



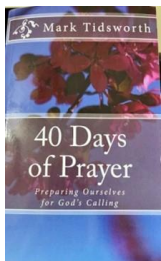
SOUNDINGS

AUGUST 2023

40 DAYS OF PRAYER

As we all know, our church is in a time of discernment. Decisions need to be made about where we are going and how we see ourselves as CHURCH. How can we be the church God wants us to be, and how can we best serve our members and the community?

To aid in this effort of discernment, we offer to our members and friends a 40-day prayer outreach. It comes from a book by Mark Tidsworth, entitled *40 Days of Prayer – Preparing Ourselves for God’s Calling*.



From Monday through Friday you have been receiving a link in your email - a short video with a reading from the Bible, time to reflect on God’s message to you, and a question for reflection during the day.

If you have not been receiving the daily email, please contact the church office and we will add you to the mailing.

All the videos can be watched (or re-watched) on YouTube.



On Sunday, August 27, let’s do lunch! Instead of our regular coffee hour, we’ll have sandwiches, salad and dessert. If able, you can bring something simple to share. Sign up outside the church office. Contact Pat Koefoed with questions: pkoefoed@yahoo.com.

MEETING REMINDERS

Session meets Thursday, August 3 at 5:30pm

The **Mission Team** meets Wednesday, August 23 at 1pm

USHERS, COUNTERS, LITURGISTS

Ushers greet worshipers, distribute bulletins, and take the offering. Liturgists help lead the service by reading the scriptures, and leading the congregation in the call to worship and prayer of confession. Counters come to the church during the week to count the offering and make the bank deposit.

If you would like to serve in one (or more) of these roles, please contact the church office for more information.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Hello Friends.

I am writing this from the deck of our ramshackle yet charming rental in Wellfleet, MA located near the tip of Cape Cod. Angie and I consider ourselves fortunate – in many respects – but particularly because we have always vacationed with our three daughters and their families. And like all families, while we don't always agree on just what to do on a given day, or where to have an evening meal, or what game to play after dinner, we somehow manage to come to a consensus and do it together. We laugh a lot, tell stories about our latest adventures, or in my case tell a tale from long ago which they have heard multiple times. We share the frustrations about our workplaces, tell of an exciting new opportunity, and generally have a great time. Well, as I said, we consider ourselves fortunate, very fortunate indeed.

Church congregations are very much like families, or should be. Over time, we develop deep and lasting friendships based on respect and trust. It is the nature of a church family to share our most joyous life moments as well as comfort each other in the midst of personal tragedies. We work together to accomplish specific objectives; we talk and laugh together at coffee hours and church dinners; we worship together in the presence of our Creator; and we pray together in thanksgiving and in seeking divine intervention in our lives.

And as with most families, we even disagree from time to time - can you believe that?! What local mission should we support, or how can we better reach out to our community, or how can we enhance the quality of our worship experience, or how can we improve the utilization of our resources. Our opinions on these issues and many others can seem at times to be bordering on polar opposites. However, Jesus is counting on us to find a consensus and move forward rather than retreat in anger, frustration or disappointment. For we are a family – formed and united by our common love for Jesus Christ and our commitment to the mission that Jesus has directed us to undertake. May God continue to bless this family for many years in the future.

-Larry Van Hise, Pastor

A MESSAGE FROM SESSION

Session did not meet in person in July, but has been busy with follow-up from the June meeting:

Elders Bill Schroeber, Jim Middendorf and Noralee Manzek conducted an in-house audit of 2022. Their report is included below.

New Mover postcards were designed, and the first mailing will be in late July. These will go to all people moving into Easton, Forks and Palmer, either by purchasing a house or renting an apartment.

Session approved the temporary use of the kitchen by Virella's Bakery due to recent water damage to the kitchen they were renting on Northampton Street. Session is happy to lend a hand to our neighbor.

With Session approval, Susan Mackay is helping to plan an LGBTQ Day of Awareness proposed by Trinity Episcopal Church. Other downtown churches are expected to participate. It will be an all-day event held at First Presbyterian Church of Easton on Saturday, September 30. This free event will include a keynote speaker and several workshops. Lunch will be served. This is a free event, and participating churches are asked to supply food including soups, bread and dessert. More details to follow.

Session will soon have a full complement of nine members following the July 16th congregational meeting vote to elect Candy Gulotta as a new Session member and to extend Darcel Hayes-Bridges, and Nancy Udut's terms.

Pastor Larry proposed a three-to-four-hour retreat in early September for Session members to meet, discuss, and brainstorm about the future of FPCE. No date set yet.

The next Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 3 at 5:30pm. And just a reminder, any member can attend a Session meeting.

The Session

Class of 2024

Nancy Udut
Darcel Hayes-Bridges
Candy Gulotta

Class of 2025

Susan Mackay

Class of 2026

Bill Bartlett
Jim Middendorf
Bill Schroeher
Noralee Manzek
Bud Martin

AUDIT

Memorandum

To: Members of the Session

From: Bill Schroeher, Noralee Manzek and Jim Middendorf

Date July 17, 2023

We were requested to review the financial performance and condition of the church as of December 31, 2022, an internal review in order to save the cost of an outside audit or review by a Certified Public accounting firm. Our objective was to determine if our internal controls were adequate to safeguard the financial condition of the church.

We met with Susan Mackay, Treasurer, and Jonathan Acheson, Office Administrator, to review the operating procedures employed from the receipt of funds to the disbursements. We learned the following:

Some donations are made online through the Presbyterian Foundation which provides a fee-based online service to churches. Donations are aggregated and remitted monthly by a direct deposit to the checking account of the church along with an email verifying the donor and the purpose of the gift. Another method of contributing is through checks remitted by banks or financial advisers directly to the church by mail.

These checks are set aside by the Office Administrator and provided to the Counters, along with donations currently made through the Donation Box. There are a minimum of two counters who open the box and the mailed envelopes. One counter opens the envelope and identifies the donor, amount, and check number, while the second counter records it on a form identifying the gift as either a pledged or unpledged donation for the General Fund or the Capital Fund, as well as any specific application. The counters then reverse roles to verify the information providing a dual control. Income from the parking lot fees is received by the Administrator who provides a receipt for payment in a receipt register and prepares a summary report for the Treasurer and the Counters.

The Session will consider at its August meeting returning to collection plate usage now that Covid is not the pressing issue. The continuation of the Donation Box will be considered. Procedures for the ushers must be reviewed and/or established as there is limited key access to the secured closet.

The disbursement of funds is reviewed by examination of the reconciliation of the checking account to the bookkeeping financial reports done on a monthly basis by an Elder, usually the Stewardship/Finance Team chair. Deposits are verified from the bank statement to the financial statement. All disbursements are verified by invoices or reimbursement forms that identify the purpose or purchase. The reconciliations were correct through the end of fiscal 2022.

We conclude that statements fairly represent the financial condition of the church.

DEACON UPDATE

Your Board of Deacons continues to serve our church family through the summer months, providing coffee hour fellowship following worship services and keeping in touch with our church family through visits, cards, and phone calls. Don't forget to check out the jars of Deacon Honey available during coffee hour, and be sure to mark your calendars for our upcoming Progressive "Everything-But-The-Dinner" Event on Friday, September 23, co-sponsored by the Mission Team!

PROGRESSIVE DINNER... WITHOUT THE DINNER!

No typo! Progressive dinner without dinner...! Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 23rd at 5 pm! Step out of your comfort zone for some great food and drinks, good company, a few laughs and just an all-out nice Saturday Evening! We will start with appetizers and drinks at the home of Nancy & Mike Udut (51 Edinburgh Drive, Easton) and then go to the home of Ruthann Arras (3345 Bridlepath Road, Easton) for dessert and coffee. The sign-up sheet will be available later in August. Hope to see you on the 23rd!

COFFEE HOUR

Deacons will be hosting the weekly coffee hour after worship, so that we can all enjoy some goodies and fellowship together. If you'd like to be a helper with a Deacon in a future coffee hour, please let Ruthann Arras know.

HELLO, HOW ARE YOU?

Every church family has a Deacon! Deacons will be calling members to chat, and share joys and concerns. You can expect a monthly or bi-monthly phone call from your Deacon.

DEACON HONEY

Your sweet tooth will be happy that the Deacons are providing local Heinsohn honey at coffee hour for a donation of \$8.00 per 1-pound jar. Check your cupboard to see if you're running low!

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

SUMMER MUSIC

The FPCE Choir and Handbell Choir are on hiatus for the summer, but we have lots of special music lined up for summer Sundays! Our Chancel Choir will return to worship on September 10.

THANK YOU!

A special thank you to Bud Martin who has been playing the organ and piano on Sundays for Gloria Snyder as she recovers from wrist surgery.

ONLINE WORSHIP

Our services are streamed live on our Facebook page - [EastonFPC](#) - at 10:30am Sunday. The recording of the live worship is posted each Sunday by 12:30pm- on our website: <https://eastonfpc.org/online-worship> and YouTube channel is [Easton First Presbyterian Church](#).

MISSION



BLESSING BOX

The Blessing Box one of our many Local Missions! The Box is filled because of you 🙌, whether one can of tuna, silverware, money or a week's supply of food, the Blessing Box is there because you care!

The sign-up is outside of the church office, for a week or day; or drop food directly into the Blessing Box if you are coming to town. Let's keep this beautiful, very needed community mission going and to do that we need your continued help!

-Mission Team

TRAVELING?

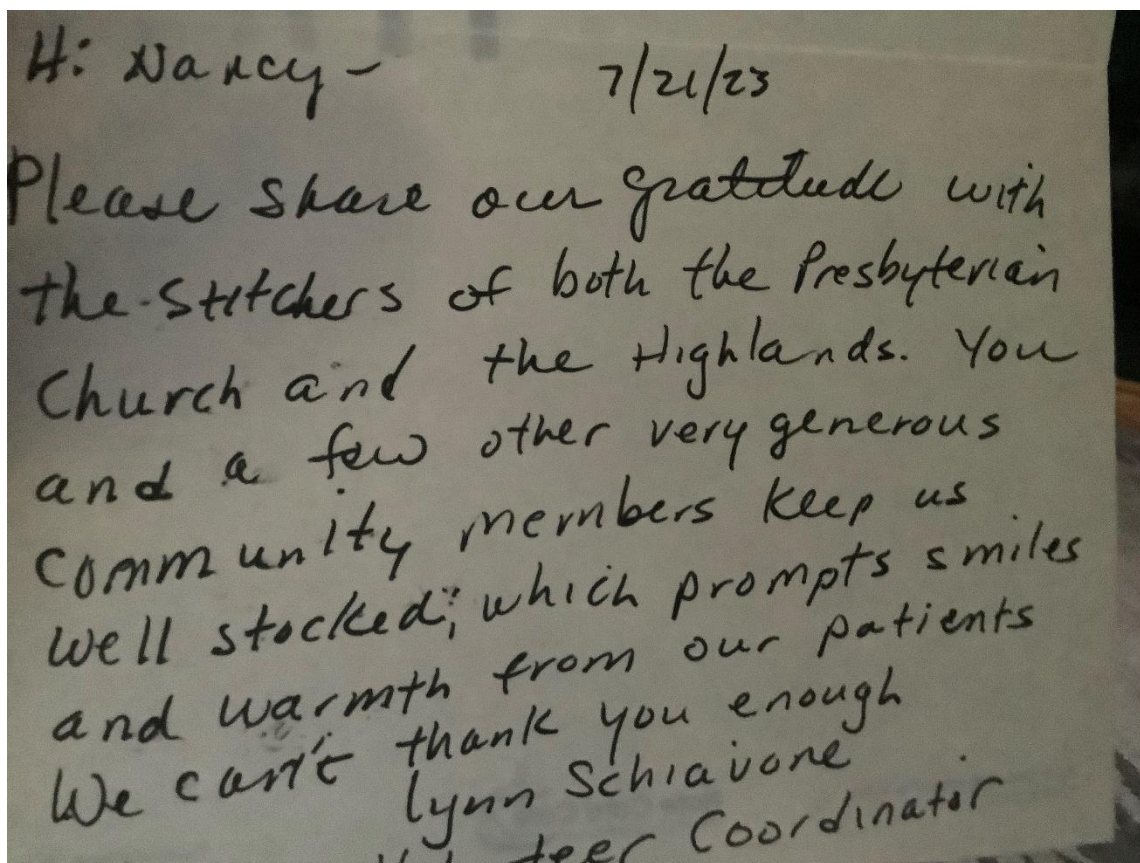
Traveling this summer? Please take the small soaps, shampoos, creams, etc. that you do not use and leave at church (Mission Team Mailbox) for the Blessing Box. It's another way we are able to help those in need without really taxing our budgets! Thanks for remembering those in need.

PASTA SUNDAY

Sunday, August 6, is Pasta Sunday! We'll accept your donations of canned, microwavable, or dry pasta until Tuesday, August 8 at 12pm, when they will be delivered to ProJeCt's food pantry. Thank you!

STITCHERS, A.K.A. SHAWL MINISTRY

We have yarn, we have needles, but we do not have enough stitchers....do you want to make a lap robe for Hospice or a baby item for newborns, just speak up! Oh, you haven't stitched in a while or don't know how to? Well, just give a shout and we'll help you get started. Contact Nancy Udut, naomiudut@yahoo.com.



THANK YOU!

St. Johns would like to THANK all those individuals and local businesses who contributed both monetarily/ gift cards and with clothing/household items to the victims of the Ferry Street Fires. Generous donations have poured in from all over the community since the tragedy and shows how truly blessed we are to live in a city like this. St. John's feels that we have done our part in the collection effort and are ceasing collection of both money and clothing/household items. Please direct your gifts to other local Easton charities who can continue to help those in need.

- God Bless.

Melissa Dean, Administrative Assistant, St. John's Lutheran Church



Right now, the Third Street Alliance is preparing for our annual backpack giveaway event called No Child Left Behind. Through this event, we provide free backpacks to children in the local area to help prepare them for the upcoming school year.

As many of us know and have experienced, preparing for back-to-school time can be very costly and many families in the area struggle to provide supplies to their children. Last year we were fortunate enough to give away **500 backpacks** that not only instilled confidence and readiness in the children who received them, but also provided much needed financial relief to their families.

This year we are striving to collect just as many backpacks and school supplies as before and we could really use your help! Collection numbers are down, and we want to make sure we can meet demand. Would you join in to help us meet our goal by donating item(s) from our list?

We are collecting the following items:

- Backpacks
- Lunch Boxes
- Reusable Water Bottles
- Crayons/Markers
- Glue Sticks

We have a donation box located in the front vestibule of our building, located at 41 North Third Street, Easton, PA 18042, where donations can be dropped off as well.

Thank you again for all of the support that you have given us and thank you for your consideration in supporting us once more through contributing to this important community event.

FAITH FORMATION AND FELLOWSHIP

BRUNCH BUNCH

Brunch Bunch will be going to Longhorn Steakhouse, 3784 Dryland Way, Easton on Sunday, August 13. Please let Ruthann Arras know by Friday, August 11 if you are coming. Of course, if you have a last-minute change of plans, we'll do our best to accommodate you. All are welcome!

BUILDING USE – RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP

We are pleased to have Recovery Partnership, a community drop-in center, renting Legacy Hall on a temporary basis, which will continue through August. They will be in our building 10am to 4pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

BUILDING USE - VIRELLA'S SWEETS AND TREATS

We are assisting Virella's Sweets and Treats by hosting them in our kitchen, as their storefront was damaged by heavy rain. They will be using the kitchen periodically for the next several weeks.

DISCUSSION ON CHURCH HISTORY

A discussion on the early history of Congregational and Presbyterian churches in the Middle Atlantic states, to be led by Rick Taylor, is now scheduled for Sunday October 1, after Church, Wednesday October 4 at 10:30am, and Sunday, October 29, after church. All are welcome. Free copies of the study book are available in the church office. Reading suggestions are pages 11 to 35 for the first session, and pages 35 to 62 for the second session.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



August 3	John Charlton
August 10	Mercy Barrow
August 15	Joshua Charlton
August 16	Pat Koefoed
August 16	Joe Manzek
August 19	Diane Meyers
August 25	Ronald Udut
August 27	Rodney Bridges
August 28	Claire Cole

PRAYERS

We pray for...

Our church, its leaders, staff, members and friends as we navigate a significant financial crisis.

All who grieve for the loss of loved ones.

Elizabeth Campbell and the Becker-Campbell family as Elizabeth recovers from surgery.

Gloria Snyder, as she recovers from a broken wrist.

Peg Opthof, as she recovers from surgery on her wrist, and her recovery from a fall in her home.

Natalie Hoff, who was hospitalized.

Members addressing ongoing medical concerns, including Victoria Opthof-Cordaro.

All those who live with dementia and their care givers.

For neighbors near and far recovering from natural disasters and extreme weather.

Peace and goodwill for all God's children, especially in places of war and conflict.

Victims of gun violence and acts of hate.

Those who suffer from mental illness.

For injustice in our nation and world, that people of goodwill might work together for the greater good.

Prayers can be sent to office@eastonfpc.org, please include "prayer list" in the subject line.



A FUNDRAISER FOR



**THE 80'S
TO DEATH**



**Murder Mystery Dinner
& TRICKY TRAY**

**SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 23**

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTRY CLUB
5 PM - 9 PM
DOORS OPEN AT: 4 PM
TICKET: \$65 PP
\$55 BEFORE 8/23/23**



**MORE INFORMATION:
610.905.7869**

www.eastonareaneighborhoodcenter.org