

First Presbyterian Church of Sussex
PRESBYTERIAN
PRESS



21 Unionville Avenue, Sussex, NJ 07461

February 2024

From the Pastor's Desk....

Hello Friends!

I can't believe it's already been three years of partnership in ministry! I am so honored to be called your pastor. The time has gone so quickly for me, and I am thrilled to see what God has in store of our fourth year of ministry together.

This month is the start of Lent, the time in the church calendar when we prepare our hearts and minds for Holy Week, especially for the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Many people honor Lent by giving something up.

This year, Ash Wednesday is on Valentine's Day, so if you're giving up chocolate, make sure to tell your spouse early so they don't buy you a chocolate heart that will just sit there tempting you for the six and a half weeks of Lent!

To mark Lent with our church family, we will be offering a few things:

1. Ash Wednesday Service on **February 14th** at 7:00 p.m. at the church and on ZOOM.
2. An Ecumenical Book Discussion Group through six weeks of Lent. There is a ZOOM group and an in-person group. The ZOOM group will meet on **Wednesdays at 12 noon (starting February 14th)**, and the in-person group will meet on **Thursdays at 12 noon (starting February 15th)** in the fellowship room of our church. More information is in our newsletter.
3. The pastors will be joining together for a Maundy Thursday Service, as we've done for the past many years. More info will come about this in March.
4. Good Friday Service on **March 29th**, 7:00 p.m., at the church and on ZOOM.
5. Easter Sunday Service on **March 31st**, 10:30 a.m., at the church and on ZOOM.

I hope you're able to come to some of these special offerings for Lent. And that you listen for however the Holy Spirit is guiding you to mark Lent in our own lives. I find that I really like adding something into my spiritual life in Lent rather than just taking something away. To me, it adds a richness to this 46-day period of time.

You might have just read that last sentence and thought, "But Pastor Katherine, I thought Lent was 40 days?" and I'd respond by saying, yep. That's the traditional count of days because Sundays don't count as fasting days, because every Sunday is a mini-resurrection day and therefore, isn't a day to fast but to feast.

I hope you enjoyed those fun facts for this newsletter note. And I hope you take to heart the opportunity to mark Lent in your spiritual life this year. For our spiritual growth is an incredibly important part of our overall health.

In Psalm 25:4-5, the psalmist writes, "*Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.*" May this Lenten season bring this to fruition within you and within all of us as part of this church community.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Katherine Scott-Kirschner
(973) 771-4721 (cell)



Session Highlights

Session met on December 19th. The following items were discussed:



- Hope all have a wonderful Mery Christmas and a Happy New Year. Always have faith!
- A congregational potluck luncheon is being considered for **April 2024**.
- Recognition of church membership anniversaries is scheduled for **January 28, 2024**.
- January sermon themes will be entitled, "The Power of Jesus." Please attend.
- Ash Wednesday is **February 14, 2024**.
- The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation is scheduled for **Sunday, January 28, 2024**, after worship.
- Ruling Elder Penny Bates shared much success with the Cookie & Bread Walk.
- Ruling Elder Charles Bates reported the purchase of two new toilets for our church.
- The next regular Session meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, at 6:30 p.m., on the ZOOM platform.

Session met on January 16th. The following items were discussed:

- The Ecumenical Pastors' Group will sponsor an Ecumenical Book Discussion during Lent.
- The Soup Sale is scheduled for **February 11, 2024**.
- Active membership is recorded at 90 active members, with ten members removed to inactive and one removed from the rolls.
- Pastor Katherine's will present a new sermon series during Lent entitled, "The Gifts of Christ," from **February 18th through March 31st**.
- The Buildings & Grounds Committee will be busy this year with the installation of new toilets in the church and the removal of the oil tank in the ground. Other hopeful improvements will be new flooring in the fellowship room and a new handicapped door.
- Communion dates for 2024 are: **February 4th, March 3rd, April 7th, May 5th, June 2nd, July 7th, August 4th, September 1st, October 6th, November 3rd, and December 1st**.
- Our total Per Capita for 2024 is \$4,335. We ask each member to pay their "dues" of \$42.50.
- The next regular Session meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**, at 6:30 p.m., on the ZOOM platform.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles Bates, Clerk of Session

Presbyterian Women's Group



Our Soup Sale is being planned for **Sunday, February 11th**, in the church kitchen area. To make this sale a success, we will need help from our church family to make their favorite soup/soups. There is a sign-up sheet in the fellowship room on the food table for anyone who is willing to make a soup. We will be having soup for sale in pints (\$5) and quarts (\$8), and also cups (\$3) and bowls (\$4) to sit and have together as a church group. Please look up your soup recipes, and mark your calendars!

Mark Your Calendars

The next regular Deacons' meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 25th**, 11:30 a.m., at the church; the next regular Session meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 20th**, 6:30 p.m., on ZOOM.



The season of Lent begins on **February 14th**. The six weeks or 40 days of Lent prepare us for Holy Week and Easter by calling us to focus deeply and intentionally on our relationship with God.

Ash Wednesday Service



The 2024 Ash Wednesday Service is taking place at 7:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, February 14th**, in the church and on ZOOM. You're invited to begin the season of Lent by attending this service. Pastor Katherine and the choir hope to see you there!

Lenten Book Discussion Group

This year, the pastors in Sussex and Wantage are joining together to offer a community-wide Lenten Book Group Discussion. The discussion will be based around Kate Bowler's brand-new book, *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day*, and will meet weekly on ZOOM and in person. You do not need to purchase or read the book to be part of the discussion group, but it is likely to be helpful to frame the discussion overall. The group will look at what it means to follow Jesus through the ups and downs of our days, which will hopefully help us to share all aspects of our lives, not just the picture-perfect sides. The ZOOM group will meet on **Wednesdays at 12 noon starting on February 14th and finishing up on March 20th**. The in-person group will meet on **Thursdays at 12 noon at the First Presbyterian Church of Sussex starting on February 15th and wrapping up on March 21st**. The groups will be doing the same discussion questions for the week, so for example: if you want to mostly meet in person but one week you meet on ZOOM instead, you'll get the same questions but with a different group. Please bring your own lunch to the in-person discussion group. If you would like the ZOOM link, please let Pastor Katherine know so she can send it to you.



Sermon Series



Pastor Katherine will be starting a new sermon series called, *The Gifts of Christ*. This series will run from **Sunday, February 18th through Easter Sunday, March 31st**. Plan to join Pastor Katherine for this interesting series!

Church Directory

We are working on updating our Church Directory...please email your information (name, address, telephone number, cell phone number(s), email address) to the church office at sussexpresbyterian@embarqmail.com, or mail it to the church at 21 Unionville Avenue, Sussex, NJ 0461, or call the church office at 973-875-4760. Please have your information in to the church office by **February 29th**.





Sunday School News

Sunday school runs from 9:30 – 10:15 a.m., for Pre-K through Adult, September through June. Please see Ashley Ziccardi if you have any questions.

Christmas Pageant

The Sunday School children held their Christmas Pageant, “I Didn’t Think It Would Happen Like This,” on Sunday, December 10th, during the worship service. Congratulations on a wonderful performance!





Back: Molly Swartz, August Ziccardi, Molly Jean Marquart, Eloise Demeter, Emily Gulick, & Abby Gulick;
 Front: Owen Touw, Emmett Touw, Aven Swartz, Emeline Demeter, & Heath Ziccardi

Pastoral Care

Pastor Katherine aims to be in the office on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. She is available at her cell phone number (973-771-4721) the rest of the days and for longer conversations in the evenings. She sets aside Friday evening through Saturday evening as her Sabbath (around 5:00 – 5:00 p.m.) most weeks. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please still reach out.



How Are We Doing???

For the Month of January

(Computers Connected During ZOOM + People Attending In-Person Worship)

Average Weekly Attendance: 38

Monthly Offering: \$ 9,058.50



Why Per Capita?

Per Capita exists as a way for all Presbyterians to share costs that belong to the whole church and to give meaning to the interdependent nature of Presbyterian polity. For 2024, each member's contribution is \$42.50

Per Capita is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. It exists to allow the whole church to share equitably in those things that make us Presbyterian: our theological identity, our connectedness as communities of faith, our core structures that keep us together as a church, and our call to work for full participation in decision making.





Worshiping In Person Update

Masks are optional for those vaccinated; for those not vaccinated, it is strongly recommended that masks continue to be worn. Child care in the nursery has resumed.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation was held on Sunday, January 28th, after worship, in the church sanctuary and on ZOOM. The 2023 Annual Report is available at the church, along with the 2024 Budget.



2024 Calendars

Pinkel Funeral Home has generously donated scenic calendars with our church's information on it. Please feel free to take home as many as you'd like. They are available in the narthex.

2024 Church Envelopes

The 2024 church offering envelopes available now in the narthex. Please take yours home with you when you come to church. Also, if you see a neighbor's envelopes, please take them and drop them off.



Madelyn Coykendall with little Reagan Ziccardi!



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Donald and I are immensely grateful for the generous gift we received for Christmas. Donald was especially touched that, after finding out he has celiac disease, that the congregation purchased him some gluten-free cookies to go alongside the Danish Butter Cookies tin that I'm able to enjoy. We are incredibly touched by the congregation working together to provide such a meaningful gift for our family. I'm blessed and honored to be your pastor. Thank you for supporting me and this congregation's ministry so faithfully year in and year out.

*In gratitude,
Pastor Katherine*

Dear Church Family,

I am so blessed to know you and be a part of this congregation for over eight years. For your generous Christmas gift, I thank you so very much! It is my privilege to share music at worship with the choir and all of you. I hope I can continue to be blessed with being a part of God's church for many more years.

*With love and gratitude,
Linda*

Dear Presbyterian Parishioners,

Thank you so much for your beautiful Christmas card with your generous monetary gift inside. I am so humbled and thankful to be included and supported by such a loving and accepting parish,

Thank you also for the delicious box of Belgian cookies. I truly enjoy them as a treat and dessert at the end of a busy day.

I truly hope your holidays were happy ones spent with loved ones and good friends. Hope you all enjoy a happy and healthy New Year.

*Love,
Kathy*

Dear Friends at FPC of Sussex,

Thank you very much for the very generous monetary gift and delicious cookie tin you gave me for Christmas. It is nice to be remembered at this special time of year by such a special congregation!

I am blessed to be able to work here at the First Presbyterian Church of Sussex for all these years. Your thoughtfulness is very much appreciated!

I hope you all have a wonderful and healthy 2024!

*Love,
Sharon*

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the gift! May the magic of the season fill your heart.

Walter Houck



February Birthdays

(14) Charles Lain, Sr.

(18) Nancy Barta

Rachel (Stormes) Sullivan

(22) Joanne Cosh

(27) Charles Bates



Congratulations

Nathan Hayzler and Molly Swarts made the Honor Roll at Sussex Middle School for the first marking period.



Church Membership Anniversaries Celebrated

On January 28th, the congregation celebrated membership anniversaries for the following during the worship service: **85 Years:** Madelyn Coykendall; **80 Years:** Lois Wright; **65 Years:** Jane Clark; **50 Years:** R. Dale Boyd; **45 Years:** Richard L. Hayzler & Janet Hayzler; **35 Years:** Marion Kopec; **30 Years:** Richard M. Hayzler; **20 Years:** Stan Kotowicz, Eric Sives, Betsy Sives, Carol Tomasula, & John David Tomasula; **15 Years:** Charles Bates & Penelope Bates.



From the Finance Committee



If you pay your bills using online banking, consider scheduling your weekly or monthly giving like other regular payments. This will greatly assist with our cash flow. Thank you! **We have online giving!** There is a 'donate here' link on our website, www.sussexpresbyterian.org or you can download the GivePlus Mobile App

(Vanco) to your smart phone. Our online giving program is provided by the Presbyterian Foundation in partnership with Vanco Services, LLC. Both the Presbyterian Foundation and Vanco Services have very good reputations, and this online giving program came highly recommended by other churches.



February 19th

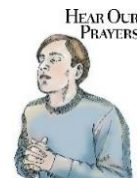
In Our Thoughts & Prayers



Please pray for **Teresa Belcher** (friend of The Batemans), **Madelyn Coykendall**, **George Clark**, **Rob Contrada** (father of Amy Mills' daughter's friend), **Frank Del Sardo, Jr.**, **Bob & Donna Gibson**, **Rev. Bruce Gillette & Family**, **Charlie & Dodi Lain**, **Lorraine**, **Betty Martin**, **Rev. Tim Marvil**, **Carol Mullen** (Donna Gibson's friend), **Art & Carolyn Van Houten**, **Pat Walker**, **Lois Wright**, and **Barbara Young**; and the families of **George Martin**, **Dolores Voris** (Marion Kopec's mom), and **Brian Young**. Please let the Deacons or the office know who to add and who to remove. **Thank you!**

Prayers of the People E-mail

Pastor Katherine sends out a weekly email with the prayer requests lifted up in worship. If you would like to receive this e-mail, please contact the church office.



Deacons' Fund Offering



A part of the Deacons' ministry is our monthly Deacons' Fund Offering, which assists charitable, nonprofit organizations. The Board of Deacons would like to thank all those who donated to Father John's Animal House in Lafayette, our Deacons' Fund recipient for December, and to the Center for Prevention and Counseling, our Deacons' Fund recipient for January.

Our Deacons' Fund recipient for February is the Sussex Help Center, our local food pantry. Please give generously to our monthly Deacons Funds!

Deacon of the Month

When Pastor Katherine is not available or needs assistance, the following Deacon will be on call for the month of February – Sheryl Dekmar.



Prayer Shawl Ministry



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry has been sending prayers and love in the form of beautiful knitted, crocheted, or quilted shawls to people in need of physical, emotional, or spiritual comfort. The shawl maker begins with prayers and blessings for the recipient, and keeps these thoughts in mind throughout the creative process. Our shawls are delivered with a message expressing the feelings of love and comfort with which they were made. If you know anyone who could benefit from a prayer shawl, please call Janet (973-875-9252) or see her after worship. If you would like to create these beautiful shawls, a 20 x 60-inch rectangular shawl requires five skeins of yarn. If you don't knit, crochet, or sew, or don't have the time, you can purchase yarn or donate funds for materials.



Just Plain Change Ministry

I give you a new commandment: Love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples. - John 13:34-35



Please remember to empty your pockets/ purses to help our neighbors in need. Listen to your neighbor, your co-workers, your friends, cashiers at the places where you eat or shop and/or the waitresses where you eat. If you find a need to cheer or support, write down your suggestion on a slip of paper. Put it in the jar in the back of the sanctuary or contact any Deacon. **You can also mail in your donation to Janet Hayzler.**

Yes, your quarters, dimes, and pennies do make a difference in the lives of those around us!

Small Change Suggestion (The suggested amount limit is \$50.)

Recipient/situation: _____

Contact information (name, address, phone #): _____

Your name (optional): _____

How do you want to have the “gift” delivered? (By yourself or by a member of the committee? Or other suggestion?): _____

Please continue to listen to your neighbor, classmate, and community members, as each has a story to tell. If we at the First Presbyterian Church of Sussex can help, let someone on the Board of Deacons or Sharon Bove or Pastor Katherine know. There are also papers on the back table in the sanctuary that can be filled out and placed in the glass jar. **Do you know of someone who needs a little boost?**



Refreshments After Worship

Refreshments are served in the fellowship room. Please sign up to bring in goodies on the sign-up sheet in the narthex. Please call Penny Bates if you have any questions.



The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

Psalm 19:1-4, 7-9a

Lectionary for the Lord's Day

February 2024

- 4 **5th Sunday after Epiphany**
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; Mark 1:29-39
- 11 **Transformation of the Lord**
Psalm 50:1-6; Mark 9:2-9
- 18 **1st Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 25:1-10; Mark 1:9-15
- 25 **2nd Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 22:23-31; Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9



March 2024

- 3 **3rd Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 19; John 2:13-22
- 10 **4th Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; John 3:14-21
- 17 **5th Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16; John 12:20-33

Can You Help?



Mike Kosco, Chair of the Worship & Sacraments Committee, is looking for people to serve as liturgists and ushers. You can be liturgist in church or at home on the ZOOM platform. If you have done it before, or even if you haven't, please contact him at 973-875-7412, or see him after worship on Sundays. Communion preparers and servers are also needed. A schedule (*through March*) of liturgists, ushers, communion preparer, and communion servers is listed below. **If you cannot volunteer on your scheduled date, please "swap" a date with someone else and notify Sharon Bove at 875-4760. Thank you!**

Schedule of Liturgists

February 4 th	Janet Hayzler
February 11 th	Charles Bates
February 18 th	Betsy Sives
February 25 th	Walter Houck
March 3 rd	Sheryl Dekmar
March 10 th	Richard L. Hayzler
March 17 th	Penny Bates
March 24 th	Mike Kosco
March 31 st	Janet Hayzler



Schedule of Communion Preparers and Servers

Preparers

February 4th – Nancy Barta
March 3rd – Paulette Touw

Servers

February 4th – Penny Bates & Paulette Touw
March 3rd – Janet Hayzler & Richard L. Hayzler

Schedule of Ushers



February 4 th	Chris & Chuck Sarno
February 11 th	Mary Alice Hosking & Niki Lepes
February 18 th	Charles & Penny Bates
February 25 th	Ken Enhoffer & Richard L. Hayzler
March 3 rd	Sheila Stormes & Paulette Touw
March 10 th	Joanne Cosh & Kyle DeGroat
March 17 th	Mary Alice Hosking & Niki Lepes
March 24 th	Chris & Chuck Sarno
March 31 st	Charles & Penny Bates

Local Food Pantry News

The Sussex Help Center is open from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Wednesdays, and from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Mondays/Fridays. They appreciate all donations, and they especially need everything. Please let Walter Houck know if there is a family in need.



Sussex Elks



Veterans: The Sussex Elks are still collecting needed items for our Veterans, as well as DASI. The Veterans need: body wash, shampoo/conditioner, and toothpaste/toothbrushes. DASI needs: toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, napkins, laundry detergent, Dreft (baby detergent), cleaning products, dish soap, female hygiene products, deodorant, soap, hair-care products, shampoo and conditioner (full size), cereal, canned tuna/chicken, individual snacks, juice boxes, mac & cheese, and soup. Also, small and medium dog/cat food bags, and gift cards for Walmart, Shoprite, and gas in \$10 increments. The following new items are also needed: pillows, twin-size bed sheets, hand towels, larger size women's pajamas, children's pajamas (boys and girls), sweatshirts and sweatpants (XXL), socks, and slippers. Drop-off location: Sussex Elks Lodge #2288. Please leave by the door.

Fundraiser

St. Monica's Church is having a fundraiser at the Green Olive Restaurant, 1 Libertyville Rd., Sussex, on **Wednesday, February 7th**, from 12 noon to 9 p.m. The church will receive 20% of all restaurant sales (dine-in only) during that time frame. Enjoy a great meal and help our neighbor church!



Free Tax Preparation Program



United Way of Northern NJ and its partners are offering FREE tax preparation services for low- and moderate-income households. At no cost to you, our IRS tax-law certified preparer will help you claim all the credits you are eligible for and get what you are owed. Tax filing opens **February 1st**. Visit uwnnj.org/freetaxprep.

Our Church Sign

(Thank You Phil Hardin, with help from Richard L. Hayzler)



One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of her older deacons to lead in the opening prayer. The deacon stood up, bowed her head and said, "Lord, I hate buttermilk."

The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going. The deacon continued, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was totally perplexed. The deacon continued, "Lord, I ain't too crazy about plain flour. But after you mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits."

"Lord help us to realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what you are making. After you get through mixing and baking, it'll probably be something even better than biscuits. Amen."

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

