

The Pastor's Pen January 2023

Happy New Year! 2023 has arrived and we are excited for the ministry of Christ that God has placed before us in this New Year.

Advent of 2022 ended with three wonderful Christmas Eve services. Many thanks go out to the very talented members and groups of our congregation that brought beautiful music to these services. We are truly blessed in the musical and worship talents that God has given to this congregation and we thank you for sharing these gifts. This year Christmas and New Years each fell on Sundays and we had one service on these days. Beginning January 8th, we return to three services at 8:00, 9:15, and 10:30. Communion at all three services will be on January 8th, since we had just one service on January 1.

Last January I attended a Spiritual retreat at the Loyola Jesuit Center in Morristown. This is an annual event that takes place on the first weekend in January every year. Last year I found this was a wonderful way to grow closer to God as a disciple of Christ while fellowshiping with other men over the weekend. My goal is to attend this retreat every year and I will be attending this weekend, January 6, 7, 8. Dave Wilenta and Cindy Wilcox will lead our services on Sunday January 8, and Cindy will preach.

Thank you all for your continued prayers for Cathy Gaestel who leads music at our 8:00AM service. Cathy is getting better and hopes to be back leading us in songs and worship soon. We also thank Mike Petillo for filling in until Cathy returns.

You may have noticed three blue bulletin boards in the hall at the top of the stairs as you go to the Fellowship Hall. These boards will soon be filled with pictures and short bios of the Manasquan Presbyterian Church staff, elders, and deacons. This will be a nice way for the congregation to get to know church leadership and connect with them.

I know Christmas just ended but Lent is right around the corner. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday which is February 22nd this year. I am excited to announce that the Manasquan Area Churches Ministerium is bringing back Soup and Scripture this year. Our church will be hosting this each Wednesday in Lent (at noon) as we share a bowl of soup and hear an inspiring Lenten message from various ministers in our community.

In our congregation there are always families who are in need of our prayers and connection. I thank you for all of your prayers, cards, calls, and visits. If you or anyone you know is in a challenging situation or just needs a call or visit, please let us know, and you can always call me directly on my cell phone at (732) 245-1910.

May God's Peace and Love in Christ surround you in this New Year of 2023!

Pastor Jim