safety.eventbrite.com>



#### For More Information:

Elder Jerome B. Lane Jr

Community Ministry Organizer

[jerome@pnenj.org](mailto:jerome@pnenj.org)

973-873-0700