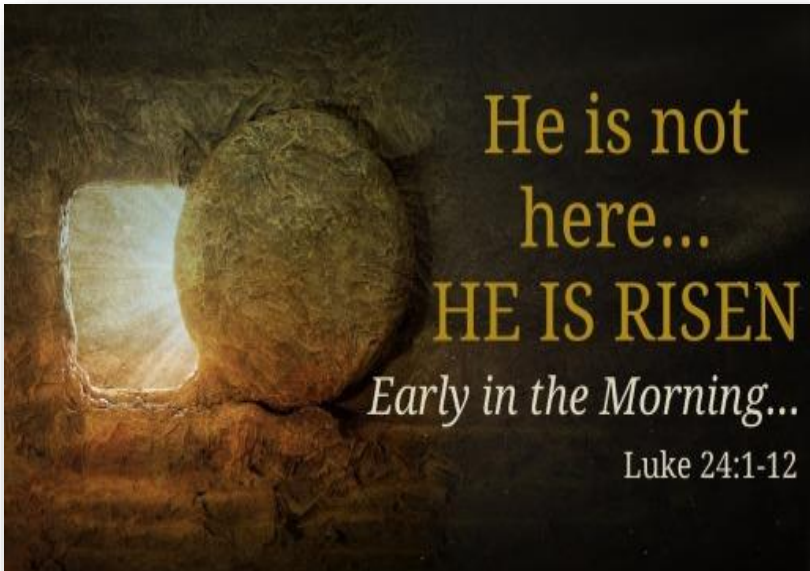


The 40 Days of Lent

A season of special opportunities and experiences for 2023

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. (Mark 8: 34 NLT)

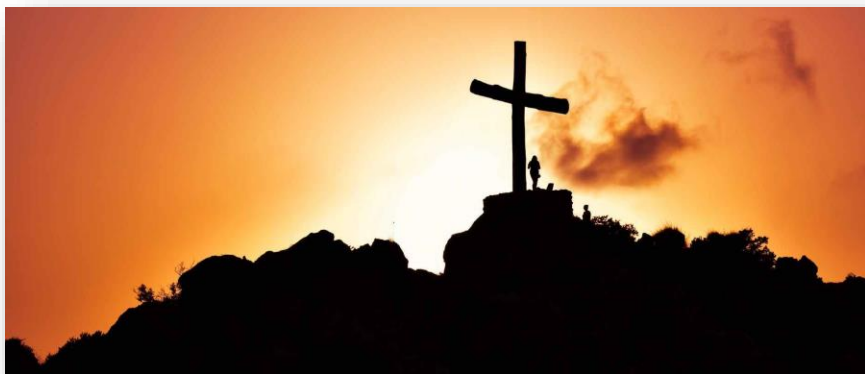


First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown

P.O. Box 868

Moorestown, NJ 08057

fpcmoorestown.org ~ 856.235.1688



The Meaning of Lent

*"O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones.
Let me find you again. Amen."*

Henri Nouwen

The 40 days of Lent have historically been a time of fasting, prayer, and study for those wishing to grow closer to God. It can be a time for personal and collective reflection and transformation. We look honestly at ourselves and are reminded of who we belong to while aligning with Christ's sacrifice. In scripture, the number 40 is significant as the Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness preparing for the promised land, and Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days to prepare for his ministry. These two stories show us that God can use Lent to help us make new choices and begin a new direction for our hearts and lives.

In 2023, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday February 22, and continues through the five Sundays in Lent: February 26, March 5, 12, 19, and 26. Palm Sunday is April 2ndth leading us into Holy Week and Easter.

Lent Worship Schedule 2023

Wednesday, February 22, 2022

12:00 Noon Ash Wednesday Worship (Lord's Supper)

7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Worship (Lord's Supper)

February 26 ~ First Sunday in Lent (Lord's Supper)

8:30 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

Wednesday Evening Lenten Services

6:30 pm: Wednesday, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

March 5 ~ Second Sunday in Lent

8:30 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary
(no Lord's Supper)

March 12 ~ Third Sunday in Lent

8:30 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

March 19 ~ Fourth Sunday in Lent

8:30 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

March 26 ~ Fifth Sunday in Lent

8:30 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

April 2 ~ Palm Sunday / One Great Hour of Sharing

8:30 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary

One Great Hour of Sharing fish boxes returned in both services

Education Hour 9:45-10:45 am

Children's Sunday School and Adult Spiritual Formation

continued

Holy Week Worship Services

Special Observances

April 6 ~ Maundy Thursday Worship

7:00 pm Miller Commons

April 7 ~ Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

7:30 pm Sanctuary

April 9 ~ Easter Sunday

6:30 am Sunrise Service

8:30 am Traditional Worship

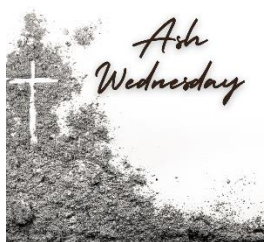
11:00 am Contemporary Worship

No Children's Sunday School or Adult Spiritual Formation

No Nursery Care

Ash Wednesday February 22

Worship at 12 Noon and 7:00 pm



We begin the Journey of Lent on Ash Wednesday February 22nd. This year a new 12 noon worship service is being added for those who prefer not to be out at night. The evening worship service will be at 7:00 pm Associate Pastor Wes Allen will preach the Word, and the Lord's Supper will be served. If

watching at home, please have a communion serving for yourself and those with whom you are worshipping.

Scheduling Note: On Ash Wednesday, there will be no Kingdom Kids, Crossing Zone or Family Dinner so families may worship together. Middle School Youth Group will meet at the regular 6:30 pm time and plans to attend worship. For choir rehearsal schedules, contact Joel Krott at jkrott@fpcmoorestown.org.

Lent Sermon Series Starts February 26

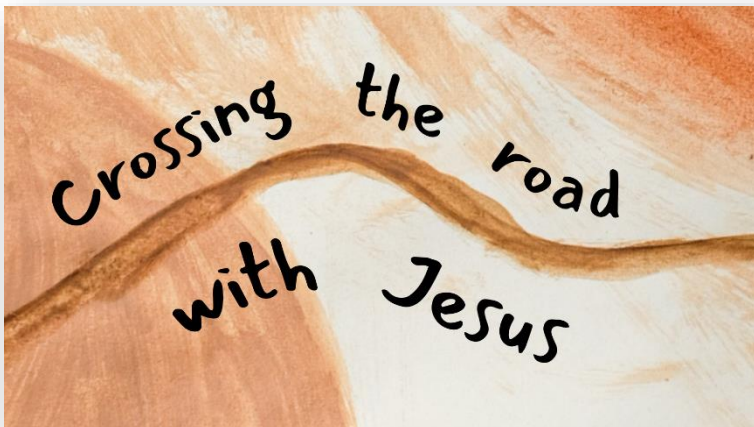
“Crossing The Road With Jesus”

In the season of Lent, Pastors Spencer and Allen preach a series of Lenten sermons called, “Crossing the Road with Jesus.” The inspiration for this sermon series is the book, *Why Did Jesus Cross the Road* by Dr. Bruce Main, our Lenten book study. Bruce writes, “What do [Jesus’ stops] say about his interests, concerns, faith, mission, commitments and purpose? Each of his destinations and interactions with various people groups represented something for Jesus; and where he went and what transpired there provide us with a deeper glimpse into his mission and purpose on earth.”

MEMORY VERSE:

Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at his tax collection booth. “Come, be my disciple!” Jesus said to him. So Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

— Luke 5: 27, 27



Per Capita Giving for the larger church

Please return by February 28, 2023

Members pay this *per capita* (Latin for “by head” or per person) in addition to one’s annual gift, recognizing that the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) is a connectional church. As such, we are part of a larger family throughout the state and the country with Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly.

Our 2023 per capita remains \$38.75 per member. In February a letter was mailed to member households with information about this offering and a giving envelope for your convenience.

Submitting Your Per Capita

This per-member offering has remained the same for over 10 years despite increases to Presbytery costs. We appreciate you covering your payment, as you are able. In 2022, 286 members contributed their offering, which saved the church \$11,082. There were 48 opt-outs received @ 38.75 (\$1,860). The church was billed for the balance, paying **\$37,239** for its apportionment. This is a significant budget item.

PLEASE DO YOUR PART AND RETURN your contribution of \$38.75 per member in the offering plate, by mail, [online](#), through the Church Center app, or drop a check off to the office. **Please return this offering by February 28, 2023** to offset the amount the church must pay.

Do you want to "opt out?"

In 2012, Session voted that if a member prefers that the church NOT pay his/her portion, he or she may “opt out” and ask that their portion be deducted from the total amount the church must pay. To do so, [fill out the attached Opt Out form](#) or notify Norman Vandergrift in the church office. Please remember that not paying is not the same as opting out.

Praying the Bible with Stuart Spencer

Thursdays in Lent (Zoom Only, 6:30 pm)

March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

**Help me understand the meaning of your commandments,
and I will meditate on your wonderful deeds.**

Psalm 119: 27

Praying the Bible or *Lectio Divina*, is an ancient form of contemplative prayer. *Lectio Divina* or “sacred reading” is a way to pray by using the words of the Bible. In this form of prayer, participants read or listen to a passage of Scripture as if it were speaking directly, personally to them. In faith, we trust that the Holy Spirit will speak to us in the most personal way as we pay attention to God’s Word. This spiritual practice is a form of biblical meditation.

On the Thursday evenings in Lent, Pastor Spencer provides an online opportunity for learning and practicing *Lectio Divina*. One resource he’ll use is the website or app called Pray as You Go: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>. This site offers a daily, guided meditation on a biblical passage using music. Meditations are usually about 12 minutes. For more background on *Lectio Divina*, visit this page from the Pray as You Go website: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/series/16-how-to-pray-with-lectio-divina>

ZOOM LINK

Topic: My Meeting Praying the Bible Study

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82155873927?pwd=WnBQeDdha0xYYkVCekVOakpkVEZrZz09>

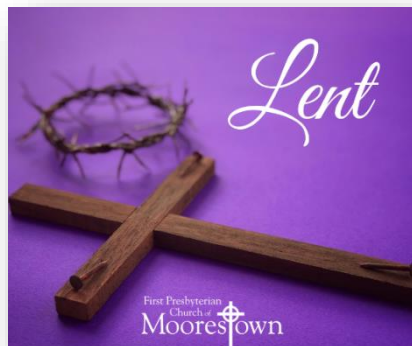
Meeting ID: 821 5587 3927

Lenten Evening Prayer Service

Wednesdays in March ~ 6:30 pm

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

This season, Pastors Spencer and Allen will lead a brief in-person Wednesday evening worship at 6:30 pm during Lent: March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. The theme will be "Light in the Darkness," and the service will include prayers, a personal testimony, music and Lenten reflections of the season.



"Lent in a Box" for Families

Creating meaningful memories together

Beginning **Sunday, February 19**, families with children 10 and under can pick up their own personal "Lent in a Box" in the Commons Lobby. This box includes tangible activities (supplies provided), devotionals, scriptures, and hands-on prayer exercises each week for families to journey through Lent.

Families may also pick their box up on Wednesday nights during Fellowship Groups and in the Commons Lobby on Ash Wednesday. *ONE box per family please.*

For questions contact Holly Ascitutto at cell/text 609.273.7465 or hascitutto@fpcmoorestown.org.

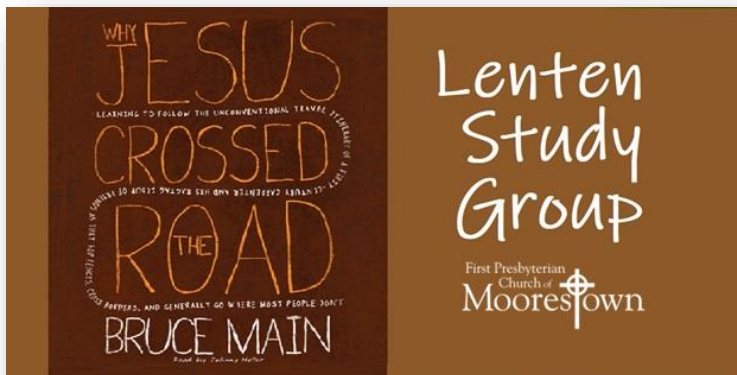
Sign Up: Church-wide Lenten Book Study

Read: “Why Jesus Crossed the Road”

For Lent 2023, our church-wide book study will be Dr. Bruce Main’s book, “Why Jesus Crossed the Road.” Our hope is that the book will challenge us to get out of our comfort zone and go to the people and places Jesus went.

- Are you interested in leading a Small Group? Please contact Wes Allen at wallen@fpcmoorestown.org or 856.235.1688, x101.
- [SIGN UP](#) for a Small Group on our event page, on the website, in the Commons Lobby, or right through your Church Center app.
- Books are available for purchase at the church (\$11) or [online](#).

Most groups begin meeting the week of February 26, following Ash Wednesday (February 22). We are preparing a Leader's Guide and a Participant's Guide. Please contact [Wes Allen](#) or [Alison Mackey](#) in the church office at 856.235.1688.



Lent Devotional: “Water and Spirit”

Purchase for \$4.00 at church

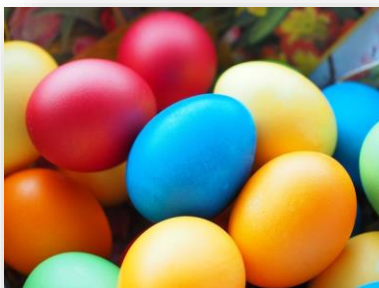
As a beautiful companion piece to the Lenten study, *Water and Spirit* provides daily devotions for each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Devotions begin with an evocative image and a brief passage from the Gospel of John. The writers then bring unique voices and pastoral wisdom to the texts with quotations to ponder, reflections, and prayers. You can purchase your copy online with Amazon, [any Christian bookseller](#) or through the church office, which has a limited quantity for \$4.00. Please reach out to [Alison Mackey](#) at 856.235.1688, Ext. 113.



Children's Easter Celebration

Saturday, April 1 ~ 10:30 am

The Children's Easter Celebration will be **Saturday, April 1** from 10:30-11:30 a.m., and OUTSIDE (weather permitting). Celebrate the joy of Easter with an Egg hunt for children ages 2-10! There is no charge; canned food for the food pantry as an entrance will be welcomed. If it rains, we will move inside. **Don't forget your basket!** We are looking for donations of candy and small toys for the event. Donate candies that are fun size, nut-free and



individually wrapped, small toys, stickers or tattoos that will fit in a standard size plastic egg. Please do NOT prefill eggs as the items are sorted by age. Drop off candy and toys at the church office by **Wednesday, March 15.**

Easter Flower Sales (\$15)

Orders Taken March 5, 12, 19

On Easter, congregation members may remember a loved one, honor an individual or recognize an occasion by purchasing Easter flowers (\$15) to be placed in our two worship spaces on Easter Sunday, April 9. Order forms will be available in *Connections* and online on **March 5, March 12** and **March 19**. Please mail your payment or drop in the church office or offering plate. Flowers may NOT be *purchased* online at this time. Order forms may be submitted online but payment must be separate. Can you help the deacons deliver to those who may have trouble coming to worship? Sign up on your order form. Orders and payment are due on or before **Sunday, March 19th**.

Palm Sunday Offering April 2

One Great Hour of Sharing

Typically received during the Season of Lent, this offering for [One Great Hour of Sharing](#) supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promotes development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assists in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Each works in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope. [Gifts may be made online](#) using our One Great Hour of Sharing drop down, and special pew envelopes for the offering will be available. In Sunday School, children will be given One Great Hour of Sharing “fish boxes” as a means for charitable monetary collections and giving during the weeks before Easter. The completed boxes will be collected during both Palm Sunday services on **April 2nd**.

Palm Sunday Choral Concert: April 2

Haydn's "Theresa" Mass ~ 7:30 pm

The West Jersey Chamber Symphony and Chorale and FPC Moorestown Adult Choir combine to perform one of the most radiant choral works of the classical era, Haydn's *Theresienmesse*. This work showcases the composer at his masterful best.

Tickets are \$28, \$20 for seniors, and children 18 and under are free. Tickets are available at <https://wjcms.org/concerts/> and may also be purchased at the door. The concert is at 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown.

For more information contact Joann Nawrocki at 609-417-2873.



Prayer Service Schedule

There will be NO virtual Thursday prayer service on Maundy Thursday, April 6.

Education Hour 9:45-10:45 am

Palm Sunday and Easter

Sunday, April 2 (Palm Sunday)

Adult Spiritual Formation meets

Children's Sunday School meets

Nursery care provided

Sunday, April 9 (Easter)

No Adult Spiritual Formation

No Children's Sunday School

Nursery care not provided

Holiday Office Schedule

On Good Friday April 7th, the church office will be closed at 1:00 pm. The campus will be CLOSED on Easter Monday April 10th.



Spring Recess Schedule

Fellowship Groups Easter Break

Wednesday, April 5

No Kingdom Kids, No Crossing Zone, No Family Dinner, No Middle School Youth Group

Sunday, April 9

No High School Bible Study (off site)

Wednesday, April 12

No Kingdom Kids, No Crossing Zone, No Family Dinner, No Middle School Youth Group

For choir schedules during spring break, contact Joel Krott at jkrott@fpcmoorestown.org or 856.235.1688, Ext. 109.

Maundy Thursday Worship

Thursday, April 6 ~ 7:00 pm

A poignant Maundy Thursday worship and communion service will be held in Miller Commons on **Thursday, April 6** at 7:00 pm and will also be available via live stream. Through drama, this worship commemorates the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples. Rev. Stuart Spencer preaches this meaningful worship experience.



Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

Friday, April 7 ~ 7:30 pm

"Tenebrae" is the Latin word meaning "darkness." The service of Tenebrae is characterized by a gradual extinguishing of candles and a "strepitus" or "loud noise" taking place in total darkness near the end of the service. Associate Pastor Rev. Wes Allen leads this service on Good Friday evening.

The story of the suffering and death of Jesus from John's gospel is divided into separate readings. After each segment of the story is read, a candle is extinguished. After the last reading, which confirms that Jesus had died on the cross, the last of the lit candles is extinguished or taken away, and a loud sound (*strepitus* in Latin) is made to convey the sense of total loss of God's presence and the effect of the death of Jesus on the universe. The final story of the burial is read in near darkness. Worshipers leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the celebration of the coming Resurrection.



Special Easter Giving

Easter is an opportunity to share our church's ministry through the lens of the cross and resurrection. Jesus gave everything for us, including his very life. Your Easter donations, given above your regular tithes and offering, support our programming and connection to the greater community.

Now more than ever, this support is critical as we face a significant shortfall in income for 2023. As shared at the annual meeting, Session has adopted a challenging budget for 2023. Every department is contending in real time with a decrease in its 2023 allocations from 2022.

Your gifts can help us navigate these waters. Donate easily from the Church Center app, online at www.fpcmoorestown.org, mail in your check or leave in the offering box at either worship service. Special Easter offering envelopes will be available in the Sanctuary pews, in Miller Commons and also in boxed envelope sets. Offerings will not be collected at Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday Tenebrae services.

