

Inclusive ~ Curious ~ Compassionate ~ Courageous

Newsletter

March – May, 2020

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The TPC Staff

Rev. Rob Carter
Pastor, Senior

Rev. Joel Strom
Pastor, Associate

Stephen Harouff
Director of Music/Organist

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Kathryn Bojanowski
Business Administrator

Walter Austin
Sexton

Leslie Foretich
Director,
Towson Presbyterian Preschool

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, our Lenten journey will have begun. Each year, Lent arrives with the invitation to explore the distance between the lives we live, and the life that Jesus said is real life. True life. Eternal life.

This year, TPC is inviting you to explore this distance in a special way, as our worship will take us traveling through chapters 5-7 of Matthew's Gospel, and chapters 27-31 in We Make the Road By Walking by Brian McLaren (the book we've been exploring as a whole church community this year). On the fifth Sunday of Lent, March 29, Brian will join us in worship via videoconference to help us reflect on insights gleaned along the Lenten roads we've traversed.

Clearly, we'll be traveling quite a bit this Lent—metaphorically speaking. We'll be moving back and forth between the lives we live today, and the life to which Jesus pointed 2000 years ago when throngs of people came to him at the onset of his ministry, clamoring for answers to their questions about life... and the things that make for real life... life as God intends.

So may we use this Lenten season as a special time to reconsider not just who we are, but who we are aspiring to be. May we examine the distance between: What success looks like to us and what success might look like to God? What does strength mean to us and what might it mean to God? What does a life well-lived look like to us? To God?

Of course, TPC offers much more than worship to facilitate this exploration. Special Lenten small groups are available, as are other formation and fellowship opportunities you can explore on following pages. Invest and join us for the special Lenten journey.

Peace,
Rob

Worship at TPC

Lent—Easter
(March, April, May)



Feb. 26 || Ash Wednesday

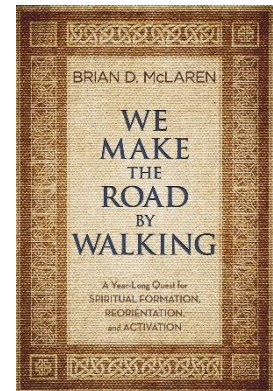
- We celebrate the first day of the Lenten Season on Ash Wednesday, gathering at 7 p.m. in the Chapel for a special service of Communion and the Imposition of Ashes.

March 1 || We Make the Road By Walking, ch. 27 || "A New Kind of Hero"

- Who are we aspiring to be? Who does God hope we aspire to be?
- To live the life to which Jesus calls, we need a new definition of success, and a new model of hero.

March 8 || We Make the Road By Walking, ch. 28 || "A Third Way"

- Are Christians called to look back at the way of Christ and the early church in order to see how we are called to live?
- Or are Christians called to forge ahead, forgetting what lies behind in order to trod the path not yet taken?



March 15 || We Make the Road By Walking, ch. 29 || "Change Yourself to Change the World"

- Is anyone perfect? Or nearly perfect?
- Reformed Christians don't believe so. But that doesn't mean we can't pursue the perfection of Jesus, who offered the "perfect" view of God in the flesh: full of compassion, grace, and love.

March 22 || We Make the Road By Walking, ch. 30 || "From Anxiety & Judgment to Grace & Fulfillment"

- Who doesn't struggle with anxiety? This world overwhelms us with false measurements and judgements until anxiety becomes an unavoidable side-effect of life itself.
- God's kingdom offers an antithesis to the world's anxiety-and-judgement-driven systems.

March 29 || TPC Welcomes Brian McLaren, author of We Make the Road by Walking to worship

- TPC is blessed to welcome Brian McLaren back via videoconference.
- We will speak with Brian about our journey through his book and through Matthew 5, 6, and 7.





April 5 || Palm Sunday || "Did Jesus Have to Die"

- Each year on Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus' triumphant procession into the city of Jerusalem, as the crowds greeted him as a king.
- As Holy Week awaits, however, we know things changes radically for Jesus in the days that followed.
- We have long assumed Christ's death was always a part of God's plan, but there is an important question worth asking: Did Jesus have to die?



April 9 || Maundy Thursday || Seder Meal in Thompson Hall

- We gather to remember Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, and celebrate a Tenebrae.
- The Tenebrae incorporates the dimming of lights, extinguishing of candles, and stripping of the sanctuary as Scripture readings tell of Jesus' progression to the cross.

April 10 || Good Friday

- We share a special meditational service at noon on Good Friday in the Chapel.



April 12 || Easter Sunday

- Christ is risen! Death has been defeated! Sin and judgment have no more power over us. But what does all that happened two millennia ago mean for us today?

April 19 || Doubting Disciples

- Let's be real. Resurrection seems far-fetched when consider the laws of physics.
- Do disciples have to have unbending faith? Is there room for doubt?
- Might it even be helpful?



April 26 || Earth Sunday

- TPC celebrates a special service regarding our call to care for creation.
- Blessed to welcome the Rev. Mary Gaut to the pulpit.
- Rev. Gaut is currently the co-Stated Clerk of the Baltimore Presbytery.

May 3 || Acts 2 Worship

- The book of Acts offers the church a portrait of how the ancient church worshipped.
- This morning, our order of worship harkens back to, in some ways, its earliest form as read Scripture, celebrate communion, join in fellowship, and share in prayer.

May 10 || Gifts of Women

- TPC celebrates the gifts of women this morning, as women (and young ladies) will lead this morning's service in its entirety.



What a Youth Sunday!

Who Do You Say That I Am?

On Feb. 23, our teens created and led a fantastic worship experience for us by exploring Jesus's question to his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?"

Max Fisher, Ryan Krugman and Sarah Martin each gave beautiful reflections on who they believe Jesus is, and offered powerful testimony of the role faith has played in their lives.

Thank you, youth!



Pictured above: Youth leading Call to Worship
Picture below: Youth leading Children's message (by Andrew Kays)

Confirmation 2020

Confirmation 2020 has begun, and teens are gathering for classes, attending worship and meeting with a Mentor! Confirmation at TPC is an opportunity for teens to:

1. An opportunity to reaffirm the promises made to each teen at their baptism
2. A milestone on a lifelong journey of faith
3. An experience of faith formation alongside parents and adults
4. An opportunity to learn what it means to be a member of a worshipping community of faith
5. An opportunity to learn the basics of Christianity and Presbyterianism

Pictured: A prayerful introduction of Confirmands, their parents, and their TPC mentors in worship on Feb. 16 (by Andrew Kays).



Youth Trying Something New in Lent

Lent is a season that invites us to try something new, and for 3 weeks in March, Youth Group will not meet on Sunday nights at TPC. Instead, all of our youth, both middle and high school, are broken up into Small Groups that will meet off-site. While Small Groups might meet at a leader's home or at an ice cream shop, youth and their leaders will continue to explore a chapter of Brian McLaren's book, We Make the Road By Walking. Youth Ministry Lenten Small Groups meet on March 8, 15 and 22, and will sit together in worship on March 29 for our videoconference with Brian McLaren.

Church School Ministry

“What It’s Like to Be a Church School Teacher”

– Bob Bickel & Phyllis Gray

For Phyllis and me, being a church school teacher has brought us tremendous joy. We often get asked why we teach and we tell people “lots of reasons!” So as Presbyterians, we formed a small committee at dinner one night, made lists, and studied the reasons.

We realized *we teach because we enjoy it and love being around children who are*

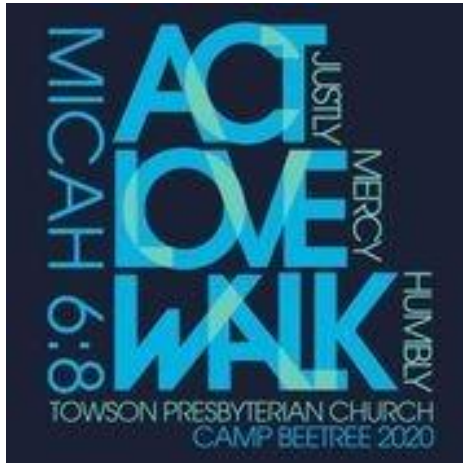
exploring their faith. Having raised our three boys at TPC, we reflected back on people who taught them Sunday school and expanded their understanding of the Bible, and sharing their own faith stories. Our boys remember, Jack Tyrie, MaryJane Facello, and Eb Nuttle to name a few. These adults were interested in growing the faith in our sons.

So each week as we review the lesson, we plan how we will spend the one hour together. What we have discovered is that you really learn more when you teach! The children question, challenge, and push you to explore your own faith as we study the bible stories. We are often amazed and surprised by the students and their understanding. A bonus as a result of teaching is that we do better in Bible categories while watching Jeopardy.

We enjoy our Sundays when we teach after attending the early worship. We then spend time growing and learning with our class. We have enjoyed the different age groups that we have taught. It is a blessing to be a part of the faith journey of TPC's young members.



Camp BeeTree – July 13-17



Camp BeeTree is an intergenerational week-long camp for children who have completed Kindergarten through Grade 5. The camp is held July 13-17 at TPC and the Bee Tree Preserve.

This year's theme is Act, Love, Walk. Campers will discover what God wants us to do with our lives, giving ourselves up to God and using our Actions, our Love and Walk in Life for good.



Campers will enjoy a creative learning environment in which to find delight in God's creation. And we will delve into Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God."

To learn more, please [CLICK HERE](#).



Adult Spiritual Formation

Explore Brian's Lenten reflections in [We Make the Road By Walking](#) by signing up for a Small Group in March. Even if you are not reading the book you are invited to join. Our leaders make it accessible for everyone to participate. See below for dates, times, leaders and locations:

Special Small Groups in Lent

Leader: **Jim Kuhlman**

Sundays - March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 || 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. || TPC Library

Leader: **Ro Nicolosi**

Thursdays - March 5, 12, 19, 26 || 7-8 p.m. || TPC Library

Leader: **Patty O'Brien**

Wednesdays - March 4, 18, 25 || 7-8 p.m. at her home (1-minute drive from TPC)

Leaders: **Phyllis Gray and Bob Bickel**

Mondays - March 9, 16, 23 and 30 || 7-8 p.m. || at their home (5-minute drive from TPC)

Leaders: **Chris & Bonnie Britt** – (for Parents with Young Families)

Sundays – March 8, 15 and 22 || 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. || Chapel





TPC's Talent Show & Chili Cookoff

March 14, 2020 || 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Have a hidden or not so hidden talent? Share it with your church community. Acts from all ages warmly welcome! || Have an award-winning (or really good) chili recipe? Put it to a fun test! Contact Bob Bickel (bob.bickel@yahoo.com) or Jenness (jhall@towsonpres.org) if interested.

Nominations

The 2020 Congregational Nominating Committee is receiving nominees to the office of deacon and elder through March 15.

The Board of Deacons are the caregiving leaders of the church, who not only offer warm greetings and support for our worship services, but also offer ministries of care and compassion to those members grieving or struggling.

Elders serve on the Session, which is the governing board of the church. Session oversees all ministries, properties, and finances of the church.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to nominate someone for either of the above offices, and submit the nomination form by March 15.



Daylight Savings



Gentle Reminder: Set your clocks AHEAD one hour the night of March 7 → March 8

Honduras Mission Team

On March 1, TPC was blessed to commission the members of the Honduras Mission Team, who are in Honduras between March 6-13. There, they serve those in impoverished Honduran villages by offering free medical and dental care, building special “eco stoves” to heat village homes, and much more. Please keep the mission team members—and those whom they serve—in your prayers during this time.



Picture from previous trips:

Top Left: Members build an eco stove in a village home

Picture Left: Dr. Scott Krugman offers medical care

Top Right: Dr. Patty O'Brien offers dental care

Bottom Right: A Honduran woman uses a new eco stove



ACTC Benefit Concert

March 22 || 3:00 p.m. || Sanctuary



On March 22, TPC's Chancel Choir and Director of Music, Stephen Harouff, offer a special concert to benefit the ministry of the Assistance Center of Towson Churches. A beautiful, eclectic array of music will be performed, and a freewill offering will be collected. Join us!

Easter Breakfast

April 12, 2020

TPC serves Easter Breakfast.

Cost is \$5.00 per person or \$20.00 for a family of four or more.

Please register online or show up in Thompson Hall on Easter Morning.

Volunteers Needed – If you are available to help set up, prep and serve, or clean up, please reach out to Sandi Burt or contact the church office



Blue Jean Sunday

April 19



Many hands can make light work of some important projects!
Volunteers of all ages are invited to help clean out and clean up the church after 10 a.m. service, as we aim to empty storage and improve our facility's organization
Lunch will be served at the conclusion of the morning in Thompson Hall.

Thanks to Tara Runge

TPC extends great thanks to Tara Runge for her 12-year tenure serving our community of faith. Tara served for 10 years as TPC's Administrative Coordinator, and the past two as Administrative & Communications Coordinator. We wish Tara and her family God's rich blessings in all their future endeavors.

A Great Parents' Night Out @ Stumpy's



TPC Parent had a great "Parents' Night Out" eating, drinking, and throwing axes at Stumpy's Hatchet House in Towson this past February, while their children were cared for by TPC's professional nursery caregivers.



Interested in future Parents' Night Out events? Join the mailing by contacting tpc@towsonpres.org.

WOW! TPC *SHATTERS* 2019 Budget Expectations

At the onset of 2019, Leadership set an ambitious goal of raising \$675,000 to support the mission and ministries of TPC

We joyfully report that you *smashed* that goal with \$714,163 raised to support the General Fund of TPC. **That's an increase of 8.5%** over last year! Thanks to you, TPC was able to fund all of the transformational ministries that have been growing and making a difference in people's lives.

Offerings to the General Fund were made by 282 households with an average annual gift of \$2500. Specific annual gift breakout:

- 10 households over \$200 per week
- 6 households between \$160-\$200 per week
- 12 households between \$120-\$160 per week
- 16 households between \$80-\$120 per week
- 17 households between \$60-\$80 per week
- 31 households between \$40-\$60 per week
- 54 households between \$20-\$40 per week
- 136 households less than \$20 per week

With your continued support, TPC will be able to continue investing in the mission and ministries that make such a difference in our lives, and the lives of those around us.

**THANK YOU, TPC,
for your ongoing generosity!**

Easter Flower Order Form

Easter flower orders are being received through March 31.

Order Forms can be found by [clicking HERE](#), or outside the Sanctuary.

- Forms are due by than March 31.
- Cost: \$15.00 for each plant.



Session Highlights

December, 2019

Finances

- Treasurer
 - Received Tom Peer's resignation as Treasurer. Session sincerely thanks Tom for his service as Treasurer this past year, and Vice-Treasurer the preceding year.
 - Session approved the election of Pat Keller to serve as Treasurer beginning January, 2020.
- Restricted Fund Policy
 - As the 60-day review period for the revisions to the Endowment Policy ended, the Stewardship and Finance Committee members met to make minor refinements based on feedback from the congregation.
 - Session **approved** the revised fund policies and the corresponding change of the Endowment Committee to the Investment Committee.
- Budget 2019
 - The deficit is anticipated to be less than the \$77,000 projected draw on the investment fund. Finance recommends that the net difference be deposited in the Operating Reserve Fund for anticipated property expenses, which Session approved.
- Budget 2020
 - Total stewardship and income projection of \$792,000
 - Expenses projected to be \$876,179
 - Projected draw from the Unrestricted Fund - \$85,079 (3.98%)
 - Session **approved** the budget for 2020.
 - Session also **approved** requested 2020 withdrawals from designated funds for upcoming ministries or projects:

Operating Reserve Fund – \$1,000	Patterson Property Fund – \$12,000
Ensor Courtyard Fund – \$32,500	Pastor Benevolence Fund – \$1,000
BeeTree Cemetery & Columb. – \$4,000	BeeTree Preserve – \$4,000
Holmes Youth Mission Fund – \$3,000	Food Insecurity Fund – \$5,500
Worship, Music, & Arts Fund – \$6,500	Carr Music Expendable – \$5,000
Snyder International Mission (expendable) – \$7,000	

Youth Ministry

- A goal for the youth program has been to strengthen the connection between their evening meetings and Sunday morning services/programs. Older members of the congregation have been

invited to share their faith journeys with the youth. Music has also been incorporated into regular Sunday night meetings.

- Summer trips for youth: Middle schoolers will be going to Massanetta; high schoolers will work with Next Step Ministries in West Virginia.

Session also reviewed ongoing work within New Initiatives

January, 2020

Finance

- 2019 Year-end deficit of only \$14,000; total revenue of \$714,000.
- Session approved Stewardship & Finance Committees' recommendation to increase the projected revenues for the 2020 budget \$700,000 to \$725,000.

Presbytery

- The Baltimore Presbytery requests local churches support their efforts to host the 224th General Assembly in Baltimore. Presbytery. Presbytery is suggesting that TPC purchase 10 shares at a cost of \$224 per share, which Session approved

Membership Review

- In order to have our rolls more accurately reflect our current congregation, it will be important for Session to define what "Active" means and to determine what process should be used for moving members to inactive status.
- Session agreed to appoint a rolls committee to review and update membership status. Members of the committee will include: Kathryn Bojanowski, Tara Runge, Cornelia McKenna, Dotsie Bregel, and Lenore Chapman.

Associate Pastor Sabbatical

- Joel and Personnel Committee requested that Joel take a 3-month sabbatical, beginning in May 2021. He will be applying for a grant from the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program.
- Session approved the initial proposal and will support Joel through the application process.

Blue Jean Sunday

- Blue Jean Sunday will become "Clean Out Sunday." Each committee/ministry team will clean out and organize their own areas. Session members serving as liaisons to their committees will champion (or recruit a champion for) their committee's efforts.

Personnel

- The Personnel Committee has begun to explore staffing models for growth.

Bee Tree

- Committee is proposing trimming and removal of trees; request for funding will likely come from the Property Committee via the Finance Committee in February.

Mission Outreach:

- Session approved an additional \$3000 from the Snyder Fund (via the expendable portion) for the Honduras mission team's upcoming mission trip needs.
- Woodbourne-McCabe will be building three houses in conjunction with Habitat from March - November. TPC will be forming a team to participate.

Visioning/Moving Forward

- Session reviewed the 2018 Visioning Report Goals and Outcomes for each of TPC's four initiatives. Much progress has been made in each area; Session is pleased but agrees on the importance of remaining focused on these goals through 2020.
 - Session will ask each of the ministry areas to reflect on their progress and provide feedback as we continue to monitor our progress.
-