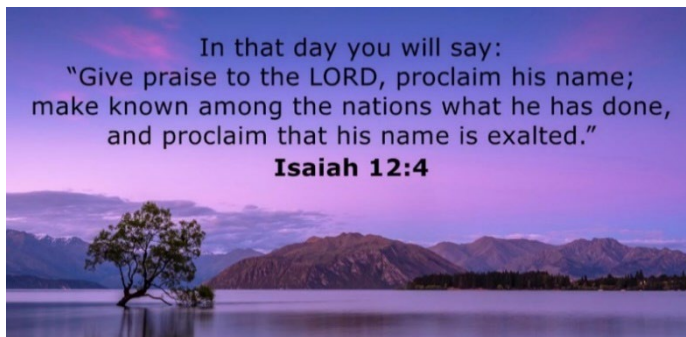


# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Spring 2025 Newsletter

## LENT and EASTER 2025

*“He isn’t here— he’s been raised! Don’t you remember? While you were still in Galilee, he told you that the Son of Man must be handed over into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and rise again on the third day.” And they remembered his words. (Luke 24:6-8)*



Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian Church Chatham,

If Advent is a time of waiting and Epiphany is a mystery revealed, what then is Lent? Traditionally, Lent is a time of fasting and penitence in preparation for the Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday, the day after the feasting of Shrove Tuesday, which this year we are celebrating with a Pancake Supper – and I encourage you *all* to come, especially those who regularly worship with us on-line: it would be lovely to see you! Following the Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36), which is yet another epiphany, Luke tells us that Jesus deliberately “turned his face toward Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51,53), so indicating that a new phase of Christ’s ministry was beginning – one that would end on the cross. The first followers of Jesus didn’t appreciate what was going to happen in Jerusalem, but we of course know the full story. In light of all that Jesus experienced during his final days—and it’s no accident that this coincided with Passover—Christians interpret the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 as pointing to Jesus the Messiah. Therefore, during Lent we also journey towards Jerusalem, with reflective, penitent, and grateful hearts, for “by his wounds we are healed.”



That first Easter weekend was a dark and confusing time for the disciples. Good Friday seemed to be a failure; the rabbi they had been following—in whom they had placed their hopes as being God’s Messiah—had been crucified. What had gone wrong? What would happen next? Where was God in all this? Uncertainty, fear, and doubt filled their minds. Yet, for the most part, as they waited and wondered about their futures, they stayed together as a community. We may have similar questions today in these uncertain and unsettling times.

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Although there was grief and confusion that first Good Friday, the story does not end there. Early on Easter Sunday, God raised Jesus from the dead – which was certainly *not* what the disciples expected! Evidently something dramatic happened in that those fearful followers of Jesus were themselves transformed by what they experienced and subsequently changed world history. John’s Gospel, which is more of a commentary really, states his interpretation of events in the very first chapter – alluding to Jesus being “The Light of the World” (see also John 8:12; 9:5).



One of the things all this means for us today is that the first Easter provides perspective for life. It provides a secure foundation as we live with our own uncertainties, for in the life, death, resurrection, ascension of Jesus, and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, *God acted in history*. We are not as in control of events (global or personal) as we would like to think. As we work and pray for stability and safety in these unpredictable times, may we once again remember the profound (and shocking!) meaning of Easter and thereby live confidently because God—through his Spirit—*is still at work* in the world in transformative ways. And because God is part of the equation, *hope* is never exhausted!

Let’s journey *together* through Lent and Easter. I encourage you to join us in our worship services and other activities. And instead of giving up something for Lent, why not *take up* some new activity that blesses others

Peace be with you all,

Rev. Tim Reddish

*Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*  
(John 16:33)



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*“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,  
so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness;  
for by His wounds you were healed.”  
(1 Peter 2:24)*

Years ago, I was pleased to hear an interview with Dr. John Stott, for many years the distinguished Christian author and Anglican rector of All Souls Langham Place in London, England. In the interview, he spoke of being struck by the contrast between two important symbols that were prominent against the London skyline. One was the cross atop a spire on St. Paul’s Cathedral. The other was atop the Old Bailey, the famous high court. There one sees the winged statue of Justice, blindfolded, and holding aloft a set of scales, symbolizing the weighing of evidence. Stott noted that for many people, the scales of justice are in fact the preferred symbol of atonement. They figure that, in the final analysis, their good deeds and their bad deeds should be put on such a scale, and the good deeds will hopefully outweigh the bad deeds, and they can call themselves saved... hopefully... hopefully... maybe.

In sharp juxtaposition, however, atop St. Paul’s Cathedral there is a cross, which symbolizes a horrid instrument of execution whereon someone died to accomplish a perfect, a complete, a final act of atonement. There Jesus Christ died for your sins and for mine, not so that our sins might be somehow outweighed, or simply be put into some kind of reasonable perspective, but so that they might be rendered dead and that we might die to them.

Christ did not die to affirm us in our sins, or in spite of them; He died on the cross to deliver us from them and from their power.

As I write this, Lent draws on and we approach Good Friday, once again. Beyond it lies the greatest day on the Christian calendar, Easter, and the glorious reality of the open tomb. The empty tomb announced that the atonement of His cross had been effective. It was a completed work. Nothing could be added to it, and certainly nothing taken away. Thus, you and I can know the joy of sins forgiven, accompanied by the wonderful hope of eternal life. That is the Gospel. That is our Good News.

## ON LENT

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is always exactly 40 days before Easter, and this year falls on March 5. Our friends in several other denominations have been numbering the Sundays since Candlemas (Feb. 2), as “The Fourth Sunday Before Lent,” “The Third Sunday Before Lent,” etc. On Ash Wednesday, many will also receive the sign of the cross on their foreheads, the mark being smudged on their brows using the ashes of last year’s palm fronds from Palm Sunday.

On the ancient calendar of the Christian Church, the three Sundays immediately preceding Ash Wednesday bore the peculiar names of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, indicating 70 days, 60 days, and 50 days, respectively, before Easter. Of course, these numbers are symbolic, and not accurate. But, their purpose was to begin turning our attention away from the glorious season of the Manger in Bethlehem to the approach of the solemnity of Lent and Passiontide, and then the ultimate glory of Easter.

Though it is a time of solemnity, of self-examination, and of penance, there is a way we may also take it as a time of encouragement. “Lent” is actually an Old English form of the word “length.” It calls attention to the fact that, at this time of the year, the days are noticeably lengthening. Spring will be upon us before we know it! Does that help?

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Because it is historically a fast, many associate Lent with “giving up” something. Chocolate... Video games... Coffee (*Oooh, that hurts!*)... meat..., and so on. And then, there are many who just end up giving up Lent for Lent.

My problem with all of this is, if there are questionable or even sinful habits in my life that I need to ‘give up,’ then that needs to happen regardless of what season it is. I would suggest that we hear the counsel of our friend, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as a guide for Lent (and for the rest of the year, for that matter):

***“...let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*** (Heb. 12:1b-2 NASB).

It is Lent. Let us be thoughtful, let us be humble, let us be penitent, let us come to the cross.

- Rev. Paul D. Shaw



## Holy Week Readings

| Holy Week              | Old Testament                | Psalms         | New Testament          | Gospel                             |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday</b>          | Isaiah 42:1-9                | 36:5-11        | Hebrews 9:11-15        | John 12:1-11                       |
| <b>Tuesday</b>         | Isaiah 49:1-7                | 71:1-14        | 1 Corinthians 1:18-31  | John 12:20-36                      |
| <b>Wednesday</b>       | Isaiah 50:4-9a               | 70             | Hebrews 12:1-3         | John 13:21-32                      |
| <b>Maundy Thursday</b> | Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14 | 116:1-2, 12-19 | 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 | John 13:1-17, 31b-35               |
| <b>Good Friday</b>     | Isaiah 52:13-53:12           | 22             | Hebrews 10:16-25       | John 18:1-19:42                    |
| <b>Holy Saturday</b>   | Job 14:1-14                  | 31:1-4, 15-16  | 1 Peter 4:1-8          | Matthew 27:57-66;<br>John 19:38-42 |

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## UPCOMING SERVICES



March 2: The View From Here (Rev. Tim Reddish) / Holy Communion

March 9: The Word is Near You (Rev. Paul Shaw)

March 16: Citizens of Another World (Rev. Paul Shaw)

March 23: The Rock is Christ (Rev. Paul Shaw)

March 30: Turn Toward Home (Rev. Paul Shaw)

April 6: To Know Him (Rev. Paul Shaw)

April 13 (PALM SUNDAY): Hosanna (Rev. Paul Shaw)

April 20 (EASTER SUNDAY): He Is Risen! (Rev. Paul Shaw)

April 27: TBA (Rev. Tin Reddish)

## A LENTEN PRAYER



O God, early in the morning I cry to you.  
Help me to pray  
And to concentrate my thoughts on you;  
I cannot do this alone.  
In me there is darkness,  
But with you there is light;  
I am lonely, but you do not leave me;  
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help; I  
am restless, but with you there is peace.  
In me there is bitterness;  
But you know the way for me...  
Restore me to liberty,  
And enable me to live now.  
That I may answer before you and before men.  
Lord, whatever this day may bring,  
Your name be praised.

Written by the Rev. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) while in a Nazi prison

*Intrigued by this painting? Check out Christianity and the Arts (p.8)*

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL



March 2- Queen Esther

March 9- Daniel in the Lion's Den

March 16- Shadrach, Meshach & Abednigo

March 23- Jesus Calms the Storm

March 30- Movie Sunday: VeggieTales- Rack, Shack & Benny- A lesson in handling peer pressure.

April 6- The Mustard Seed

April 13- Palm Sunday

April 20- Easter Sunday: Resurrection Eggs, Party and Edible Easter Craft!

April 27-The Lord's Prayer

Allison Shaw, Christian Education Coordinator  
519.352.2313, ex 3



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Soup-er Bowl February



There's still time to participate. Please drop off a canned/boxed meal, ready-to-eat soups and stews, pasta, and rice dishes, all of which will be made available to our Saturday Breakfast guests on 1 March.

### Annual Meeting



All in favour? It's time for our least popular (but essential nonetheless) gathering of the year. Many of your fellow congregants have worked hard to make sure FPC not just survives but thrives. Lots is happening you may not know about, and your presence (and vote) will not only show your support but ensure your voice is heard.

### Pancake Supper



We are famous throughout Chatham-Kent for having the best pancakes around. (It's all in the eggs.) So kiss your diet goodbye and join us on 4 March. Sittings are at 5 and 6:30 pm. Tickets are \$15 (1 person), \$25 (couple) and \$30 (family); children 5 and under eat free.

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## PASTORAL CARE

*Pastoral [care] takes Dame Religion by the hand and drags her into the everyday world...  
and is that aspect of Christian ministry which specializes in the ordinary.  
It is the pragmatic application of religion in the present.*  
(Eugene H. Peterson's introduction to his *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*.)

In the quote above, I purposefully substituted “work” with “care”. Peterson is actually talking to fellow ministers, about the proper tending of congregations. I had read his autobiography, *The Pastor*, after stumbling upon it in Chatham-Kent Public Library's list of new nonfiction titles; it later received a positive review in the *Presbyterian Record*. Since at that time I had no background in pastoral care, I was looking for outside texts to guide and inspire me, through which I in turn could guide and inspire my Team. In fact, I began this column in the hopes of extending my reach so that, whether or not you joined the Team, we could all grow a little in faith and purpose.

Simply by using the word “drag,” Peterson makes clear that Christianity demands a public face of its followers, an imperative raised regularly and often from our own pulpit. At the same time, he has not said that it is never a private matter. For example, pastoral care givers take confidentiality seriously, and those in our care depend on it. But that is only one aspect of privacy. Each of us resides in a world where loneliness, pain and doubt are simultaneously all too real, seldom aired, and often overlooked. In other words: hidden in plain sight. Through pastoral care, we learn to open our worlds to one another, to offer and accept support, to commit however briefly to the well-being of another. “See that you don't tell [that I healed you] to anyone” (Mark 1:43 NIV), says Jesus, for there are things best kept between us and God.

So yes, Christianity most certainly has a private face, true of any intimate relationship (and what is more intimate than our relationship with God?!) But it also cannot be *just* a private matter. As we are blessed with free will, so must we figure out for ourselves when to press and when to pause, when to listen and when to speak, when to engage and when to wait. In other words: when to be public and when to be private. We can and should call on the Holy Spirit. But ultimately it is our responsibility as human beings, made in the image of the Father, to determine not only what we should do, but how (and when) to do it.

Throughout my tenure as its coordinator, I have discovered our Team to be the perfect testing ground for everything I'm saying here. Many of those we call or visit have no presence in the sanctuary, and their situations are largely private (both hidden and confidential). Even so, they are as much a part of the Body as the rest of us. Which is why, as Peterson says, I continue to share with you my journey in dragging Dame Religion from pew to pasture.

Sue Easun, Coordinator of Pastoral Care

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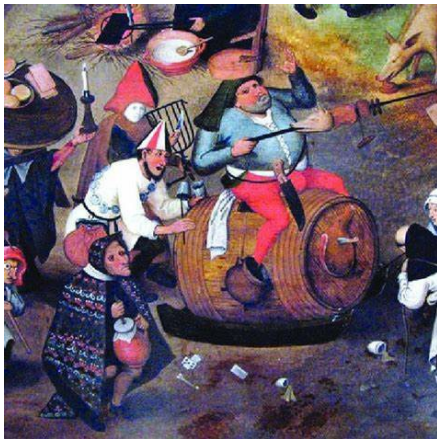
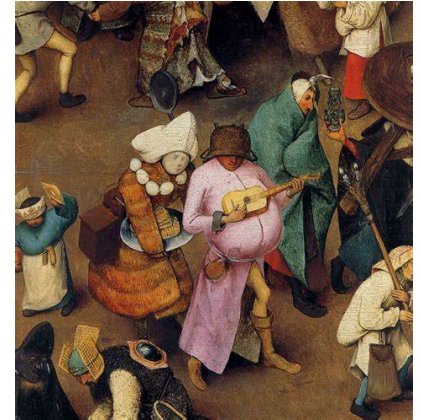
*“... you know I love you.” “Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said. (John 21:16 NLT)*

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## CHRISTIANITY AND THE ARTS

*Christianity has inspired the arts for two millennia, beginning with the simple drawing of a fish. At one point, its symbolism was as recognizable to the people of its day as emojis are to us.*

Lots going on in *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* (1559), seen on p.5, by Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder. (To appreciate just how much, check out this [much larger rendition](#).) It features a town square entirely populated, it would seem, by peasants, many of whom are in the throes of a jolly good time. In fact—and this is something I didn't know—in the 16th century, Carnival lasted from Epiphany to Mardi Gras. Judging by their girth, more than a few peasants seem to have taken full advantage of the non-Catholic version of indulgence; even at small scale, it's hard to miss the man in pink with the bulbous abdomen. But while gluttony predominates, evidence of the other deadly sins are scattered throughout. While I had to look hard to find the clergy, mostly because I didn't recognize the church as, well, a church, eventually, I spotted a cluster of clerics surrounded by parishioners, beggars and well-mannered children.



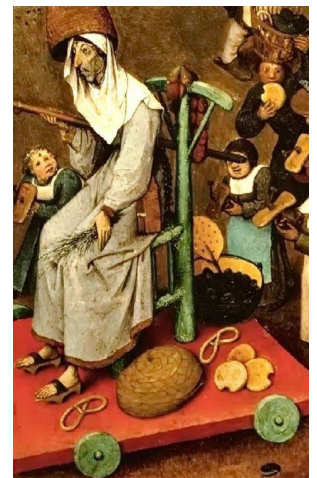
surrounded by parishioners, beggars and well-mannered children.

I'm told the canvas is divided roughly in half—though I don't really see it myself—between Team Carnal and Team Pious. Now that it's Shrove Tuesday, the titular fight is about to begin, between Prince Carnival (the portly fellow in turquoise with the meat pie hat) and an androgenous-looking Lady Lent (the cadaverous spectre wearing a beehive on her head). They are about to joust, a highly ritualized form of tournament where the point is to acquit oneself by unhorsing rather than wounding, with their chosen steeds a beer barrel and a chair, respectively. Indeed, these combatants are so bizarre, it's hard to see a clear winner on the basis of

looks alone. Except for one thing: he's fighting with a roasting spit (complete with suckling pig) and she's armed with a baking paddle. Doesn't exactly scream even odds, does it?

Only a few decades earlier, Reformation leaders had come to the conclusion that Lenten fasting was nothing but superstition and, in some cases, had even begun openly defying the Catholic Church by eating sausages in full public view. And so while Protestants today may choose to fast, they are more likely to "give something [else] up" than engage in an extended period of strict spiritual discipline.

Just think, less than 500 years ago, Bruegel set the stage for where we Presbyterians ended up. It must have been that meat pie hat that tipped the balance.



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## HOW TO DONATE

- **Weekly Envelops.** If you attend most Sunday services and would like to pay by cash or cheque, you can request a box of envelops; there are also special envelops for Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Anniversary Sunday. The first envelop in your box is labeled Initial Offering; please consider helping us defray the cost of continuing to offer this option. CONTACT: Linda Weeks at [office@firstchatham.org](mailto:office@firstchatham.org)
- **PAR.** If you would like to support us on a monthly basis and prefer the convenience of automatic withdrawal, you can sign up for PAR. This is the most cost-effective option, from the church's point of view. CONTACT: Linda Weeks at [office@firstchatham.org](mailto:office@firstchatham.org)
- **Occasional, Fundraising or Memorial Donations.** If you are in the sanctuary on Sunday morning, you can use one of the spare envelops in your pew. You can also drop by during office hours, or mail it in (cheques only).

We can provide tax receipts for any amount, if you give us your full name and contact information.

## OTHER WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

Of course, your tithes and offerings are essential to ensure the smooth running of our building, programs and activities. And without volunteers, none of those programs and activities would be possible. However, no contribution is too small.

- **Stamps:** The Canadian Bible Society accepts used stamps, selling them to collectors and vendors and using the revenue to purchase bibles for the Canadian prison ministry. Ten pounds of stamps = approximately 6 bibles for distribution. While it takes a lot of stamps to equal 10 pounds, every little bit helps! CONTACT: Cindy Reid
- **Recycling:** Terracycle Canada will accept the following items: used Brita filters/broken pitchers; used Crest dental products, including packaging; used Burts Bees products, including packaging. CONTACT: Sue Easun
- **Outreach for Hunger:** Our Session regularly sends a financial donation. However, you can help by donating in non-perishable food items and toiletries.
- **Saturday Breakfast Program:** In addition to a good meal, our guests can choose from among a variety of toiletries & hygiene items, pantry staples, and new/gently used clothing & blankets. CONTACT: Rebecca Ladd

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## BECOME INVOLVED

- Audio Visual: Barb Capeling (Team Lead)
- Bible Studies: Rev. Paul Shaw (Pulpit Supply)
- Christian Education: Maureen McLachlin (Team Lead & Session Liaison)
- Coffee Hour: Judi Aitken (Coordinator)
- Decorating: Judy McCarthy (Team Lead)
- Mission & Outreach: Oscar Njumba (Team Lead & Session Liaison)
  - Backyard Mission
  - Saturday Breakfast Program: Bruce Davidson & Rebecca Ladd (co-Team Leads)
- Music & Worship: Julie Collins (Team Lead & Session Liaison)
  - Choir: Adam Shaw (519.352.2313, ex 4)
  - Praise Team: Adam Shaw (519.352.2313, ex 4)
- Pastoral Care: Sue Easun (Team Lead, [pastoral.care@firstchatham.org](mailto:pastoral.care@firstchatham.org))
  - Visitation
  - Prayer Force: Joan Fletcher ([pastoral.care@firstchatham.org](mailto:pastoral.care@firstchatham.org))
  - Prayer Shawls: TBA
  - Widows & Widowers: Judy McCarthy
- Property & Finance: Ed McLachlin (Chair & Session Liaison)
  - Health & Safety: Ross Simpson
- Social Media: Sue Easun & Mike James
- Sunday Greeters: Mike Bennett
- Sunday Livestream: Mike Fry & Ed McLachlin

Each of these Teams is short one member: You!! Please give prayerful consideration to giving a little (more) of your time.

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## STAY IN TOUCH

Do keep us informed of births, deaths, and anniversaries. We will only include them in the Bulletin with your permission. CONTACT Linda Weeks at [office@firstchatham.org](mailto:office@firstchatham.org)

Do let us know if you or someone you know is in hospital, sick or in need of comfort. We will only share this information with designated pastoral folk: Rev. Reddish, Rev. Shaw, and/or Sue Easun. CONTACT: Linda Weeks at [office@firstchatham.org](mailto:office@firstchatham.org) or Sue Easun at [pastoral.care@firstchatham.org](mailto:pastoral.care@firstchatham.org)

In need of prayer? For yourself or someone else, our Prayer Force is near at hand. CONTACT Joan Fletcher at [pastoral.care@firstchatham.org](mailto:pastoral.care@firstchatham.org)

Wondering what's going on? There are lots of options!

- Website: [www.firstchatham.org](http://www.firstchatham.org) / typically updated Mondays and Thursdays
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChatham](https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChatham) / typically updated Mondays and Thursdays
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@fpcchatham9093](https://www.youtube.com/@fpcchatham9093) / livestream every Sunday morning

The Office also maintains an email distribution list that sends out the Bulletin and livestream link every Friday, as well as special announcements. CONTACT: Linda Weeks at [office@firstchatham.org](mailto:office@firstchatham.org)

## WHO'S WHO

Interim Moderator: Rev. Tim Reddish

Pulpit Supply/Hospital Visitation/Bible Studies: Rev. Paul Shaw

Christian Education Coordinator: Allison Shaw (519.352.2313, ex 3)

Church Office: Linda Weeks ([office@firstchatham.org](mailto:office@firstchatham.org), 519.352.2313, ex 1)

Custodian: Benson Tarrant

Music Director: Adam Shaw (519.352.2313, ex 4)

Clerk of Session: Joan Fletcher

Roll Clerk: Ernie Koehler

Pastoral Care Coordinator: Sue Easun ([pastoral.care@firstchatham.org](mailto:pastoral.care@firstchatham.org))

*Did you find an error or omission?  
Please let us know so that we can fix it for next time.*

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