



The Messenger

Osceola Presbyterian Church

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February 2025

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).

Ash Wednesday, March 5th, is the beginning for Lent. 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.

During Lent we will once again have a journal/prayer devotional booklet during this time of reflection and completion. This year’s booklet is titled, “I Am.” It focuses on “I am” passages throughout the Bible.

On Good Friday, the Narthex 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.

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.”*

The peace of Christ be with you,

Pastor Bobbie

Pancakes, bacon and sausage, oh my!



Get ready! Our Pancake Breakfast is just around the corner on Saturday, March 1 from 9 AM to 11 AM. The event will be held in Fellowship Hall and be open to the public. Tickets will be needed.

With the theme of Mardi Gras, French for Fat Tuesday, where rich foods are eaten in preparation for the fasting season of Lent, we'll be serving up a hearty breakfast with all the fixin's.

Advanced ticket prices are: Adults: \$10; Children under 10: \$5 and Children under 3: free. Tickets purchased at the door will be: Adults: \$12; Children under 10: \$7 and Children under 3: free.

You can buy tickets on Osceola's website: <https://bit.ly/OPC-pancake>

Deacons need your help

Osceola's Deacons are looking for ways to fulfill their role in nurturing and tending to the needs of our congregation. We hope our church members will consider ways to help. Three sign-up sheets will soon be posted on the bulletin board near the Narthex.

- **Meal Providers** – sign-up if you would be willing to be contacted to provide a meal for someone in our congregation. We would let you know the specifics when you are called. Remember, meals may be homemade or purchased!
- **Drivers** – sign-up if you would be willing to provide transportation for someone who may need a ride to church, a doctor's visit, etc. We would contact you when a request is made known to us.
- **Needs** – this sheet would allow church members to make us aware of specific needs you or someone in our church family has. We cannot guarantee results but would try to help meet these needs.

Please prayerfully consider ways that you may help us “tend to the flock”!

Notes from Session

- The Clerk completed the Annual Statistical Report and submitted it to the PC(USA);

currently we have 62 members.

- The Congregation and Corporation of Osceola Presbyterian Church are called to meet on Sunday, February 23, 2025 immediately following worship in the Sanctuary for the purpose of accepting the Annual Report, and to receive the 2025 operating budget.

By Order of the Session

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee (Carol Riddlestorffer, Chair; Liz Coffey-Dawe, Amy Green, Kathy Terzo, Shirley Augenstein, Samantha Leff and Francesca Germano) will begin their work next month, to fill open positions for officers for the 2025-2026 term. We ask each member of the congregation to prayerfully consider how they will serve the Lord at Osceola in the coming year.

Weekly Lenten Soup and Services

Our weekly Lenten services this year will focus on “The Seven Last Words of Christ.” The series will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 5 at 7:00 p.m. and continue each week through Holy Week. Beginning March 12, “Soup and Fellowship” will be shared in Fellowship Hall at 6:15 p.m. before we head into the Sanctuary for our Lenten devotions. 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, 2025

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, 2025

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.

Sunday School Update



Our Sunday School classes completed their study of Old Testament figures who were saved. Focusing on John 3:17, we continue learning how God saves His people through Jesus. In keeping with Jesus' teachings of love, the students made Valentine cards to be included the Deacons' Valentine baskets to some of our church members.

The classes sponsored the "Super Bowl" Noise Offering on February 16th. The students chose the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance California Wildfire Relief fund to receive the offering. Thanks to the mission efforts of our young people, \$149.55 is being sent to help those impacted by the devastating fires.

Lent will begin soon and the students will also be donating specific food items to the Food Pantry to assist with the Easter food distribution.

Youth Group learns about Christian love



Youth Group spent time this month focusing on Christian “love.” We enjoyed some heart-themed games and spread some love by sorting donations for the Food Pantry. On February 18th, the youth went bowling and “scored” some more fun. Next up is the annual Youth Lock-in from February 21st-February 22nd. This year’s theme is “God as Made Each of Us Unique” and there is plenty of time for devotions, games, snacks, fun, and (maybe) a little sleep! Watch Osceola’s Facebook page for photos from this exciting and exhausting event.

Our next scheduled meeting will be our “Fat Tuesday” evening on March 4th and on March 18th.

Daylight Saving Time

Don’t forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour sometime before going to bed on Saturday, March 8th so you won’t miss church on Sunday, March 9th!



Food Pantry Update



Our

Food Pantry shelves have been well-stocked this winter! There was a wonderful response to our January Food Collection as our congregation members brought in a steady flow of donations and community members were filling the drop-off box in the parking lot. We received Super Bowl food drive donations from Brunner Elementary School (Scotch Plains) and Valley Road School (Clark). The Key Club from ALJ High School and an Edison youth program SEWA also dropped off their food collections. So many blessings!!

Items needed:

Canned fruit	Paper products
Pasta Sauce	Jelly
Cleaning products	Laundry detergent

New Confirmation Class



A new Confirmation Class has begun meeting at Osceola. Our three confirmands (Brooklyn Germano, C.J. McCann, and Grace Walton) have begun their studies and will be working on several projects around the church. Please keep these young people in your prayers and feel free to talk to them and offer your support!

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