

LENTEN OFFERINGS

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHATHAM TOWNSHIP



“The truth is that God does not come to us from a distance. God comes to us from within our own lives.”

- Barbara Brown Taylor, from *An Altar in the World*

A LENTEN MESSAGE FROM PASTOR TOM

Dear Friends in Christ,

Lent arrives each year with the invitation to slow our pace and pay closer attention – to God, to one another, and to the contours of our own lives. The forty days from Ash Wednesday to Easter echo Jesus' time in the wilderness when his faith was stretched and his reliance on God grew. Lent offers us a similar stretch of time to examine our own faith and to engage in spiritual practices that reorient us toward God. Practices such as prayer, service and devotion can help us notice where our attention may have wandered and where God seeks to engage with us on a deeper level.

Our Lenten sermon series this year, Holy Detours: Following Jesus to New Life, grows out of a simple but persistent truth: life rarely unfolds as planned. Scripture is filled with stories of people whose journeys with God take unexpected turns—through disruption, delay, or dislocation. Rather than avoiding those moments, Lent invites us to look more closely at them. Again and again, the biblical witness suggests that God's presence is most easily found in places we did not intend to go. Detours need not be seen as signs of failure or a faith gone astray; but instead can become holy ground, where Christ meets us and offers the possibility of new life.

One of the invitations of Lent, then, is to attend not only to our inner lives, but to the ways our faith is bound up with the lives of others. Theologian Walter Brueggemann writes that true repentance is not merely about personal improvement, but about a reorientation of life toward God's larger purposes of mercy and restoration. Lent can become a season for learning – listening more carefully to voices we might otherwise overlook, reflecting on where compassion is needed, and considering how our resources, attention, and energy might be shared more faithfully.

I pray this season will offer space for personal growth, honesty reflection and openness to the new life God is already bringing into being.

May God bless you,

Pastor Tom

LENTEN SERMON SERIES: HOLY DETOURS: FOLLOWING JESUS TO NEW LIFE.

February 18, 2026, Ash Wednesday, Dinner Church, 6:00-7:15 pm, Mulford Hall

Pastor Emeritus, Rev. Dr. Edward M. Halldorson

Homily: "Can Anything Good Come Out of Nazareth?"

Scripture: John 1:43-51

February 22, 2026, 1st Sunday in Lent

Rev. Thomas A. Brown

Sermon: "A Detour in the Desert"

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 6:10-16; Matthew 4:1-11

March 1, 2026, 2nd Sunday in Lent, The Sacrament of Communion

Rev. Thomas A. Brown

Sermon: "The Promise of New Life"

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; John 3:1-17

March 8, 2026, 3rd Sunday in Lent

Rev. Dr. Edwin D. Aponte

Sermon: "Detour, Conversation, and Community"

Scriptures: Exodus 17:1-7; John 4:5-42

March 15, 2026, 4th Sunday in Lent

Rev. Thomas A. Brown

Sermon: "When We See God"

Scriptures: Psalm 23; John 9:1-11

March 22, 2026, 5th Sunday in Lent

Sacrament of Baptism

Scout Sunday

Rev. Thomas A. Brown

Sermon: "Directness and Delay"

Scriptures: John 11:1-16; John 11:17-44

"Our hearts are restless until they rest in you." - St. Augustine

HOLY WEEK



Sunday, March 29, Palm Sunday

Procession of Palms

Worship 10 am

Rev. Thomas A. Brown

Sermon: "Marvelous in Our Eyes"

Scriptures: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11

Thursday, April 2, Maundy Thursday

The Sacrament of Communion

Worship at 7:30 pm

This evening's service invites us into a deeper appreciation for The Sacrament of Communion as an expression of Christ's sacrificial love. We will join together in prayer, song, and reflection focusing on the Last Supper shared by Jesus and the disciples.

Friday, April 3, Good Friday

Worship at 7:30 pm

We continue the tradition of Tenebrae with the Chancel Choir, moving from light into darkness as music provided by the Chancel Choir and readings from scripture reflect the solemnity of this day.

Sunday, April 5, Easter Sunday

Two Worship Services, 9 am and *11 am

*One Room Schoolhouse (11 am); 11 am service will be in person/livestreamed

Rev. Thomas A. Brown

Sermon: "There They Will See Me"

Scriptures: Colossians 3:1-4; Matthew 28:1-10

Easter Brass and Percussion

Egg hunt on the front lawn following the 11 am service (weather permitting)

FAITH FORWARD SUNDAY MORNINGS

“Super Bowl, Bad Bunny, and Belonging”

Sunday, February 22, 2026 - 11:15 am, Halldorson Hall

Join us for a viewing and cultural and theological conversation about the recent Super Bowl LX halftime performance given by Bad Bunny. (Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio). Parish Associate Ed Aponte will share from his perspectives as a cultural historian of religions in the USA and as a Puerto Rican American.

Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Plan to stay following worship and join us in Mulford Hall for a delicious breakfast provided by the Fellowship Committee. We'll have pancakes, sausage, fruit, and some gluten-free options! All ages are welcome – a freewill offering will be taken for those who wish to support this effort.

Blood Drive

Sunday, March 8, 2026, 9 am - 2 pm, Halldorson Hall

Go to: [🌐 Schedule a Blood, Platelet or Plasma Donation | American Red Cross](#) to register today. Sponsored by the Deacons

Let's Talk About Mental Health

Sunday, March 15, 11:15 am, Halldorson Hall

This discussion will be facilitated by Madine Despeine-Udoh and Genaya Palmer from the Mental Health Association. Join us for an open and welcoming conversation about mental health, what it means, why it matters, and how we can support one another. We'll talk about ways to recognize when someone might be struggling, how to start a caring conversation, and what resources are available to help. Everyone is welcome, including youth and teens. This is a safe space to share ideas, ask questions, and learn how to look out for friends, family, and ourselves. We'll also test your knowledge with a few fun activities and explore ways we can make a difference in our community and in the lives of those we love. Together, we can break down the stigma, build understanding, and strengthen our community one conversation at a time.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CHILDREN'S CHAT & CHEW

Wednesdays, mid-week music, fellowship, and dinner!

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Grades K-4, 5th Grade invited too!

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18, 5:30 Chat and Chew followed by Dinner church; March 4; March 18

Children will make a craft, have music time with Ms. Caitlyn, share dinner, and learn bible stories and games with Ms. Elizabeth. Older youth encouraged to volunteer!

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

fast food frenzy!

Sunday, February 22, 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Join us tonight for a fast food progressive dinner – you'll even get to vote on where we go. Apps, dinner, dessert – make your list now! Everyone is encouraged to bring a friend. Cost is \$25 and advance signups are required. Be sure to have a signed release form on file.

Next MSYF will be on Sunday, March 15. Details to follow.

SAVE THE DATE! PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

Friday, March 6th, 5:00-8:00pm

Bring your children from Pre-K to Grade 8 from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm to eat dinner, enjoy fellowship together and watch a movie!



"Faith is not something that happens in isolation; it grows in the company of others who are also learning how to trust."
- Rowan Williams, from *Being Christian*

SMALL GROUPS

A NEW DAY

Meet the first Tuesday of the month, no meetings July and August

March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2

11:30am - 1:30pm, Halldorson Hall

All senior aged women are welcome to join our monthly meetings for lunch, fellowship, conversation and friendship. We begin with a devotion and prayer, and support each other in a joyful and casual atmosphere.

Coordinator: Barbara Dunne barbaradunne4@gmail.com

THE NEXT ACT

Monday, February 23; March 9, 23; April 6 (at Lisa Bole's house)

9:30 am - 11:00 am, New Parlor

This group meets twice monthly in the New Parlor (unless otherwise noted) to navigate the next phase of our lives through prayer, fellowship, discussion, and healthy doses of laughter. Any woman is welcome to join us.

Coordinators: Lisa Boles and Deb Ahsler

MILESTONES

March and April Dates TBD

All midlife moms are welcome to join our group "Milestones, embracing grace in the middle place" evening fellowship

Coordinator: Stacy McCann

PRAYER SHAWL

Monday, March 9

Monday, April 20

7:00 pm, Griswold Parlor

Calling all knitters and crocheters - beginners, experts and anyone in between are welcome! The prayer shawl ministry meets once a month. Typically the 3rd Monday of the month unless otherwise noted. Refreshments are provided, so we can sip, stitch, chat and learn to knit. Yarn and needles will be provided if you're a beginner or don't have a project in the works.

Coordinators: Anne Fields annekfields@gmail.com and Patti Montefusco atov@aol.com

"We do not go into the desert to escape people but to learn how to find them." - Thomas Merton

SMALL GROUPS

MEN'S GROUP

Meet Saturdays once a month (no meeting July, August), 7:15 am, New Parlor with occasional evening events sprinkled in.

Our regular monthly gathering will be **Saturday, March 7 at 7:15 am**. Join us in the New Parlor for coffee and bagels as we enjoy casual conversation and a topical discussion relevant to our lives today.

Contact Pastor Tom, tbrown@pcct-nj.org with any questions.

BIBLE STUDY

Meet Wednesdays (no Bible Study in July, August), 9:30 am, Theos Room

Members and friends are invited to join us for an informal, conversation-based study of the book of Acts. We have a friendly and encouraging group led by Pastor Tom that welcomes new participants at any time. Join us Wednesday mornings at 9:30 am for about an hour and 15 minutes in the Theos Room downstairs. All are invited to join us on this journey through the early years of church history.

"Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid."

- Frederick Buechner



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