

We Belong to Each Other. We Belong to You.

B.Wiebe

The Bible says, "where two or three are gathered." And many, in this moment, will gather no closer than six feet. The Bible says, "they were all gathered together in one place." And we do not know when we will be together next. Triune God, you exist in eternal relationship. You are One and yet are three. In a time of isolation, draw us closer to this mystery. May it remind us of your truth: even in physical isolation, we are never truly alone. Your love links us together, making us a people. For the Bible also says: We belong to each other. We belong to you. Even now. Especially now. Amen.

Christ's Disciples Listen

by Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka

Several years ago, I led a group of young adults from the United States on a journey to explore our relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. After a wonderful worship service and dinner hosted by a congregation in Tema, we were sitting at tables with the church leaders. One of the congregation's elders turned to me and said he was impressed that I listened so well. I thanked him and asked him more about his kind compliment. He smiled and said that in his experience Americans are not the best listeners. He said that often when you see two Ghanaians together, one is talking and the other is listening. When you see two Americans together, one is talking and the other is waiting to talk.

Time and again throughout the Gospels, Jesus shows us that he is a good listener. When he goes off by himself to pray, he shows us the importance of taking time to listen to God. When he is confronted with a woman caught in adultery by the religious leaders and they ask Jesus to condemn her, he kneels down and draws in the dirt. A New Testament professor friend of mine says she thinks Jesus was listening. He was listening to the self-righteous voices of the religious leaders, listening to the beating heart of the humiliated woman, and listening to the Holy Spirit. To the rich young ruler, to Jairus whose daughter had died, to Mary and Martha whose brother Lazarus had died ... to all of these and more, Jesus listened. Leaders listen. It is a spiritual practice. To listen to another is to honor them as a child of the living God. As a Japanese American, my culture values "face," and one way to lose face is to interrupt another while they are speaking. This is an act of arrogance because you believe what you have to say is more important than the one who is speaking.

As a leader in Christ's church, think about the high compliment of someone describing you as a "good listener." To sit and listen to another, to really listen and hear them, is countercultural in our social media society. To be truly heard is a gift. Work at giving the gift of being heard in the days and weeks ahead. As the Ghanaian elder illustrated for us, be the one who is listening, not the one who is simply waiting to talk. Good disciples are good listeners.

Wee Kirk Gazette

Tappahannock Presbyterian Church

A Most Welcoming Presbyterian Church in Essex County

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Beloved in Christ, as we will not gather together this Ash Wednesday, please consider reading the litany below and placing ash on your forehead or hand as you remember the gift of salvation that Jesus Christ has given to you through his death and resurrection.

A Litany for Ash Wednesday

God sent Christ into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. God's love endures forever. God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. God's love endures forever. (John 3:17; Ps. 46:1-3)

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of tenderness, and strengthen us to face our mortality, that we may reach with confidence for your mercy; in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; in your great compassion blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. And so you are justified when you speak and upright in your judgment. Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb. For behold, you look for truth deep within me, and will make me understand wisdom secretly. Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be clean indeed. Make me hear of joy and gladness, that the body you have broken may rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:1-10)

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be for us a sign of our mortality and penitence, and a reminder that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

(Genesis 3:19)

May the God of peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being— spirit, soul, and body— free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (1 Thess. 5:23)

February Announcements

The **Souper Bowl of Caring on Feb. 7** will look different this year. We won't gather for a soup luncheon, but we will deliver your gifts of canned and packaged soups to the local food bank.

Transfiguration of the Lord is Feb. 14; we will celebrate the Lord's Supper in our worship.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17: "Lenten bags" will be available on Feb. 14th for our local folks to take if they wish. The bag will contain a bit of palm branch ash to place on your forehead or hand as you read the Ash Wednesday litany.

Tuesday Bible Study begins Feb. 23 at 1 pm. with a daily study of Lenten Scriptures by Rev. Dr. Roger Gench (this study is being sent to all on our email list). Please read the study at your own pace, and we will also study the material together on Zoom each Tuesday—just let Vicki know if you'd like to participate.

Operation Inasmuch 2021 is being imagined in new ways! Please keep the core team in your prayers.

Please pray for these loved ones of our church: for Stacey, having surgery on her spine at Mayo Clinic; for Phyllis and Laura Jo and other family members of Pat Morris; for Jill Robertson's son Will, who faces continuing health issues; the family of Jo Love; for the family of Rev. Kim Sydnor, friend of TPC; LeighAnn and Bryce, grieving the loss of their mom, and for Ann and John, who have lost their daughter; for Betty Geddes, as she grieves the loss of Roland; John Moody, now at home; Virginia, recovering at home; 4 year old Brady and his family (which includes Robbie and Dave); 13 year old Luke and his family and friends, including Susan and Virginia; Ellen and John; Bob Stanford (Robbie's dad); Betty and Tom; Joey Burrough; Jill and Hunter; Cindy and Ron and Cindy's mom; Rebecca and her family.



We are proud of Madison Lam and LeighAnn Matthews, who are on the Merit Roll of Aylett Country Day School!

To all of our TPC students, keep up the good work!!



Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

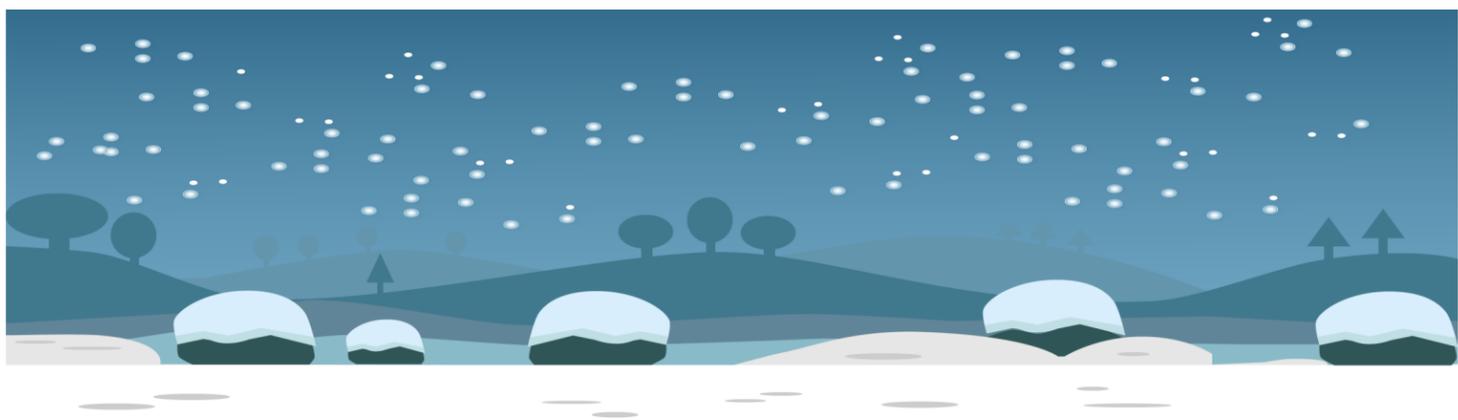
*Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.*

*My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.*

*He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.*

*The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Robert Frost



February
Wendy Chisimba
Siller 10
Margaret Broad
14
Kathy Lam 15

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

March
Dave Canby 9
Anne Sydnor 14
Ann Colby 16
Sydney Jones 27