

**THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in the CITY OF NEW YORK
Pastoral Newsletter for March 2021**

THE SEASON OF LENT



Reading the Bible, by Gerritt Dou, c. 1645, Louvre Museum, Paris, France

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we approach the Second Sunday in Lent, I'm reminded that "Lent" comes from the Old English word for word "lengthening", as in the lengthening of the days as spring draws near. And even though Lent arrived so early this year, the days are indeed growing longer and, after some surprising snows, warmth seems to be creeping back into our lives.

So enjoy the light, enjoy the warmth! Take your Bible and Lenten devotional to the park. Or sit and read by the window at home, like the couple above. Remember that Jesus often snuck off to pray somewhere outdoors. So as you journey with Jesus this Lent, delight in the beauty of God's creation, giving thanks always to the God of the sun, moon and stars, of the trees and the streams and the mountains, of the dogs and cats and anteaters and aardvarks. And you - not especially, but certainly also, you!

One Great Hour of Sharing

The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

One Great Hour of Sharing is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world, and here are some of the ways OGHS helps:

OGHS gifts are helping Black Women's Blueprint, a survivor-led ministry, in addressing issues of trauma. Client-members support one another in working to end gender-based violence, and to heal the places where its impact is seen. This ministry also provides food and housing assistance, and addresses the critical and unmet needs for women and survivors of violence. Despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, Black Women's Blueprint continues to be out in the community addressing issues of trauma and providing things like food and housing assistance that people need in order to be whole.

Thirteen-year-old Trinity White Plume lives on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota where there is only one grocery store. Thanks to gifts from OGHS and partner organization Owe Aku, new garden projects put people in charge of their own food supply, nutrition, health and well-being. Trinity has learned to plant and tend the gardens, which include medicinal and ceremonial plants, and helps teach others to increase food security in their community. She says, "I want to learn my traditions so that I can keep them alive for the future generations." With our support, we believe that she indeed will continue to grow and make a difference.

Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing helps address the root causes of hunger in places around the world, and make a difference in the life of someone who deserves God's love and support; someone who deserves our love and support. Please give generously, for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot

You can give online at <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/oghs/> You will have the opportunity to designate Second Presbyterian as your church.

Or you can mail a check to the church (attn: Iza), and put One Great Hour in the memo line.

For more information, go to <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/oghs/>

**WOMEN'S PRESS COLLECTIVE PRESENTS
International Women's Day Celebration 2021
Saturday March 6, 1 PM**

All are welcome to join Women's Press Collective's celebration of International Women's Day which is virtual this year. WPC organizes for independent media and provides writing and publication resources for the community. This year's event, on women and the press, will be held on Saturday, March 6, at 1 p.m.

For details on how to join the Zoom meeting, call WPC at 718-543-5100 or contact Elaine Song, esong701@gmail.com

MARCH AT SPC

All worship and meetings continue on Zoom for the time being.

Sunday March 7: 10 AM Mini Sunday School; **10:15 AM** worship. The 3rd Sunday in Lent we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion. Bring bread and wine!

Sunday March 14, 10 AM Mini Sunday School; **10:15 AM** worship. **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS! "Spring ahead" before church!** The 4th Sunday of Lent will be a Prayer & Fellowship gathering *with* a Blessing of the Animals. So invite your pet to join us for worship. Feel free to have a photo of your creature available, in case they don't want to sit still!

Sunday March 21: 10 AM Mini Sunday School; **10:15 AM** worship. The 5th Sunday in Lent is Justice Advocacy Sunday in the PCUSA, and our worship service will focus on issues of justice.

Wednesday March 24, 12 noon: Zoom Monthly Prayer Meeting. Contact Vivian, Karen or Lindsay for details.

Sunday March 28: 10 AM Mini Sunday School; **10:15 AM** worship. This is Palm/Passion Sunday, and the beginning of Holy Week. Details to come!

**WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY
10:15 AM Zoom Worship
(10 AM mini Sunday School for children!)**

For the Zoom link or dial in number, please contact Virginia Danner, Office Manager, Tuesdays – Fridays, at: (347) 918-7914, vdanner@secondpresbyteriannyc.org

A website for clergywomen that I regularly browse referred to last Sunday as "The First, or the 52nd, Sunday in Lent" - an expression of the sense that this past year has sometimes seemed like one long Lenten season; one long slog through the wilderness. I hope you haven't felt alone on the journey, that you felt your church with you; that you felt, above all, Jesus with you. But still...

So I leave you today with a poem by Mary Oliver that feels, this year especially, just right for Lent. We recently surpassed the unimaginable number of 500,000 US deaths from Covid-19; 2,528, 000 deaths worldwide. We have suffered various losses in the church and in our families and communities, and we have witnessed more - so many kinds of losses. It has been a heartbreaking year. And yet, as Oliver suggests, our hearts may break apart, but they can also break open.

*Here is a story to break your heart.
Are you willing?
This winter
the loons came to our harbor
and died, one by one,
of nothing we could see.
A friend told me of one on the shore
that lifted its head and opened
the elegant beak and cried out
in the long, sweet savoring of its life
which, if you have heard it,
you know is a sacred thing,
and for which, if you have not heard it,
you had better hurry to where
they still sing.
And, believe me, tell no one
just where that is.
The next morning
this loon, speckled
and iridescent and with a plan
to fly home
to some hidden lake,
was dead on the shore.
I tell you this
to break your heart,
by which I mean only
that it break open and never close again
to the rest of the world.*

~ "Lead" by Mary Oliver, in *New and Selected Poems, Vol. 2*, Beacon Press

May your heart be open, and may God be with you until we meet again.
love and light,
Rev. Lindsay

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