



First Presbyterian  
CHURCH OF EASTON

# SOUNDINGS

February 2023

**Sunday, February 12**

Simple Church  
Souper Bowl Sunday event, 12pm

**Tuesday, February 14**

Property Team meeting, 7pm

**Sunday, February 19**

Deacons' meeting after service

**Monday, February 20**

Presidents' Day; office closed

**Tuesday, February 21**

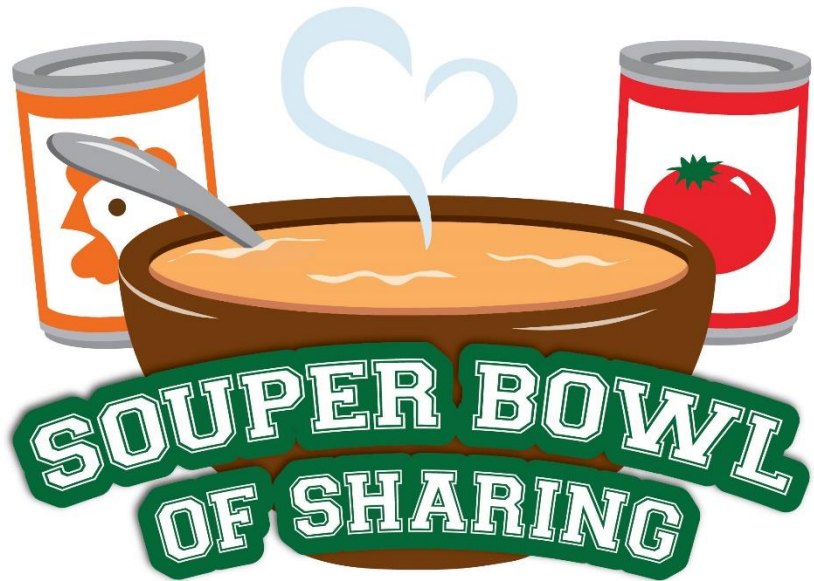
Session, 7pm

**Wednesday, February 22**

Ash Wednesday Service  
5:30pm-6:30pm

**Sunday, February 26**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent  
Session 1 of Lenten Bible Study



**Join us for this free soup and bread lunch at  
the church on Sunday, February 12  
from 12 noon to 2pm.**

**Support the Blessing Box by bringing  
donations of canned soup, ready-to-eat  
pasta, or other non-perishable foods. We  
are also in need of can openers to put in  
the Blessing Box.**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTON

333 Spring Garden St.

Easton, PA 18042

610-253-3579

[www.eastonfpc.org](http://www.eastonfpc.org)

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

*Who will separate us from the love of Christ?  
Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?*

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- *Romans 8:35 and 38*

God loves you.

If you want a Valentine's Day message, it is that simple.

Love is a term we like to throw around a great deal. But love is far from a superficial feeling. Psychologists and researchers of the human condition have long noted that humans need to be loved. It is said that for a child to thrive, they need just one other soul who clearly loves them. Love can make all the difference in someone's life. It is profoundly important that each person know that they are worthy of love.

A central message of our faith is that God loves us. We find our worth in knowing we are loved. God, the being who created all that is. God, the force and presence behind what is good. Our Creator, Almighty Father, our Higher Power is not just aware of us. We followers of Jesus have the audacity to say - God loves me. God did not just create humanity on a whim. God does not watch human struggles and progress as a detached observer. God cares about each human life. God is invested in our well-being. We know this most clearly because of Jesus. The life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus tell us that God could not stay away from our human brokenness. God came close to us, in the person of Jesus.

God loves you. And Jesus tells us to love one another, as God loves us.

The love of God is powerful in our personal lives and in our society. If we know God loves us, we find strength. If we know God loves all human beings, we must reflect on how we treat all our neighbors. In this month we celebrate Black History. God cares about the experience of the Black community - in the past and in the present. God is pained that we still struggle as a society to ensure that everyone, regardless of their skin color, can thrive. Christians inspired by the love of God should work for a society in which all human beings are treated as beloved children of God.

No matter the challenges we recognize in our communities, families, churches, or personal lives - remember always, God loves us. Our small church has had and continues to have its fair share of struggles. Currently we have a financial crisis and are seeking to balance our budget in 2023. This is stressful. You too as individuals have stressors in your day to day. We must all remember that the love of God holds us. Nothing can separate us for the love of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Stefanie

### **LEHR FUND**

The Barbara and John Lehr Fund is a designated fund only distributed to members.  
Are you a member going through a financial crisis? Please speak with our pastor Stefanie Muntzel or contact her at [revstefaniefpce@gmail.com](mailto:revstefaniefpce@gmail.com) to see if the Lehr Fund could be a support to you.

## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH: REVEREND DR. JAMES HUTTEN COSTEN**

The Presbyterian Historical Society is bearing witness to the lives of African American leaders throughout the history of the denomination. This month their study highlights the achievements of Reverend Dr. James Hutten Costen.

James Hutten Costen was born on October 5, 1931, in Omaha, Nebraska. He was the son of William James and Mary Lou Costen. Raised as Roman Catholic and educated in parochial schools, Jim began worshipping at a Presbyterian church during high school. After graduating High School in 1949, he attended Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) in Charlotte, North Carolina, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1953. Jim then entered Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, receiving a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1956. He later pursued a Master of Theology degree in religious education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, graduating in 1964. Jim was either the earliest or one of the earliest African American students to attend the Seminary.

Reverend Dr. James Hutten Costen was ordained on January 19, 1956. He served as pastor of Mount Pisgah Presbyterian Church in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. There in Rocky Mount, Jim and his wife Melva successfully won a lawsuit to integrate an elementary school, allowing their children to attend. The family was threatened by the Ku Klux Klan for their civil rights work. Jim worked closely with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement. In 1965, Jim received the call to serve as pastor of the Church of the Master Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He was integral in establishing the church, which was deliberately organized as the first interracial Presbyterian congregation in Atlanta. Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. participated in Jim's installation.

In 1969, Jim became dean of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, which had been newly relocated at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta. Jim became the fifth president of ITC in 1983, serving in that role until his retirement in 1998. As stated on their website, "ITC is the world's only graduate theology program with this unique model that is exclusively African American but inclusive to all people." In 1974, Jim visited Kenya for the first time, where he built relationships with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). Because of this experience, Jim created and offered scholarships to PCEA students for them to attend ITC. After his retirement from ITC, Jim raised funds to build a library, student and faculty housing, and other facilities for what is now the Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Jim served as moderator of the 194th General Assembly (Hartford, Connecticut) of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) in 1982, becoming the fourth African American to hold the role. Additionally, he served as moderator in 1983, when the UPCUSA and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (PCUS) reunited to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Jim passed away on April 11, 2003, leaving behind a legacy of work as an administrator of religious education and as a Presbyterian moderator, with a tireless focus of uplifting the opportunities and voices of African Americans and Africans across the theological spectrum.

## WORSHIP AND MUSIC

### LENT 2023

#### **Ash Wednesday, February 22, 5:30PM-6:30PM** **A service of scripture, art, music, and reflection**

To mark the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, we invite you to this experiential worship. It is rooted in scripture and shaped by art and music. Nine artistic expressions of the beatitudes will be positioned throughout our sanctuary. Each station will each invite participants into prayerful reflection on Jesus's core teachings. Music appropriate to the season will be offered during the entire hour - though the journey from each station to the next will only take 10-20 minutes. You may come at any time during the hour and leave when you wish. The imposition of ashes will be offered.

#### **Palm Sunday, April 2**

##### **Worship this Sunday will be a joyful celebration of Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem.**

10:25am – Procession of the Palms (weather permitting) - gather at corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Spring Garden.

11:30am -- Coffee and Crafts. Join us for refreshment, fellowship and the opportunity to fold paper and palm crosses. All ages and artistic ability welcome.

#### **Maundy Thursday, April 6 at 6:30PM**

##### **Tenebrae: Service of Shadows**

The name Tenebrae is the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows," and has for centuries been applied to the ancient monastic night and early morning services of the last three days of Holy Week. This is a typical service but centered on scripture readings and the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights until a single candle remains. Towards the end of the service, this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil. At the very end, a loud noise is made, symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection (Matthew 28:2), the hidden candle is restored to its place, and by its light all depart in silence.

## **CHOIR REHEARSALS**

**Chancel Choir** rehearses on Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30pm.

The **Handbell Choir** rehearses on Wednesdays, 6:30-7:15pm. No rehearsal on Feb. 22.

## **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

### **THANK YOU!**

We received thank you notes from the Director of Mission Engagement and Support for the Presbyterian Giving Catalog for our gift of \$660.00; from Third Street Alliance for our December gift of \$300.00; and from the Easton Community Drop-In Center for hosting them in Legacy Hall while they search for a permanent home.



JOIN HANDS TO  
SUPPORT CHILDREN  
2022-23 FPCE MISSION FOCUS

**A.M.E.N. UPDATE**  
**ACTION – MEDITATION – EDUCATION – NEW HABITS**  
**MISSION 22-23, JOINING HANDS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN**

**Hunger is a social justice issue.**

It's a simple fact: A child's chance for a bright tomorrow starts with getting enough food to eat today. In the United States, 9 million children may not know where to get their next meal. Black and Latino children are more likely to face hunger than white children. According to the USDA, in 2021, 22% of Black children were food insecure, and 18.5% of Latino children were food insecure.

Food insecurity is influenced by drivers including poverty, unemployment, and household assets. A long history of racism and structural oppression has been perpetuated through policies that have caused many communities of color to face disparities in those drivers and, in turn, food insecurity itself. To better understand these disparities, Feeding America conducts research exploring the intersection of race & ethnicity and food insecurity. This research can be found here as it becomes available:

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/race-ethnicity>

**CALLING ALL CROCHETERS AND KNITTERS!**

The Stitches made 10 blankets and 5 shawls, which were donated to Hospice in Allentown. Anyone wanting to make a lap blanket for our spring delivery call Nancy Udut,( [naomiudut@yahoo.com](mailto:naomiudut@yahoo.com)) for yarn, needles and instructions.

Thanks, Nancy Needles



*Shawls and blankets donated to Hospice in Allentown, and baby items prepared for donation.*

**NOTES OF THANKS FOR THE STITCHERS:**

We want to thank Stitches at First Presbyterian Church of Easton and Stitches at the Highlands of Glenmoor, Palmer Township so much for the BEAUTIFUL blankets and sweaters. We took them up to our Mother/Baby Unit and they just loved them! We will take donations anytime. They are needed and loved!

Thanks,  
Susan, Office Coordinator  
Volunteer Services  
Lehigh Valley Health Network

Thank you so very much for the abundant amount of BEAUTIFUL lap blankets and shawls you dropped of last week! We have already had some given out to some of our patients by our Nurses' Aides and Spiritual Counselors. Your generosity, creativity and the amount of time you put into each one is wonderful! We are so very grateful and so are our patients. In fact, just today I received a thank you from our patient for her blanket (uncertain which organization but she was extremely grateful). We rarely receive this kind of thanks. Her note reads:

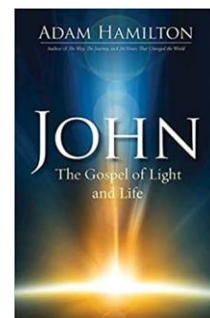
*Dear Hospice Volunteers,  
I want to thank you for the lovely knitted lap blanket. It is so warm and comfortable. It must've taken many hours of work and I appreciate all of the time and love put into making it. Everyone at hospice has treated me with such great care. Thank you all.  
Love,  
Nancy*

Believe it or not, Nancy is a current patient. Thanks again and just know we are always in need of your lovely items!  
Lynn Schiavone  
Volunteer Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Hospice

## **FAITH FORMATION AND FELLOWSHIP**

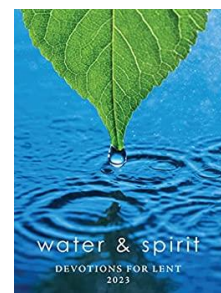
### **LENTEN BIBLE STUDY**

The Gospel of John is the most deeply spiritual of the four gospels. This writing is filled with rich images and profound truths, but John notes that his aim in writing the gospel is that readers will not only believe in Jesus Christ, but that they “may have life in his name”. In this four-week study, we’ll use the text *John: The Gospel of Light and Life* by Rev. Adam Hamilton to follow the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus through the Gospel of John and understand the context of some of the best-known verses in the New Testament. This study will meet February 26, March 5, March 19, and March 26 after worship. All are welcome!



### **LENTEN DEVOTIONAL**

*Water and Spirit* provides daily devotions for each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Each day has an evocative image and a passage from the Gospel of John, followed by writers’ reflections and prayers. If you would like to order a copy of *Water and Spirit: Devotions for Lent 2023* for \$3.00, contact the church office by Friday, February 17, and we will place a bulk order. You can also purchase it as an e-book on Amazon.com.



### **BRUNCH BUNCH**

Please note that Brunch Bunch will not meet in February. All are invited to come to the next Brunch Bunch on **Sunday, March 12** after worship!

## MEETINGS

The **Property Team** will meet on **Tuesday, February 14 at 7pm.**

The **Deacons** will meet on **Sunday, February 19 after worship.**

**Session** will meet at the church on **Tuesday, February 21 at 7:00pm.**

If you are unable to attend a meeting, please contact the church office to let us know. Thank you!

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Lawrence Opthof
- 11 Anthony Moki
- 12 Mary Gyamenah
- 23 Solomon Akpor-Mensah
- 25 Stefanie Muntzel
- 26 Anne D'Alberto



## PRAYERS

*We pray for...*

Fran Dean and all who love her, especially her husband Joel, as Fran is under hospice care.

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

All who grieve for the loss of loved ones, including Jay Koch and family at the passing of Cindy; the family and friends of Rev. Charles Holm; and for the mother, brother, and newlywed wife of Vernon Kineard, cousin of Darcel Hayes-Bridges.

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

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](mailto:office@eastonfpc.org), please include "prayer list" in the subject line.