

The Amagansett Presbyterian *Spirit*

Issue #5 January - February 2022

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Dear Amagansett Presbyterian Family and Friends,

Before church this last Sunday I went outside to survey the snow left by the blizzard. The drifts my yard gleamed in the sun, and winter beauty was at its fullest! Giant cupcakes on wheels slowly made their way on Montauk Highway, the first cars to travel on the road, snow piled on top like a heap of frosting.



The change of seasons is a joy to me – sparkling snow, the bright buds of spring, summer lushness, autumn colors. But I also know there are other changes life brings that I do not embrace. When there are good changes - a desire fulfilled, health restored, a renewed relationship – we give thanks to God. We rejoice in new babies, when our children and grandchildren become young women and men. But when challenges arise, like a financial setback, another variant, news of a conflict overseas, we of course do not embrace it at all, but grow fearful and start praying for things to be back to normal.

Wise people tell us that the way to manage these unwelcome changes is very much the way we adopt to the good changes: we give thanks. Paul the Apostle writes that we should “rejoice in the Lord always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (I Thess 5:16-18). Paul is not saying we rejoice in suffering, or that we should be happy that we are struggling. He is saying we are not daunted by adversity because we know God is with us, bringing strength, bringing peace, opening a way forward. We give thanks in faith that God is at work and will not let us go.

God’s love for us is unchanging. The words of the hymn “Great is Thy Faithfulness” include “God changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not, as Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.” It is a wonderful spiritual practice to daily recognize signs of the way God “changest not.”

Whatever our challenge may be individually, for a loved one, our nation – and as we work toward revitalization in our church - we do well to recognize that all changes are in God’s hands. Unwelcome changes are perhaps God’s way of using our time of need to turn our attention to God more fully, and develop the ability to trust God in all things.

May each of us enjoy good changes in our lives, and support one another in the difficult ones. Let us trust together that no matter what we face, we are no less loved or provided for by our Creator.

Grace and peace to each of you and your families,

Candy

Important February Dates!

Church returns to in-person worship Sunday, February 6

We will resume meeting in-person in the sanctuary beginning this Sunday, February 6. Thankfully, virus numbers are going in the right direction, but we still ask you to wear your mask and space out in the pews to keep everyone safe. Coffee hour will resume at a later date. We look forward to being back together!



Peace in the Pandemic

A time for quiet music and meditation

All are welcome

Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 pm, in our sanctuary through March 10

FEBRUARY FOOD DRIVE FOR SPRINGS FOOD PANTRY

We continue to support the Springs Food pantry this month by collecting **Pancake mix and syrup**. Please bring in your items on Sundays and they will be donated at the end of the month to the food bank. Your support is very appreciated as food insecurity remains high in East Hampton.

February 14 Happy Valentine's Day!



Remembering Christine Goddard



Long-time member and friend Christine Goddard died on Thursday January 13 at age 101. Rev. Rob Stuart held a graveside service at Oak Grove Cemetery attended by friends and neighbors. Christine, known as Chriss, was active in the Women's Guild, and with her husband Irving, contributed to the life of our church in many ways. Rest in Peace, Christine.

Saturday, April 9!

We're hosting a community Health Fair – Hold the date!

Plan now to attend the Spring Health Fair on Saturday April 9 in Scoville Hall! The event is being sponsored by Amagansett Presbyterian Church and The Stony Brook University School of Health Professions. The Fair will offer our community free health information, blood pressure checks, glucose checks, vision screening, height/BMI measurements, tick removal kits, and much more. A mobile mammogram van will also be there. High school and college students can meet health profession students and learn about different career paths. We hope that a drug take-back unit and mobile dental unit might be available as well.

Thank you to Jerry Simons, PA who is spearheading this event geared to serving our community.



Volunteers are needed! We are looking for church friends and family members to staff the welcome table for all or part of the day (9:45 - 2pm). Please let Rev. Candy know if you are available.



Josephine Crasky's Birthday



Party to Come!

Jo's birthday was January 7, but with our not meeting in person, and gatherings made difficult by the virus, we plan to celebrate **Jo's 98th** as soon as we are back together! The church provided her with a beautiful bouquet on her birthday...which was carefully set on the table in her house where it could be fully enjoyed! Birthday blessings and love to Josephine!

UPCOMING IN MARCH

March 2 - Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.
(Easter is April 17.)

Daylight Saving time begins Sunday, March 13...Spring Ahead!

First Day of Spring is March 20

WELCOME, REG AND SHIRLEY!



We are delighted to have with us as our pianist three Sundays a month Reginald Starks. Reginald brings a love of music, a worshipful sensibility, and great skill and musicianship to our services! We are grateful also to have his partner Shirley Talmage with us also to assist Reg as he prepares and leads us on Sundays. You might not know it, but Reg offers many creative suggestions for pieces that enrich our spiritual lives on Sunday mornings.

Reg and Shirley have been with us since the summer, and we are delighted that they will be able to continue to be with us on Sunday mornings.

Prefer to worship from home? Candy offers a Zoom option for regular Sunday services. If you would like to zoom in on Sundays, use the following info at zoom.us. Service begins at 10 am.

Meeting ID: 814 3074 9560
Password: AmaZoom350

NEXT FUTURE FORUM

Sunday, February 27 after church

As this new year begins, and as we hopefully have a respite from the virus and can begin to reactivate as a church, we are joyfully considering faithful steps toward our future as a church.

On January 27 a group gathered on Zoom to share ideas to help our church move forward. It was a productive time of generating ideas, sharing ways to get us moving again as a congregation and let our community know we care about them.

Do you have ideas? We want to hear from you. The next Forum will take place **immediately following worship on February 27**. The Zoom will remain on so that anyone out of town may participate.

May the Holy Spirit be with us as we share ideas and prepare to serve our community.

An Ancient Prayer

Lord, Jesus, think on me
and purge away my sin.
From earthborn passions set me free
and make me pure within.

Lord Jesus, think on me,
that when the food is past,
I may th'eternal brightness see
and share your joy at last.

-Synesius of Cyrene (4th Century)

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Mental health issues in East Hampton, especially among youth, are being addressed by various organizations in our Town and on Long Island. Sadly, mental health issues are on the rise, and they may have serious consequences.

The good news is that authorities are able to help us prepare to help someone in distress, even when suicide is a possibility. If you are interested in learning how to help someone who is considering suicide and connect them with effective intervention, please attend a training called **“SAFEtalk Suicide Prevention” at the East Hampton Library on Tuesday, March 1 from 5:45 – 9:00 pm.** Registration is required. Call Candy for details.

SESSION NEWS

On **SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2022**, at approximately 11 am we held our annual meeting via Zoom. Candy moderated our meeting, during which we heard reports and received a presentation by Mary Vorpahl of our 2022 budget. For a copy of the Annual Report (thank you, Rick!) please contact Lisa in the office.



The first Sunday in Lent will be Sunday, March 6. Scholars believe the word “Lent” comes from the word for “lengthen” which refers to the way days grow longer as we approach spring. It is a beautiful reminder from the natural world that God desires new growth in us and offers forgiveness through Christ to help us begin afresh in our attitude toward ourselves, toward God, and toward others.

When we accept forgiveness for the things we have been holding on to that weigh us down, or create obstacles to healing in our spirit, we walk

more fully in our belovedness and freedom as Christ’s disciples. Lent is an opportunity for self-examination and shedding those things that have been obstacles to peace and joy in our life, or have been keeping us from the kind of relationships with others that we want. It is a season of thoughtfully making room for new habits of mind and spirit, and opening ourselves again to the love that God has gifted to us and to the world. May this Lent be a season of hope and renewal for you.

For Lent: Psalm 51:10-12

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.

PRESBYTERY OVERTURE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

The Presbytery of Long Island voted on January 29 to send an overture to the 225th General Assembly of the PCUSA this year stating our acknowledgement of the sin of slavery and its legacy. Our presbytery wants to go on record recognizing that in past centuries, many of our denomination’s leaders did not censure this horrific practice. Instead, they were known to keep enslaved people themselves, or supported policies that enabled it to continue. The overture is being proposed as a first step in working towards justice and reconciliation.

This is a time of remorse in the past practices of our church, and lament for the many who benefitted by this exploitation. We go forth trusting that allowing this sin to come to light will open the door to new life for our presbytery and our denomination as we live out the gospel we preach.