



The Presbyterian Church of New Rochelle

Year 3, Vol. II

September 2015

From the Pastor

No matter where we are in life's journey it seems we never have enough time. We spend vast sums of money on various resources to help us manage our time more effectively. We debate the merits of trying to cram too much into too little time versus finding more quiet time to think creatively and appreciate the beauty that envelops us in God's Eden. We organize time in years, a measure of how long it takes the earth to orbit the sun. Many churches use the start of a new "school year" to energize programs after the summer break. Our Jewish brothers and sisters are celebrating the beginning of the year 5776 and of course the Mayan calendar ended rather famously in 2012.

Time is something we too often take for granted until a deadline looms or a person quite dear to us suddenly becomes ill and doctors advise that their days or hours are numbered. God of course has the key to wind the cosmic clock so when we speak of God as eternal it is surely beyond our ability to fully comprehend. If we say the universe is 14 billion years old how much older is God? Is it a silly question to even consider? When God speaks to us through Scripture about time are we actually talking about the same phenomena? How does it inform our understanding of Scripture?

And then there is Ecclesiastes time, what the Greeks called *kairos* (v *chronos*) as in, a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; (Ecclesiastes 3:2,7). This week I received an An Open Letter from the Westchester Board of Rabbis that begins: "During the month preceding Rosh Hashanah, through Yom Kippur, Jewish

tradition calls upon us to confront the reality of sin, and to extricate ourselves from its grip." The letter references Maimonides, the towering Rabbinic scholar and philosopher, who taught, "we must cleanse our souls, elevate our character, and refresh our bonds with both God and our fellow human beings." With this in mind, the Westchester Board of Rabbis calls attention to a "sin which has plagued our (Jewish) communities this past year, and which must not be carried forward, into the next. The sin is *sinat chinam* - *gratuitous hatred*; a hatred which is unwarranted, unproductive, and uncalled for."

The letter focuses specifically on the controversy surrounding the recent agreement with Iran over nuclear development but the sin of gratuitous hatred is evident in communities across the nation. Indeed I worry that gratuitous hatred is the fuel to much of the polarization that has infected the national discourse on everything from the rights of the LGBTQ community, to persons of color who are plagued by systemic discrimination, to how we treat those who emigrate seeking asylum and a better future. Despite the campaign rhetoric, winning is not a zero sum game. More importantly, balanced solutions often result in a rising tide (not the kind caused by global warming!) that benefit all.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes might put it, there is a time to argue and a time to reconcile. We are called to hold our values dear while we continue learn, always keeping an open mind. But the ultimate consideration, the final test, is whether it is consistent with loving our neighbor as ourselves. The time is now.

May it be so!

From the Clerk

Presbytery Meeting

On July 21, I attended the stated meeting of The Presbytery of Hudson River, at Holmes

Camp, as Elder Commissioner. As soon as we got there we found Pastor Buchanan on the reception area. It was a beautiful summer afternoon although very hot on the camp next to the lake.

During the meeting I was able to see the good organization and spirit of fraternity among the attendees and the people who were responsible for conducting the activities. One of the highlights of the meeting was worship that included a sermon and communion. The hymns were very lively and accompanied by guitar and piano.

The recurring theme for the year is connecting mind and body. The focus this time was touch which was incorporated into worship, most creatively during communion. Different ministers participated including our pastor who administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Communion involved *four* stations to which the people were invited to visit in whatever order they chose. They were:

1. Touching Christ's body at the table – this was the Lord's Supper served by intinction
2. Feeling a Prayerful Embrace – two people stood and offered a simple but sincere and sweet embraces to those who so desired
3. Being renewed by the waters of baptism – a person stood with a basin full of water in which people submerged their hands remembering their own baptism
4. Offering our gifts - offerings were received to be divided between Holmes Camp and a fund to help rebuild the black churches that recently have been burned. Nearly \$1,000 was collected.

There was also a part in which prayers were offered to those who were in need or simply wanted a prayer.

On the business side of the meeting, Pastor Buchanan's contract was renewed for another year.

The meeting ended with a musical presentation given by a group of adolescents from The Korean Saeronam Presbyterian Church in South Korea. This very spiritual group of young, musicians was visiting the United States in a good will trip to perform traditional music and sing hymns for all. It was very beautiful to see their folkloric dresses, how well they played the violins and other instruments and their singing. The director of the group also enlightened us about some aspects of their culture.

After these activities we had picnic. The food was abundant and great. The tables had been placed under some tents that had been raised outside of the hall and near the lake. Almost at the same time we sat to eat a deluge fell accompanied with the loudest thunderstorms I have heard in some time. After the torrential rain the temperature lowered and we were able to leave.

All in all was a great activity and I am very happy I attended.

Notes from Session:

There were 38 congregants who participated in communion in June, 34 in July and 28 on August 2.

The Stewardship boxes have arrived. There are 40 boxes and the numbers were already given. Some of the numbers will be different but not many. The boxes will be distributed in December.

The baptisms of Amari Lewis and Maliya Mahabal, two friends born a few days apart and great-grandchild of Cherry Charlton last July 19th made all of us very happy. With these are 4 baptisms that the pastor has performed since being here.

Update on fall tag sale. The next tag sale will be October 3. Although we have many items, if you have shoes, handbags, or winter clothes we will

gladly accept them. We will also need your cooperation on that day, both men and women.

The Koreans fixed the open gap in the ceiling of the main office as they had promised. We are very happy and grateful.

The lamps in the Pastor's office have new lamp shades thanks to Cherry Charlton and the wall have updated electrical receptacles thanks to Mr. Charlton.

Office refurbishment -we are planning to paint the main office and probably change the carpet sometime after the yard sale.

A bequest from Madeline Muller's state for the amount of \$20,000 was received. The money was deposited in the church's endowment account and both session and deacons will consider how best to use the money to spread the word and in the best way to honor Ms. Mueller's memory.

Ron Sanderson agreed to be our representative to the Interfaith Dwelling Meetings.

Bring a friend Sunday was September 13. 60 people attended the service. The choir resumed on this day. It was nice to have them back. By the way, if you are interested in being part of the choir, please talk to Tamara or the pastor. At this time your commitment will be for only one Sunday a month.

Mark Your Calendar

September 20

A joint meeting of Elders and Deacons will take place today. The purpose is to continue a conversation about PCNR's strengths and how we can build on those strengths to make a more meaningful impact in our community. We will explore ways we might use the Mueller bequest consistent with our Mission Statement. Bring your ideas!

September 22 –

Hudson River Presbytery meeting; Stony Point from 9:30-3:30. The sense of taste will be explored this time.

September 26 – Cott Memorial

The Memorial service for Raymond Cott will be held in the sanctuary at 11:00. A reception will follow.

October 4th - World Communion Sunday

Please join us for a special communion Sunday in unison with nearly 2.5 billion Christians around the world who participate of the body of Christ on this day.

October 18 and November 8 – New Members

A class for new members is scheduled for after worship. We have 7+ likely participants so it promises to be a lively exchange and enjoyable way to meet new members of your extended family!

November 15 - Stewardship Sunday

On this date parishioners will bring their pledges for next 2016. Remember, no matter how little or how big your contributions are greatly needed to help the church continue servicing the community. It is a great way to thank God for all his blessings.



What a joyous day in the life of our congregation! On July 19th we baptized Amari Lewis, grandson of Cherry Charlton *and* Maliya Mahabal. Amari's dad Jakema is looking over my shoulder next to mother Aslee. On the right side clapping is Maliya's dad Chris. Unfortunately Maliya's mom Onika is missing from the photo.

When the congregation was asked by the Clerk of Session: Do you as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Amari and Maliya by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging him to know and follow Christ and to be faithful member of this church? You answered full voiced, "We do!"

We enjoyed a wonderful turnout on **Bring a Friend Sunday**. It was a joy to meet so many of your friends and family as well as new neighbors and a family celebrating a 50th anniversary!

