



The Messenger

Osceola Presbyterian Church

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Dear Friends,

Many people do not appreciate Lent because they do not fully understand its meaning. It comes too soon after Christmas for some. We want to dwell on angels, gifts and the sweet little baby. But nobody stays in Bethlehem not even God. Jesus grows and turns his face to Jerusalem (Luke 9: 51).

Like Advent, Lent is a time of preparation. Historically it is a time for new converts to prepare for baptism. The forty days prior to Easter were set aside for fasting, prayer, and self-examination. However, Sundays were treated as “Little Easters” when the fast and penance could be set aside to celebrate Jesus’ victory.

The high point of the week for Christians is Sunday. That is the day we set aside for rest, refreshment and the worship and enjoyment of God our Creator. The early church chose Sunday because it was the day of resurrection. Therefore, Easter is the Sunday of all Sundays, the high point of the Christian year. It is on this day that we as Christians renew and celebrate our identity as “Easter people.”

As Easter people, we are people of the Resurrection, the people “between times” between the time that Christ came and the time he will come again. Our lives cannot be the same after we accept what God did for us on the cross and after we confess the resurrection.

Lent is also a time of waiting. We wait for the day when Christ rose from the grave. As we meditate during Lent, let us anticipate that wondrous day, that day of divine mystery, Easter Sunday, the holiest day of the Christian calendar.

Christ rose and triumphed over evil and death. During these trying times, hold on to the hope of the resurrection: “Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.” Alleluia! Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!

The peace of Christ be with you,

Bobbie

Pancakes, bacon and sausage, oh my!

Osceola's pancake breakfast on Saturday, March 1, raised over \$1,000 to benefit the church.



Come Learn About Osceola

Want to know more about Osceola Presbyterian Church? Join Pastor Bobbie Sunday, March 23, 11:15 a.m. in the conference room. We will learn about the church, and about the different ways to be involved. A light lunch will be provided. It will be a fun time. Email pastorosceola@gmail.com or call the church office, 908-276-5300 to sign up or if you have with any questions about the event.

Weekly Lenten Soup and Services

Our weekly Lenten services this year will focus on “The Seven Last Words of Christ.” The series will began on Ash Wednesday, March 5 and continue each week through Holy Week. “Soup and Fellowship” will be shared in Fellowship Hall at 6:15 p.m. before we head into the Sanctuary for our Lenten devotions at 7. Join us as we journey through the meaningful season of Lent. The Lenten calendar in this Messenger lists dates and times for each week and lesson. Pastor Bobbie and Alice Dietze will share the leadership each week.

Tenebrae Service, April 17

The word “Tenebrae” is Latin for “shadows” or “darkness.” It is a service of extinguishing candles, one after the other, as the events of Holy Week unfold. The final candle is the Christ candle, which is not extinguished but instead is removed from the church until Easter Sunday.

The term “Maundy” comes from the Latin phrase “mandatum novum” which means “new commandment,” and thus Maundy Thursday celebrates the new commandment that Jesus gave at the Last Supper, “Do this in remembrance of me.”

Our Tenebrae service will be held in the narthex gathered together at tables as Jesus and the disciples were that night so long ago. join us, Maundy Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Spirituality Center – Good Friday-April 18

On Good Friday, April 18, Osceola church will be set up as a Spirituality Center. A Spirituality Center is a place set apart to experience and experiment with ancient spiritual practices and contemporary resources for spiritual exploration and encounter with God. Like worship, it is a place for the head and the heart. It is a sacred space, holy ground and a time set apart. Those who come to the Center are invited to be comfortable, to rest and renew, to pray, to experiment with different spiritual disciplines such as writing prayers, listening to music while reading prayers, movement prayers and Biblical passages or praying the labyrinth.

The Spirituality Center is self-guided and self-paced. It is offered to everyone as a place to come and contemplate the meaning of Christ’s sacrifice on one’s life. The Center will be available Good Friday, April 18, 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Deacons at Work

The Deacons continue to look for ways to nourish our church family. We ask the congregation to help us by making us aware of any specific needs you may have yourself or know of for another member.

Please check out the sign-up sheets on the Deacons' bulletin board if you are willing to provide a ride or meal for a church member. As specific needs arise, a Deacon will reach out to coordinate the details.



If anyone is interested in assisting with Fellowship Hour (helping make coffee, plating cookies, etc.), please speak to Jimmy Dietze or any Deacon.

The Deacons' Lenten Food Drive continues throughout Lent. Suggested items for the coming weeks are:

- Wednesday, March 19 / Sunday, March 23 – GRAPE JELLY: Jesus shared wine with his disciples, telling them it was his blood shed for them.
- Wednesday, March 26 / Sunday, March 30 – OLIVES: Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane which was an olive garden.
- Wednesday, April 2 / Sunday, April 6 – SALAD DRESSING: While hanging on the cross, Jesus said, "I thirst" and the soldiers mocked him and offered him vinegar.
- Wednesday, April 9/Sunday, April 13 – OIL: In Jesus' time, oil was used to anoint kings, special dinner guests and bodies for burial.

Save the Date

The Mission Commission is excited to announce this year's Rise Against Hunger meal-packing event scheduled for World Communion Sunday, Oct. 5. We will come back together to pack more than 10,000 meals over the course of a couple of hours. As always, these meals will be sent to hunger-stricken areas of the world that will be fed in both body and spirit because of our work.

Last year was our biggest fundraising year yet and we hope to continue that momentum!

Please also mark your calendars for the following events:

Friendly's

We will be hosting a series of fundraisers in partnership with Friendly's on Raritan Road in Clark again this year, starting in May. We hope you will join us for nights of fundraising and fellowship!

Clothing Drive Fundraiser

While you're doing your "spring cleaning," keep us in mind. On Saturday, Sept. 20, a donation truck from A&E Clothing Corp. will be coming to the church to collect donated clothing items. The company will donate money back to us in support of Rise Against Hunger for each bag donated. (Please note: **We cannot accept donated items early** – we don't have space to store them)

Sunday School Update

In preparation for Lent, the Sunday School students helped make centerpieces for Osceola's Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast. Now that Lent is here, our lessons are especially focused on the events leading up to Holy Week. They are helping collect food for the Deacons' Food Drive and will be making special Easter crafts for the Food Pantry's Easter distribution.



As we enter Holy Week, the children will participate in the "palm procession" during Palm Sunday worship. There will be NO Sunday School classes on Easter Sunday, April 20th but classes will resume on April 27th when we will rejoice that our Lord has risen from the dead!

Youth Group goes bowling

Our Youth Group had a “striking” time when we went bowling, but watch your fingers when the snacks arrive!



We had a Youth Group meeting on “Fat Tuesday” so we had a chance to discuss the traditions on the day before Lent begins and then had some “pancake races” and doughnuts and hot cross buns for snacks!

The youth will be preparing Easter treat bags and Easter cards for our Food Pantry families and some of our youth will be assisting with the Easter Sunrise Service.

Our next scheduled meetings will be April 8 and April 29.

Food Pantry Update



Our Food Pantry has received some unexpected donations recently from the community. We received the donations from 3 “Souper Bowl” collections from Brunner Elementary School (Scotch Plains), Valley Road School (Clark), and L’Oreal’s Clark office. We also received the donations from Daunno Realty’s holiday food drive. The Deacons are also holding a Lenten Food Drive with suggested items that reflect the Lenten theme.

February’s distribution included health items such as shampoo, conditioner, soaps, toothpaste, and tissues. March will be our Easter distribution that will include some “holiday fixin’s” and ShopRite gift cards. We will also include Easter crafts, cards and treat bags from our Sunday School classes and Youth Group. We know this will bring some Easter joy to all of our families!

Confirmation Class Update



Our confirmation class has been continuing their classes in preparation for Confirmation Sunday on April 27th. They have also been helping to organize some of the church’s historical information that has been piling up in the Conference Room. In addition to providing a service to the church, the confirmands have been learning a few things about Osceola’s history. Help support our future members with your support and prayers!

Lenten Services

Our weekly Lenten services this year focuses on “The Seven Last Words of Christ.” Soup and fellowship are shared in Fellowship Hall before everyone meets in the Sanctuary for a special service. The Lenten journey continues as we enter Holy Week with special services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. A complete calendar of events is included in this Messenger.



OPC website now has on-line giving for donations

OPC embraces “tech” of the 21st century!

The 21st century is the current century in the Gregorian calendar, it began on January 1, 2001 and will end December 31, 2100.

The term "21st century" may refer to 21st century skills, which are a set of skills that are considered important in the modern world.



These skills include:



- **Flexibility:** The ability to adapt plans when needed
- **Leadership:** The ability to motivate a team to achieve a goal
- **Initiative:** The ability to start projects and plans on one's own
- **Productivity:** The ability to remain efficient in a world of distractions
- **Social skills:** The ability to meet & network with others for mutual benefit

Let's use those skills to build up Osceola Presbyterian Church! Remember, go to our website <https://www.osceolapresbyterianchurch.com/> for on-line giving via credit card or Google Pay.



Give

<h3>BY MAIL</h3> <p>Osceola Presbyterian Church 1689 Raritan Road Clark, NJ 07066</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every gift counts!• Your contribution matters! <p>Thank you!</p> <hr/>	<h3>YOUR TIME</h3> <p>Share your talents with us! Use your skills to help others!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sing the choir or play an instrument.• Lead a Bible study or a devotion.• Help with planning or maintenance.• Send card, visit shut-ins with the Deacons.• Mission events like Bible Against Hunger. <hr/>	<h3>DONATIONS</h3> <p>Provide for the Food Pantry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needed non-perishable food items• Volunteer with sorting and monthly food distribution <p>Support Our Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friendly's FUNraising• Clothing Drive• Yard Sale <p><i>Check Facebook or call office to plan a drop-off.</i></p> <hr/>	<h3>ONLINE</h3> <p>Online giving is available using credit card and Google Pay.</p> <p>Donate</p> <p>Thank you!</p> <hr/>
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LENTEN CALENDAR

- March 5 – Ash Wednesday Service – 7:00 p.m.**
"Father, forgive them for they know not" Luke 23:33-34
Service led by Rev. Roberta Arrowsmith, with special music by the Chancel Choir
- March 12 – Lenten Soup Supper – 6:15 p.m.**
Wednesday Evening Lenten Program - 7:00 p.m.
"Today you will be in Paradise with me." Luke 23:39-43
- March 19 – Lenten Soup Supper – 6:15 p.m.**
Wednesday Evening Lenten Program - 7:00 p.m.
"Woman, here is your son" John 19:25-27
- March 26 – Lenten Soup Supper – 6:15 p.m.**
Wednesday Evening Lenten Program - 7:00 p.m.
"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mark 15:33-34 (Psalm 22)
- April 2 – Lenten Soup Supper – 6:15 p.m.**
Wednesday Evening Lenten Program – 7:00 p.m.
"I thirst." John 19:28
- April 9 - Lenten Soup Supper – 6:15 p.m.**
Wednesday Evening Lenten Program – 7:00 p.m.
"It is finished" John 19:29-30
- April 18 - Maundy Thursday Service - 7:00 p.m.**
"Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit" Luke 23:46
Service led by the Rev. Roberta Arrowsmith, including Communion
- April 18 – Good Friday - 2-5:00 p.m.**
The Spirituality Center is self-guided and self-paced. It is offered to everyone as a place to come and contemplate the meaning of Christ's sacrifice on one's life. The sanctuary will be open for private prayer.
- April 20- Easter Sunday**
Sunrise Service - 6:30 a.m.
Service led by Osceola's youth and young adults, followed by breakfast
- Easter Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.**
Service includes special music by the Chancel Choir, Holy Communion, and an uplifting Easter message by the Rev. Roberta Arrowsmith