

THE TOWER TIE

The Newsletter of the
First Presbyterian Church of Goshen

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February 2023

Faith Matters

“The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone....

Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes.

They shared food with gladness and simplicity.

They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone.”

(Acts 2:42-43a, 46 Common English Bible)

My Dear Goshen Presbyterian Friends and Family,

Whenever I read this passage about the early church, I am reminded of just how engaged the new believers were with God, with each other, and with the larger community. I’ve lived in a lot of neighborhoods in my life; some of which were very “neighborly” and some of which were not! In truth, though, I don’t know that any of those neighborhoods would have evoked *awe* despite the good-natured individuals who made their homes there. I suppose that’s why this text from the Acts of the Apostles moves me so much with its message of devotion to both God and neighbor as a meaningful piece of our Christian heritage and discipleship.

The early Christians trusted that their baptisms gave them a spiritual identity unlike any other and they were grateful to share their thanksgivings for a new life in Christ by giving freely of themselves in rich, full ways on behalf of the same Lord who came into the world to transform us. I’ve had some parishioners in bible study say, somewhat lightheartedly, that this chapter of Acts reads like a socialist manifesto, especially verses 44 and 45:

All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them.

But, in doing so, they’ve missed the point. Luke isn’t talking about a political, social, and economic system of enforced norms. He is sharing with us a vision of a community in which there was so much joy in having been blessed with the depth and breadth of the Christian faith that they chose to “give back” to Christ. They freely gave of themselves in powerful ways to make a difference in the lives of God’s beloved children. It may be hard for us to imagine a climate of such enduring generosity in a “dog eat dog” world. But when we parse out these verses, we see that the many “action words” provide

a good picture of how the early believers responded to the gift of an Easter faith through mutual disciplines of *worship, prayer, study, fellowship, and the sharing of resources*.

This is what every church strives to work toward—being a community that, like a thriving neighborhood or, better yet, a healthy family, deeply commits itself to loving the One who is most dearly and nearly revealed to us in Christ, and to loving our neighbors all around. Perhaps our lives today don't allow for daily worship; but that doesn't stop us from attending to the same disciplines as the Acts church.

As we approach the season of Lent, I invite you to reflect on how you might use the spiritual disciplines of worship, prayer, study, fellowship, and stewardship to embody your faith as you serve Christ at home, at work, at church, and in your neighborhoods.

Trusting that we are called to devote ourselves to Christ in much the same way as the Acts Church, the Session has approved a new Mission Statement that speaks to what we believe we are called to do as we seek to serve our neighbors with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. This is our calling. This is our faith. This is what we do:

We strive to be a welcoming, loving church family united by our faith and committed to service in Christ.

Blessings of love for you,

Pastor Rhonda

Ash Wednesday

Join us for Ash Wednesday worship on February 22nd. We will begin the Season of Lent with a solemn reminder of our human mortality and a spiritual focus on the importance of repentance and prayer before the Lord of all goodness. Ashes will be imposed, songs will be sung, scripture will be read, and prayers will be shared. Join us. 7pm. February 22nd.

Season of Lent

The Season of Lent will soon be upon us. The word Lent is related to another word, Lengthen, and calls to mind the gift of lengthening hours of sunlight as we move toward a summer equinox. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays—which are considered “mini-Easters”), and it represents the time of Christ's temptation in the wilderness where he fasted and faced daily temptations with prayer, conviction, and courage. Lent is intended to be a season of reflection, for both individual Christians and for the church. We reflect on who and whose we are in Jesus Christ. We pray for guidance through the trials of life and we hold fast to hope as we come to trust that Easter will bring with it yet one more reminder that nothing can separate us from the love of God—not even death. We'll put our “Alleluias” on hold for the season of Lent and sing hymns of repentance, discipleship, honor, and trust in a God who's giving and living is eternal. Join us each Sunday @ 9:30am.

Book Study “UnClobber”

A Zoom Book Study using Colby Martin's UnClobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality began January 23rd and will run through February 20th. If you wanted to join us but missed the first conversation, feel free to join us now. Copies of the book are for sale at Amazon and other retailers; it is available in paperback or on Kindle. The Zoom link comes from Pastor Rhonda. So, please contact her at revrhon@aol.com to let her know you would like to join the study. As the title would suggest, the book is about inclusion and welcome. Pastor and Author Doug Pagitt has said of the UnClobber, “Martin's insight, winsome spirit, and passion have come together to create a book that I not only love but am proud to share with those whom I love. UnClobber is a great gift for all who are seeking deeper understanding, faith, and compassion.



Another winter fades, another spring whispers its promises in our ears. During February, we stand to gain over an hour and ten minutes of daylight (according to the *Old Farmer's Almanac*). Also, Lent is coming. Ash Wednesday is on the 22nd. The music, as always, will shift to a reflective tone and sometimes to penitential

texts, as we pare away the unnecessary and focus on the essential. God never asks us to give up something but He gives us something better in its place.

Sacred music isn't a form of entertainment, a mere distraction. I got a gag gift (I think) this Christmas: a DVD called *Boogie Down the Pounds*. It stars Richard Simmons, that wild-haired 80's fitness icon. It's hilarious, and yes, I admit, I enjoy sitting on the couch watching it! But it ain't sacred music, not by a million miles.

Sacred music, as an ancient hymn tells us, opens us to the "sober intoxication" of the Holy Spirit. It binds us in community, it energizes our soul into a deep calm. It's an anti-distraction. May our Lenten music help us hear what Dylan Thomas meant when he wrote: "There was calm to be done in His safe unrest."

The organ still needs the new Mixture, which had to be separately constructed. When that comes, Austin will also take care of the chimes and a few other items that have to be seen to. I'm already planning a dedication recital—date and time to be determined.

I've read some articles about the difficulty churches are having returning to pre-2020 attendance levels. Slowly but surely, we must continue to rebuild and take charge of our destiny again. Lent reminds us of that destiny: that we must carry our cross and suffer with the Lord in order to rise and reign with Him.

So, come back and bring a friend! The choir can use you, handbells can use you, and every single other church ministry can use you! What better time to start!

I was moved, as you might expect, by the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. His main theme was that the Christian faith is *reasonable*. It cannot be a paranoid rejection of science, but must speak of the reasonable Creator who makes science possible in the first place. *Come, let us reason together, says the Lord* (Isaiah 1:18). Without faith, reason is all dressed up and has nowhere to go. Without reason, faith is timid and defensive. Also, Benedict's lifelong love of music—especially piano and organ—always encouraged me.

Just think how the organ merges science and faith! I'm looking forward to sharing some new sounds with you soon. Let's "boogie down the pounds" together this Lent—for real!

Jonathan

Please Be Advised That We Do Live Stream Our Worship Services.

The Live Stream camera generally captures the first 4-5 (rarely 7-8) rows of the sanctuary in its feed. Normally we only see the back of your head. If you would rather stay out of camera range, please know that we do not capture the seating under the balcony (on either side) and we don't capture the back rows at all. Regarding the Children's Message: We keep the camera zoomed out. As children leave to go to Sunday school, we will pan up to the stained glass windows so no children's faces are caught on camera.

TIDBITS FROM THE TOWER

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS TO:

| | | | |
|----|------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Grover von Pentz | 14 | Laura Colacci |
| 3 | Kat Kingsley | | Ann Delgado |
| 4 | Garfield Clark | | Doug Wade |
| | Arlete Shaeffer | 16 | Cliff Bartley |
| 5 | Morgan Case | | Robyn Farley |
| | Sarah Gibbons | 20 | Beth Phelan |
| 10 | Linda Clark | | Becky Stewart |
| 11 | Mike Csernai | 21 | Jack Calzaretta |
| | | 24 | Mackenzie Sproul |

HAPPY FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES TO:

| | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 9 | Mike and Allison Csernai |
| 14 | Sean and Janet Linton |

***If you are also celebrating a special day, we wish you much happiness.
If you would like your birthday and/or anniversary included,
please give your dates to Pat in the church office.***

Congratulations to Joy (Phelan) and Fran Swankowski on the birth of their daughter, Lillian Noelle. The proud grandparents are Ken and Carol Phelan.

News From the Fellowship Committee....

February 26th is the last Sunday of the month and is also the congregational coffee hour. So please bring a goodie to share.

We are always looking for coffee hour hosts. Don't be shy; we will provide you with a printed guide and lots of help. Thanks!

Welcome All Men of FPG to a Men's Fellowship Breakfast Plus

When: Saturday, February 18 @ 9:00 a.m. Where: Fellowship Hall

It has been quite a while since the men of FPG gathered together. There has been much interest in getting together again. I encourage you to set aside this time in your schedules to join us for breakfast, devotions, and discussion. Please let me know if you will be attending so we can plan accordingly. Mark Glassé cell(845) 325-4439 text or call mpglasse@optonline.net

Prayer Chain

It is vital for any congregation to be in prayer for the church and for individuals affiliated with the church who have a need for God's intervention in some way. This is why churches such as ours have prayer chains. But the prayer requests must stay current if individuals are to be asked to pray for everyone on the list. So, as of March 1st, we will be changing the way we update the prayer chain. Once a request has been made for a member of the church, a friend, a neighbor, a family member, etc. to be met with prayer, that name will remain on the prayer chain list for 2 months. If you want continued prayers for another 2 months, please contact the church office to make that request. Use the church email address fpgoshen@gmail.com or phone the office with your request at 845-294-7991.



PRAYER CHAIN

The following members or friends are going through a time in which they have asked for prayer by the church. Please keep the following people in your prayers:

*Landon Schust and Family
The Family of Barry Freeman
Peggy Huestis O'Connor
Father Gus
Alan Thompson
Orra Wood
Jean Crandall*

Financial Commitments

If you haven't made a financial commitment for 2023 but would like to support this congregation in fulfilling its work of worship, education, mission, outreach, care and fellowship, consider making a pledge using a commitment card found on the table in the Narthex or see Deb Hourahan.

Please Pay Your Per Capita Assessment For 2023

Every year, the Presbytery of the Hudson River charges every member church an assessment according to the current active membership. Our recorded active membership is currently **206** and ***our assessment per member*** (not per family) **for 2023 is \$39.70**, which is a total of **\$8,178.20** to be taken from our operating budget. Please assist with this expense and write a check for your family assessment and either mail it to the church or place it in the Sunday offering plate. We ask that you pay this by February 1, 2023. Thanks for doing your share.

Electronic Giving Cards

There are giving cards for use during the offertory for those who give electronically each week/month/year. Your gifts are meaningful and necessary, and you should be able to participate in our weekly presentation of our offerings to the Lord.

Livestreaming Worship

If you are unable to join us in person for worship, watch on our YouTube channel.
If you need help finding the Livestream, use the link on our Weekly Tower Tie.

Annual Congregational Meeting—February 26th—Following Worship

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church in Goshen has called an annual Congregational Meeting immediately following the 9:30am worship on Sunday, February 26th for the purpose of receiving reports of the various church boards and committees.

Annual Reports

The 2022 Annual Reports will be available to pick up in the Narthex on Sunday, February 19. It will also be sent electronically around February 16.

Church Office Closed

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 20 in observance of President's Day.

Offering Envelopes

The 2023 offering envelopes are on the table in the Narthex. Please pick up yours. If you don't see a box with your name and would like one, please email Deb Hourahan at debhourahan@yahoo.com



“And don't forget to do good and share with those in need.” —
HEBREWS 13:16

Our Annual Church World Service Blanket Drive will be held in February. Each blanket cost \$10.00 but whether you can give \$1.00 or \$100.00 or more, all will be sent in to help blanket someone in warmth and caring. **Please watch for announcements in church and online.**

Your gift will support two types of Church World Service Blankets: Woolen blankets are water-resistant and flame-retardant. They are extremely durable, warm and great for frigid temperatures or other extreme weather conditions. Fleece blankets are water repellent, durable, warm and soft. These blankets keep families covered but suitable for warmer weather. The blankets are distributed to folks in the USA as well as world-wide- victims of floods, fires, earthquakes, homelessness, and refugees.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to be Elected January 29th

The Pastor Nominating Committee will be elected at a special congregational meeting following worship on January 29th. Please keep the PNC in your prayers and exercise patience in awaiting their updates. The first task of the PNC will be to review the CAT report and the Transition Team Report, assess the church's ministry and identity, determine pastoral needs, establish criteria for determining which candidates might be a good match for the church, and write a Ministry Information Form for circulation to pastors seeking a new call. Once they begin receiving communiqués from denominational headquarters and potential candidates, they will review those Personal Information Forms (PIFs) and narrow down the search to a few pastors for interview. (Pastor Rhonda often teases that this process is a lot like going on Match.com to find a suitable partner!)

The Rev. Judy Anderson of the Florida church will be the presbytery liaison to the PNC. Judy is a member of the presbytery's transition team and she successfully guided the Interim Pastor Nominating Committee in their work two years ago.

There is no deadline for calling a pastor. But that doesn't mean that the search will go on interminably. The PNC will meet regularly to find an excellent candidate for service as your next pastor. And that candidate will be brought before the congregation for vote before they are installed. Being a member of a PNC is a big responsibility, to be sure. But when done well, the process affords the opportunity for a new relationship between pastor and congregation that promises to be refreshing, renewing, and purposeful. So, get those prayers going!

Maney-Hawkins Meditation Garden



FEBRUARY UPDATE

**Taking a stroll around the labyrinth in winter
can be both cold and warm at the same time!**

Memorial Pavers

To order a memorial paver to honor or remember your loved ones, please see Pat in the church office.
The cost of each paver is only \$100.

The Memorial Columbarium

The LAST niche has been purchased in the Memorial Columbarium wall.

The congregation will need to consider if constructing a second/third wall is desired and/or financially possible. If it is, a new, current estimate for the work will need to be created, considered, approved and work coordinated.

“Stewards of Our Garden”

Special thanks to our dedicated Stewards who continue to keep our garden beautiful!

The FEBRUARY/EARLY MARCH Steward's Schedule:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Barbara & George Hankins | February 1 – February 14 |
| Bill Eustance | February 15 – February 28 |
| Nancy Buckley | March 1 – March 15 |

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

If you'd like to help maintain our garden, just see Pat in the church office to sign-up and be added to our Steward's schedule.

Call the church office (845-294-7991) for any information you need about
The Maney-Hawkins Meditation Garden

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We strive to be a welcoming, loving church family united by our faith and committed to service in Christ.

BOARD OF ELDERS

Class of 2023

**Linda Boardman
Geri Corey
Jennifer Ellis
BA Long
Kevan Ottochian
Sue Varden**

Class of 2024

**Marlene Gaynor
Bill Powers
Mal Stewart
Anne Wood**

Class of 2025

**Diane Church
Mark Glassé
Jody Kopec
Scott Roper**

Clerk of Session: Sue Varden

BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2023

**Diana Bowe
Gina Gruber
Carolyn Keller
Mary Kopec
Jonathan Laskoski
Cheryl Zis**

Class of 2024

**Allison Csernai
Patrick Ellis
Bill Keller
Barbara Schust
George Schust**

Class of 2025

**Cecile Ayres
Michael Csernai
Carol Gabella
Jennifer Serkes**

Moderator of Deacons: Carolyn Keller

STAFF

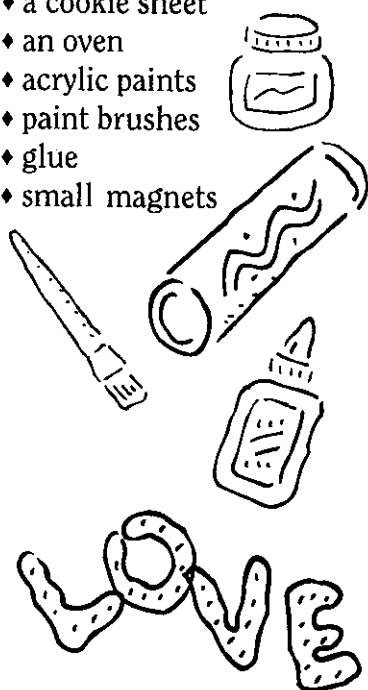
**Jonathan B. Hall, Minister of Music
Patricia Schwetje, Office Administrator
Deborah Hourahan, Church Treasurer
William Kozireski, Church Sexton
Matt Kopec, Church Sexton**

THE KID'S PAGE

Make Some Magnets

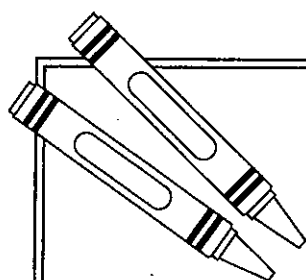
You will need:

- ♦ a tube of refrigerated breadstick dough
- ♦ a cookie sheet
- ♦ an oven
- ♦ acrylic paints
- ♦ paint brushes
- ♦ glue
- ♦ small magnets



How to make:

Stretch out the dough. Shape pieces into letters or shapes. Spell "LOVE" or make heart shapes for Valentine's Day. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet at 300° for 30 minutes. Cool. Paint. Glue magnet on back.



Just for KIDS

Mark 12:30-31

Change some of the letters below to find the words in these important verses.

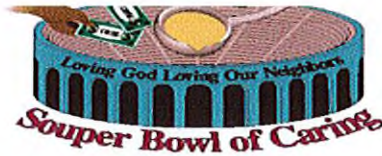
Change: C's to L J's to A K's to O Z's to H
Q's to T P's to R X's to E

(The other letters stay the same.)

" L
C K V X Q Z X C K P D Y K U P
G K D W I Q Z J C C Y K U P
Z X J P Q J N D W I Q Z J C C
Y K U P S K U C J N D W I Q Z
J C C Y K U P M I N D J N D
W I Q Z J C C Y K U P
S Q P X N G Q Z . . . C K V X
Y K U P N X I G Z B K P
A S Y K U P S X C F .

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength ... Love your neighbor as yourself."

The Souper Bowl



On Super Bowl Sunday **February 12**, tens of millions of people will enjoy the warmth of friendship and the satisfaction of food and drink while watching the Super Bowl football game on television. Unfortunately, at the same time, countless other people will feel cold air against their flesh and hunger within their stomachs.

An effort has been born that seeks to transform the Super Bowl into a “**Souper Bowl**” for the needy. The “**Souper Bowl**” is a unique interdenominational effort to glorify God and care for our brothers and sisters in need.

Here's how it works: please give Five dollars & one canned good as you leave worship on the weekend of the Super Bowl.

Youth from your congregation will collect the money and canned goods and then send the contributions **DIRECTLY** to the Goshen Ecumenical Pantry. Congregations across the nation are then asked to call “**Souper Bowl**” headquarters with the results of their efforts so that totals can be promptly determined and released. (Congregations, please call John Strobl at 294-9004 with your totals; he will report the totals to the “**Souper Bowl**” headquarters for the Food Pantry).

Here's some background: the effort began in a Columbia, SC church in 1990. That year \$5,700 was raised in Columbia. Last Year, The **Goshen Ecumenical Food Pantry raised \$2,628.00.**

Please join in partnership as we seek to *Love the Lord our God...and Love our neighbors...* in this simple yet significant way.

Goshen Ecumenical Pantry, Inc.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN GOSHEN
GOSHEN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GOSHEN CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ST. JOHN A.U.M.P. CHURCH
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CHURCH

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9:30am - Church School 9:30am - Worship Service @ 10:30am - BINGO @ Coffee | 12:30pm - NA @ FH 7pm - Book Study @ Zoom | 9:30am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - NA @ FH | First Day of Black History 4:30pm - Mission Committee 6:30pm - NA @ B | 6pm - Fellowship Committee 6:30pm - Bell Choir 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 7:30pm - NA @ FH | 12:30pm - NA @ FH | |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 9:30am - Church School 9:30am - Worship Service @ 10:30am - Coffee Hour @ FH 2pm - Club Z @ FH | 12:30pm - NA @ FH 7pm - Book Study @ Zoom | 9:30am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - NA @ FH 7:10pm - Worship/Music | 7:30pm - Finance Committee | 6:30pm - Bell Choir 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ | 12:30pm - NA @ FH 6pm - Friday Night Friends @ | 9am - Food Pantry @ Parking |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Souper Bowl of Caring 9:30am - Church School 9:30am - Worship Service @ 10:30am - Coffee Hour @ FH 10:30am - Deacon's Mtg. @ | 12:30pm - NA @ FH 7pm - Book Study @ Zoom | Valentine's Day 9:30am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - NA @ FH | 7pm - Session Mtg. @ FH | 6:30pm - Bell Choir 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ | 12:30pm - NA @ FH | 9am - Men's Breakfast @ FH |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Tower Tie Articles Due 9:30am - Worship Service @ 10:30am - Coffee Hour @ FH | Office Closed Presidents' Day 12:30pm - NA @ FH 7pm - Book Study @ Zoom | 9:30am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - NA @ FH | 7pm - Ash Wednesday | 6pm - Food Pantry @ FH 6:30pm - Bell Choir 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ | 12:30pm - NA @ FH | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9:30am - Church School 9:30am - Worship Service @ 10:30am - Coffee Hour @ FH 10:30am - Congregational | 12:30pm - NA @ FH | 9:30am - Food Pantry 6:30pm - NA @ FH | First Day of Women's History 4:30pm - Mission Committee 6:30pm - NA @ B 7:10pm - Worship and Music | 6pm - Fellowship Committee 6:30pm - Bell Choir 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal @ 7:30pm - NA @ FH | 12:30pm - NA @ FH | |