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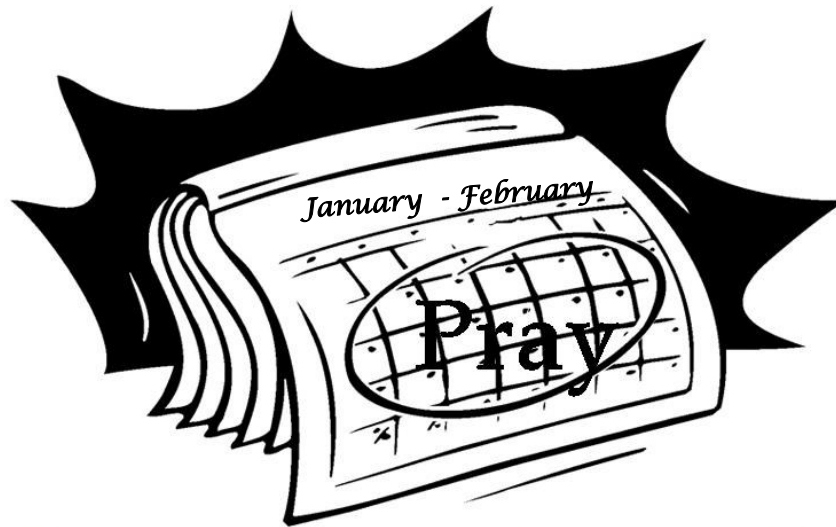


SHEPHERD'S LOG

Eastchester Presbyterian Church
3154 Fish Avenue
Bronx, New York 10469

JANUARY— FEBRUARY
2020

Rev. Dr. Brian John, Pastor
Dr. J. Perry Wootten, Pastor Emeritus
Vol. 2, No 1



Start the New Year with
Prayer

A word from
the Pastor

REFLECTION



What are the Significances of Ash Wednesday?

⁴ and said to him, “Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.”

(Ezekiel 9:4 New Revised Standard Version, N.R.S.V.)

Before we explain what the importance of this symbol is, let us look at a few passages from scripture that describe symbols on the forehead. There were two brothers named Cain and Abel. One day they were to offer sacrifices to God. The Bible tells us that God had respect to Abel’s offering but He rejected Cain’s sacrifice. In his anger, Cain killed his brother Abel and God cursed him for his actions. Part of his punishment was to be a restless wanderer roaming through the earth but God put a sign on his forehead that nobody will kill him (Genesis 4:15-16). The second passage was when the angel was sent to give a symbol by placing it on their forehead to identify those who were suffering (Ezekiel 9:4).

The imposition of ashes is one of the ecumenical symbols of the Church with biblical underpinnings. It is the beginning of the season of lent. Where do the ashes come from? The Pastor saves and recycles palms from the previous Palm Sunday left in the church. Then they burn the palms and place the ashes on the foreheads of individuals. During the imposition, the Pastor says the following “From dust you are and to dust you will return” (Gen. 3:19). In Genesis 3 after Adam disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit God said to Adam “... for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” But there is hope through the season of lent. Jesus’ death on the cross and triumphant resurrection on the third day gives us His grace. We have eternal life after death. The symbol of ashes is a twofold reminder; first, of our mortality and second, our future hope for everlasting life from Jesus Christ our Lord.

~ Rev. John

EASTCHESTER CELEBRATES

In the Old Testament, momentous events or places were marked by stones. These assured that future generations would remember the significance of memorable experiences. Today's memory stones consist of contemporaneous records, photographs and oral history. Elder Cloval Anderson, with curiosity and persistence of a professional researcher, collected information on the history of Eastchester from its beginning to the present. She spent countless hours researching the history of Eastchester. The results of her research were part of a service in Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Sanctuary on November 17, 2019.

A two-part presentation, **The Journey Begins** and **The Journey Continues**, was narrated by Elder Yvonne Wynter. The narration was accompanied by photographs projected on the screens. For many EPCers, the presentation was a refreshing reminder; for some it was a memorable introduction to the church's foundation that developed over generations of united, spirit-filled leaders and congregants. Thanks to Elder Anderson, Eastchester has a well-documented archive records of our church history. Prior to this undertaking, who knew that she could accomplish such a daunting task?

The historical presentation was followed by praise dancing performed by our youngest children, under the direction of Alysia Sangster. Special music was performed by Cori Lynn Hendricks, a piano student of Mr. Koh. Although Elder Ethan Gillies was not listed in the bulletin, he played a harmonica solo, as he usually does every third Sunday. In spite of health challenges, Elder Gillies Continues to serve the Lord with music.

Up to this point in the service, the entire program was a sermon each Eastchester member has brought, and still brings, to our church family. The congregation, however, still looked forward to the sermon delivered by Elder Nathaniel Christian. The sermon, based on 2Corinthian 4:1-7, was entitled "Home, Sweet Home." The message was centered on the lessons taught by the experiences of three Josephs in the Bible: Joseph son of Jacob, Joseph known as Barnabas, and Joseph husband of Mary.

As always, Elder Nathaniel brings fresh insights to his biblical messages. This was particularly true of his detailed account of Barnabas' character, life and relationship with Paul. The message causes one to want to re-examine the Scripture to gain new perspectives.

The part of Elder Christian's sermon that seemed to have the greatest impact on the audience was his personal testimony about God's grace. Elder Christian was involved in three serious automobile accidents. Each accident had the potential to be life threatening. His severely damaged car could attest to this. By the grace of God, Elder Christian survived. Irrefutable evidence of God's grace was the fact that each accident occurred at different places, at different times and under different circumstances at that intersected with a Grace Avenue or Grace Street. The incident affirmed what's so *amazing about grace*.

The service significantly ended with the congregation singing "To God Be the Glory."

PRAISE DANCING



In his book, “**Reflections on the Psalms**”, C.S. Lewis wrote: “The most valuable thing Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance.” And did David delight in God! One can envision David dancing and leaping as he returned the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. What joy he found in praising the Lord with dancing.

At EPC, we see Alysia Sangster delight in the Lord when she dances. We also see that delight in the children she trains to perform praise dances. The current members of the junior praise dance group are:

Naima Bryant	Efa Vida
Olivia Evans	Kylie Willis
Arianna Gogoh	Dylan Wilson
Cori Lynn Hendricks	

For several years Eastchester had an accomplished group of teen praise dancers. Unfortunately, all of the dancers graduated high school and went off to college. Alysia, a member of this dance group, decided to undertake the task of training a younger group. She has done a phenomenal job. This junior dance group has performed at several worship services. The congregation is excited by their performance. Alysia has taught them to dance with energy, passion and precise movement.

A few people may find it difficult to accept dance as a part of worship service. Dance, however, is a part of our Judeo-Christian heritage. Women danced and sang to celebrate the Israelite’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Women danced and sang to celebrate David’s slaying of Goliath.

Altogether there are approximately seventeen references to dance in the Old Testament. May we continue our tradition of praising the Lord with music and dance.

“Great is the Lord and most worthy to be praised.”





Baptism

On Sunday December 29, 2019, Rev. John baptized Krystal Henriguez
by immersion.

Welcome New Members

EPC welcomed into its fellowship :

- ♦ *Valencia (Michelle) Brown and William Sanders*

On Sunday November 10, 2019

- ♦ *Krystal Henriguez*

On Sunday December 29, 2019



Our Sympathy



We extend our deepest sympathy to

Deacon Lola Wright on the passing of her mother on December 2019

The family of **Mrs. Bernice Wilkinson** on her passing on February 2020.

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live,
even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*

Do you believe this?"

John 11:25-26 NIV

EPC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Early last year, the Scholarship Fund had an insufficient balance to award scholarships to all of our high school graduates. The Committee distributed a letter appealing for special donations. The response was amazing. Thanks to the generosity of EPC members and friends six graduates were awarded scholarships. Each of them was grateful for the financial assistance. One graduate, Jason Dwarka, expressed his gratitude to the congregation during a Sunday Worship Service. As usual, others sent thank-you notes to the Scholarship Committee. Maya Blake wrote a note that the essence of all the notes. She wrote: "Thank you for gifting this award and providing me with a strong footing to begin my college career. EPC has been a key factor in shaping and guiding me throughout my life. I appreciate every member of the Committee and the congregation."

In a familiar commercial, a young recipient of assistance from the United Negro College Fund says "I am your dividend." All of our scholarship students are our dividends. Each time they graduate from college; each time they are successful in their chosen field; each time they continue their faith journey, they are our dividends. What better returns could we receive on a modest investment?

With our continued support and donations, EPC's young people will continue to do amazing things.

EPC Scholarship Committee



COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

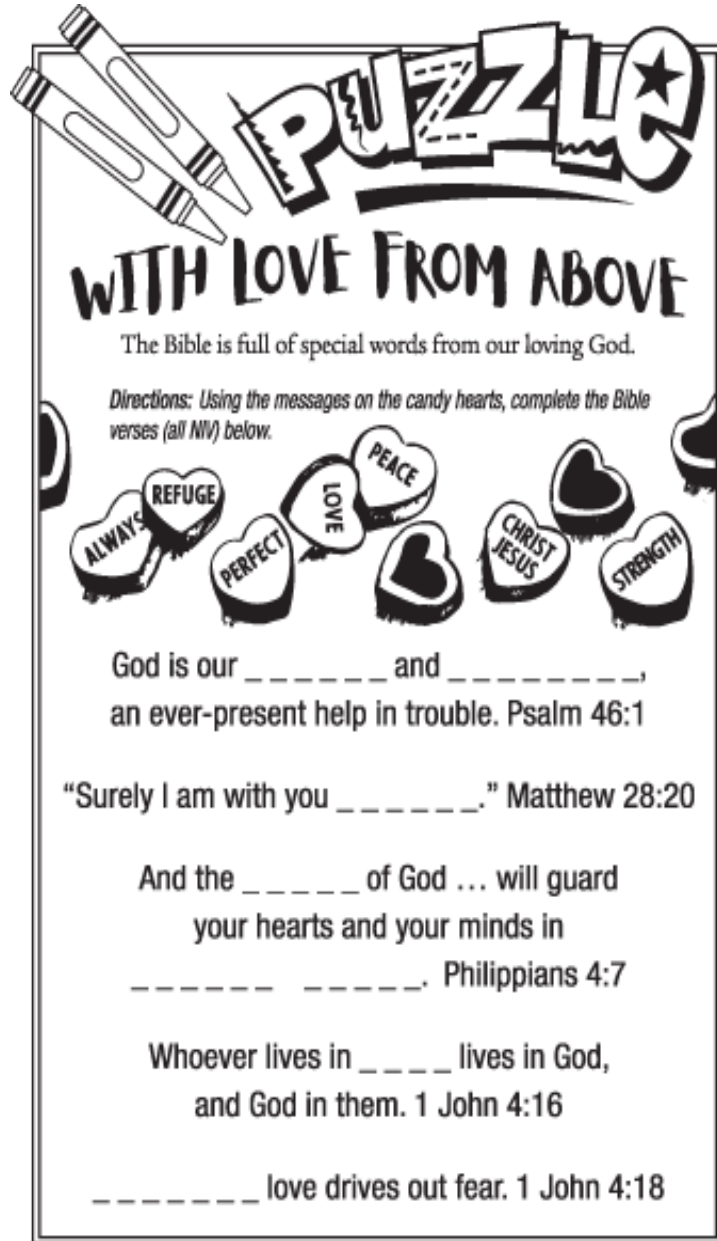
Although we know the benefits of counting our blessings, we still, on occasion, resort to complaining about our lot in life. A current complaint among a few of our family members is that our young people go off to college and never return to Eastchester. While bemoaning the loss of some young people, we often forget about the ones who return. We tend to focus on our loss, rather than our blessings. The greatest blessing is that the ones who return are active in various ministries. Alysia Sangster doing a splendid job of training young praise dancers. When previous praise dancers visit, they assist Alysia. Monique Evans is working each week with CYD. She has the demanding task of working with early teens to older teens.

Ashley Williams is committed to working in the Sunday School. She has a gift for relating to young children. Janieke Harrigan is a deacon. In addition, she plays the drums every Sunday morning. Her playing enhances the chancel choir's performances. She is to be commended for never overpowering the singers.

Jason Dwarka is a dependable, caring usher. He is always willing to assist anyone in need of help. He also keeps a count of the number of attendees at the 10:00am worship service. Jabari Gallier returns every Sunday to serve as an usher. Prior to graduating from high school, he began ushering and participating in church activities.

Of the many students who returned during their winter break, some will probably return to Eastchester. If our past experience is a predictor, those who move away will become involved in a Bible-based church. This is a testimony to the foundation laid by their church family and their relatives. For example, Shari Rutherford, who lives out of state, is an active member of an Apostolic Ministry. She has worked in the church nursery and has been a youth leader. Presently, she does power point. While teaching at a Christian college, she volunteered to go to India, where, in addition to academics, she taught students about God and the Word. There are many other former members of Eastchester who are continuing to live as men and women of faith.

Our young people may move away, but they never forget Eastchester. During visits to the city, they will invariably return to their home church. We have had visitors who bring their children to introduce them to their former teachers. What greater blessings could one hope and pray for?



PUZZLE

WITH LOVE FROM ABOVE

The Bible is full of special words from our loving God.

Directions: Using the messages on the candy hearts, complete the Bible verses (all NIV) below.

ALWAYS REFUGE LOVE PEACE
PERFECT CHRIST JESUS STRENGTH

God is our _____ and _____,
an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

"Surely I am with you _____." Matthew 28:20

And the _____ of God ... will guard
your hearts and your minds in
_____. Philippians 4:7

Whoever lives in _____ lives in God,
and God in them. 1 John 4:16

_____ love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18

Answer: refuge, strength, always, peace, love, Perfect

Craft Idea

A MESSAGE OF *Love*

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.



What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

What you do:

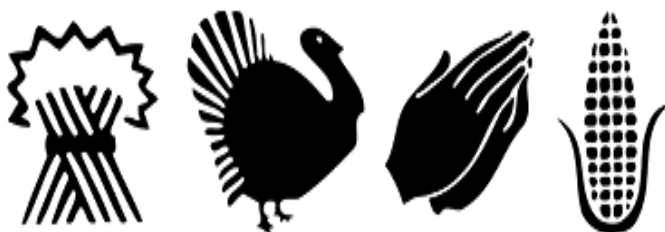
1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.



GIVE THANKS TO GOD

God gives us many blessings every day. How can we thank him?

Directions: To complete the Bible verse below, follow the code and fill in the blanks.



A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F=6, G=7, H=8, I=9, J=10,
K=11, L=12, M=13, N=14, O=15, P=16, Q=17, R=18,
S=19, T=20, U=21, V=22, W=23, X=24, Y=25, Z=26.

" _____ will _____
9 16 18 1 9 19 5
_____, _____ name in _____
7 15 4 19 19 15 14 7
and _____ with
7 12 15 18 9 6 25 8 9 13
_____, _____"
20 8 1 14 11 19 7 9 22 9 14 7

Craft Idea



Add fall décor to your family's Thanksgiving table by making these festive place mats.



What you need:

- Large pieces of paper
- Several large leaves
- Crayons (fall colors)
- Fine-tip permanent marker

What you do:

1. Working on a flat surface, place the leaves underneath the paper.
2. Peel the wrappers off the crayons. Rub crayons sideways over the paper so the details of the leaves become visible.
3. Use other crayons to add additional details, if desired. With the marker, list what you're thankful for and add a Bible verse about thankfulness.
4. Optional: Laminate the place mats so they're reusable.

God Bless America!

Remember Our Military



On November 11th we celebrate Veterans' Day. This is the day we hope **all** Americans remember the sacrifices our Armed Forces have made to secure our freedom. We thank God for those men and women who have answered the call to serve our country. For the countless lives that have been lost at sea or on land ; at home or abroad; we honor them and salute them. We thank their families for sharing them with us.

In a few weeks we will be celebrating Thanksgiving. Most of us will be caught up in the acts of shopping , cooking, entertaining and enjoying time with family and friends, with little thought for our safety. Thank God there are people who are watching out for us so we can enjoy these blessings.

Freedom comes with a price! Jesus paid for our sins with His life. ~BL



GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 12. CENSUS (O) | 13. SHEEP (V) | 14. INN (E) |
| 9. SHEPHERDS (O) | 10. CAMEL (F) | 11. STAR (L) |
| 6. JOSEPH (I) | 7. JESUS (F) | 8. WISE MEN (T) |
| 3. MANGER (D) | 4. DONKEY (S) | 5. MARY (G) |
| 1. BETHLEHEM (G) | 2. ANGEL (O) | |

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 9.

FEBRUARY

- 16 Session
- 17 Presidents' Day
- 23 International Sunday
- 26 Ash Wednesday Service 7—8pm
- 27 Service (Vital Congregations Initiative [VCI]) 7—8pm
- 28 FLEC Black History Month Concert 5—7pm

MARCH

- 7 PNYC Stated Meeting
- 8 Visitors' Sunday
- 14 Drama Ministry
- 15 Session
- 21 Prayer and Fasting Service 9am—1pm
Kairos Outside 10am—5pm
Deacons' Pantry 10—11am
- 28 Philemon Prayer Breakfast
Drama Ministry
- 29 Women's Sunday

- *Bible Study: Tuesdays 12pm—1pm*
- *Zumba classes: Mondays and Thursdays 7—8 pm & Saturdays 9—10am*
- *CYD Ministry : Fridays 7—10pm*
- *The Girl Scout Troop : Saturdays 11am—1pm*
- *Mom's Kitchen: Thursdays 5:30 pm*
- *Men's Bible Study : Saturdays 8—9am*

THE SHEPHERD'S LOG

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