



The Bridge

April 2025



From the Pastor

Rev. Julie Sterling

Repairing the Breach

In Isaiah 58, the prophet exclaims, “Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in” (Isaiah 58:12). As the people of Israel returned from the cloud of exile and struggled to rebuild their lives, Isaiah questioned their efforts: [Are you not called] “to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them?” (Isaiah 58:7).

When we give to the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), we are combining our efforts with those across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to repair peoples’ lives — people who are hurting, oppressed, lost or on the margins of society. The exact people about whom Isaiah is speaking of. The people we are called to connect with every day, but especially in the light of the Good News of the resurrection.

I invite you to visit the OGHS website (pcusa.org/oghsmap). Find a partner on

the map and see how your gifts are used by the ministries these offerings support all over the world and offer prayers for those who will receive support through this offering. Small changes which, when added together here and around the globe, make huge differences in the lives of our siblings in need.

This is an opportunity for our congregation to recommit to our participation to do our part to participate in God’s ongoing repair of the world God so loves.

This year, I challenge each of you to increase your gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering to benefit Presbyterian ministries to combat hunger, provide assistance after disaster strikes, and to work with sustainable community development. You will see how giving opens your heart to God’s work in your own life. I hope that you’ll join us on Sunday, April 13th as we collect this offering and tangibly witness to the repairing love of God in Jesus Christ through One Great Hour of Sharing.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Julie Sterling

Our Mission — To be a bridge to Christ through faith and service • **Our Vision** — When SPC is faithful in accomplishing its mission, people will know that Christ is at work in their lives and follow Him • **We Value** — Being accepting, caring, outreaching, Spirit-led, and willing to serve

Prayer Requests

- † Jean Butcher
- † The family of Homer Smith
- † Faye Sobel
- † Eric Sterling
- † Joan Anderson
- † Jeffery Birkey
- † Charlotte Davidson
- † Richard Alan Goforth, Sr.
- † Pat Jones
- † Tommy Morrison
- † Charlie Powell
- † Cathy Stoughton
- † Ron Ventura
- † Caroline

Pray for our Military

- † Ashlyn Dawson
- † Laura Dawson
- † Sidney Dawson
- † Nick Meadors
- † Glenn Smith
- † Hayden Spalding
- † Greg Vernon

Happy Birthday

- 4/5 Curtis MacKenzie
- 4/7 Susie Stoughton
- 4/12 Erik Wood
- 4/12 Lilith Wood
- 4/15 Faye Sobel
- 4/19 Chris Johnson
- 4/25 Sherry Matthews

Happy Anniversary

- 4/1 Calvin & Susie Piland
- 4/13 Danny & Cheryl Morrow

The *Suffolk Presbyterian Bridge* is a publication of Suffolk Presbyterian Church in Suffolk, VA. The *Bridge* is published 12 times a year under the direction of the Administration/Communication Ministry Team of the SPC Session.

News items should be submitted to the newsletter editor by the 20th of the month in one of the following ways:

- email at office@suffolkpresbyterian.org
- mail to the church address
- Laura Farmer's office mailbox

Editor: *Laura Farmer*, Administrative Assistant

News Briefs

Food Pantry Donations: The greatest needs are canned veggies/fruits/tuna/chicken, cold cereal, peanut butter, and jelly. Financial donations accepted via church website. Donations delivered to Suffolk Christian Fellowship Center.

Gift Card Ministry: The deacons are collecting \$25 restaurant gift cards during the offering to help congregation members in times of need. These will be used to assist with meals.

Suffolk Little Pantry: The youth are collecting items for their project. Granola bars, individual cracker packets, fruit cups, rice crispy treats, and other non-perishable snack items can be placed in the Narthex collection box.

Glory to God Hymnbooks have been ordered to have in the sanctuary. If you would like to donate to help with the cost, each book is \$25. You can contribute on Sunday morning during the offering, mail in a contribution, or give online. Please designate that your gift is for the purchase of hymn books.

Easter Egg Hunt: Join us on Saturday, April 19 for our annual Easter Egg Hunt at 10 am. Rain or shine! Weather permitting, candy-filled eggs will be hidden outside. Donations of peanut-free individually wrapped candy will be collected through Sunday, April 6.



Administrative Office Hours

Laura Farmer's regular office hours are Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, and Thursdays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm. If you would like to contact her directly, please email office@suffolkpresbyterian.org or call 757-539-3213.

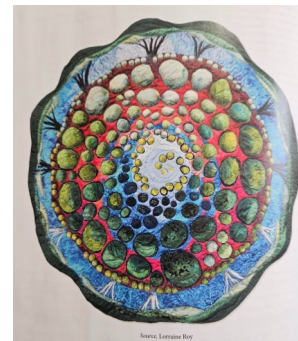
Directory updates: If you have a new address, phone number, or email, please contact the church office. If you are not in the directory, and would like to be added, please email your information.

Presbyterian Women—Water Justice

Have you ever wondered what the Bible says about water justice? Or how Christians can make an impact on our neighbor's ability to fairly obtain clean water? Join us On Monday, April 14 at 6pm for PW! During our study we will be discussing Lesson Four on Water Justice from our PW Horizons Bible Study. Our evening discussion will focus on scripture from Genesis chapters 1-12, and 42 and will consider the following main idea:

Water is so essential, and its presence and absence so impactful, that both Scripture and contemporary events reflect its multidimensional effects on human life.

Each study includes a DVD recorded description of the chapter led by author Rev. Dr. Patrica K. Tull followed by group discussion. All are welcome to attend. Extra studies are available by request but are not needed for participation. Hope to see you there!



Empty Bowls: Helping the hungry



Lisa Morrison pinches off a fist-sized chunk of tan colored clay that looks almost like bread dough and gently kneads it as if making dinner rolls. Then with great force, she throws it down onto her potter's wheel, expertly hitting the center.

As she presses a foot pedal, the wheel starts spinning. Her fingers caress the moist clay and guide the outer edges upward as the sides of a bowl magically appear. One hand shapes the bowl-to-be; the other holds a sponge that pats the spinning creation to remove excess water that could cause the bowl to flop.

Once it's finished, glazed and fired, this bowl will be donated to Empty Bowls, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts' fundraiser from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 5. Lisa, who teaches pottery at the center, and her students are participating in the center's first Empty Bowls, a global movement to help combat food insecurity. Other local potters are also contributing bowls from their kilns.

For \$25, participants get to pick their favorite hand-made bowl and fill it with soup along with some bread provided by Arts Kitchen, the Center's in-house caterer. "We're shooting for 300 people," said **Rebecca Myers**, the Center's development director. "That's a lot of bowls, but we're optimistic."

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March Session Notes - from the Clerk

At the March 2025 stated Session meeting, the pastor reported on her activities and a financial report was received from **Jack Stoughton**.

The Clerk noted that the Session had approved the minutes of the February, 2025 stated meeting by email vote on February 24, 2025. The Session took the following actions:

- voted to approve a renewal of the Music Director's contract extending the contract until July 2028.
- voted to approve proposed changes to the church's Manual of Administrative Operations and to recommend approval of those changes by the congregation at a called congregational meeting following Sunday worship on April 6, 2025. These changes will update the government of the church and technical requirements to bring them in line with our current circumstances.
- appointed **Maryanne Persons** and **Cheryl Morrow** as representatives to a committee to coordinate with West End Baptist representatives to address issues and needs of the two congregations as we share occupancy of the building.
- elected **Cheryl Morrow** as a Deputy Receiving Treasurer
- Voted to purchase 32 Glory to God hymnals to be placed in the Sanctuary for use in worship services. West End Baptist has agreed to placing and leaving these hymnals in the pew racks. This will eliminate the need to print hymn pages in the weekly bulletins.

The Session also discussed the Holy Week and Easter schedule of joint services with West End Baptist and Oxford United Methodist. They also received a report from Bruce Sharp on the initial meeting of the PEVA Small Church Cohort.

Bruce Sharp

Session Recommends Changes to Manual of Administrative Operations

The general rules for the government of the PCUSA are contained in the Book of Church Order, but each level of the church is required to adopt a Manual of Administrative Operations which sets forth the specific rules for the governing of that organization. The congregation of Suffolk Presbyterian approved its original Manual in 2013. At the beginning of the COVID crisis in 2020, the Session adopted emergency policies which suspended some of the rules, including the annual election and limitations on the terms of service for officers. With the effort involved in making decisions about the future of the church and the sale of the property, our church has continued to operate

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LWW Spring Plant Fundraiser

On behalf of Suffolk Presbyterian Church's Living Waters for the World mission Team, I am excited to let you know we are launching our LWW spring plant sale fundraiser.

But first, a brief update on SPC's mission in Guatemala. With the exception of **Rob Saunders'** solo trip to Guatemala last year, our communications with local LWW operating partners and support staff remains limited to Zoom and Facetime meetings. We are focusing our sustaining efforts on such needs as system upgrades, health licensing, replacements of filters, and five-gallon water bottles. Last month, we held a virtual meeting with the operators of our first (2008) system in Estancia de la Virgen who face technical issues following the passing of Sergio Ramirez, the original operator.

Through your donations and fundraising support last year, your LWW mission team sent \$4,5000 to support the work of our in-country staff and \$2,700 for a water softener to improve water quality for the project at the middle school in El Paso de los Jalapas. Bless you for your support that has made these investments possible.

As last year, the plant sale selection includes colorful spring annual varieties of impatiens, petunias, marigolds, and geraniums to brighten your gardens and landscapes. These beautiful plants are market priced and will be available at last year's prices! Beginning Sunday April 6, order forms will be available at the entry doors to the sanctuary and distributed later in a church-wide e-mailing.

Please note that **all orders must be returned no later than April 27**. Plants can be delivered locally or picked up at the WEBC parking lot on **Friday, May 2** between 9 and 11a.m. Payment and ordering instructions are included on the order forms.

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Lenten Cantata

"Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." These words are familiar to us at the beginning of Holy Week, particularly on Palm Sunday. On Sunday, April 13th, the choir will present the Lenten cantata "Forsaken," composed by Mark Hayes. This performance recounts the events of the four days from the streets of Jerusalem to Jesus' time with His disciples praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, reflecting on Judas' betrayal. "Forsaken" commemorates the final days of God's Messiah. Accompanied by piano, organ, and a small ensemble of instruments, listeners will embark on an emotional journey from the triumphal entry to the cries of "crucify Him," culminating in the powerful finale, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." The program will begin at 3 pm in the sanctuary of West End Baptist / Suffolk Presbyterian, followed by a reception with light refreshments.

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Proceeds will benefit the Suffolk Christian Fellowship's food bank, the food distribution site that Suffolk Presbyterian and West End Baptist churches support with donations of non-perishable foods.

Thomas Yannuzzi, the Center's executive director, wants to make the Center more involved in the community and make the arts more accessible to those who might not be able to afford it. "What's cool is our chef would make a delicious soup out of things you would normally throw away and teach you how to make it," he said.

Since she was young, **Lisa** has been obsessed with "playing with dirt" – making beautiful ceramic pieces. She fell in love with pottery when her Girl Scout troop visited **Linda Bunch's** studio in Chuckatuck. At Virginia Commonwealth University, **Lisa** learned to "throw" – making pottery on the wheel instead of by hand. She has taught art in schools for 26 years and has worked for PBS in Richmond.

After a day of teaching at Southwestern Elementary School, **Lisa** heads to her "happy place" - the pottery studio where she creates treasures for family and friends. She has generously shared her talent with her church family, conducting a Lunch and Learn where she helped members make simple trays and plates.

Lisa, a life-long member of SPC, sings in the choir and rotates as discussion leader of the adult Sunday School class. She has served as a deacon and moderator of the Presbyterian Women. She operates the camera for the livestreaming of Sunday worship services.

The daughter of Maxann Morrison and the late George Morrison, she grew up on Pinner Street along with her sister Teresa and older brothers Tom and Randy. She is excited that she and her students can combine their talent with serving her hometown.

"This beautiful community cares about people," she said. "To help with a real issue, food insecurity, is a way of bringing the community together to solve a problem for everyone."

- *Susie Stoughton*

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Your LWW mission team thanks you once again for your faithful support of this project. Please pass along this opportunity to your neighbors and friends to support this mission, now in its 19th year.

Blessings, peace, and keep the clean water flowing!

Jack Stoughton, SPC LWW team member.

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under the emergency rules, but the church leadership has determined that it is time to return to “normal.”

The leaders of the church met for an afternoon retreat on January 17, 2025 and discussed the changes necessary to create a church government which reflects our present circumstances. Several decisions were made and the clerk has drafted a revised Manual of Administrative Operations which reflects those changes. The Session approved the changes at its March meeting and has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, April 6, 2025 following the morning worship service for the purpose of having the congregation vote on final approval of the Session’s recommended changes

Major recommended changes to the SPC Manual of Administrative Operations include:

- Revising the Session membership to four members (two classes of two members each serving for two years) plus the moderator. The current requirement is a Session of six members divided into three classes serving a three year term. Also eliminates the term limitation addressing service on the Board of Deacons.
- Eliminating the requirement for a Board of Deacons, but preserving the Session’s right to appoint commissioned Deacons for specific purposes from the members already ordained as Deacons and the congregation’s right to elect and ordain new Deacons to serve as commissioned Deacons.
- Reducing the requirement for the membership of the nominating committee from 5 to 3 members; eliminating the requirement for a member from the Board of Deacons. Allowing the Session to appoint all the members of the Nominating Committee with a congregational election required only if a member of the congregation objects to the Session’s selections. The intent of this change is to simplify the nominations process while retaining the right of a congregational election, if desired
- Changing the requirement for Session meetings to no less than quarterly rather than the existing requirement to meet monthly. This will allow the Session to decrease the frequency of meetings in the future if it becomes desirable.
- Revising the quorum for a Session meeting to the moderator plus two elders instead of the current quorum of one third of members . This change reflects the reduction of the Session to four members.
- Revising the quorum for a congregational meeting to be 20% of active members rather than the current 10%. With a current active membership of 36, a 10% quorum is only 4 members which seems too small.
- Changing the requirement to elect “a treasurer” to read “treasurer or treasurers.” This change allows the election of receiving and disbursing treasurers and also assistant treasurers rather than just “a treasurer.”



April 2025

Suffolk Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
* The Ecumenical Youth Group will meet on Sunday, April 6 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 6 to 7:30 pm.		1	2 12 PM Lenten Study & Lunch	3 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	4	5
6 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sunday School *6 pm Youth Group	7	8	9 12 PM Lenten Study & Lunch	10 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	11	12
13 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sunday School 3 PM Lenten Cantata & Reception	14 6 PM Presbyterian Women	15	16 3 PM Session Meeting	17 7 PM Maundy Thursday Service	18 7 PM Good Friday Service (Oxford UMC)	19 10 AM Easter Egg Hunt
20 7:30 AM Sunrise Service 11 AM Joint Easter Service	21	22	23	24 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	25	26
27 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sunday School	28	29	30	 <p><i>The deadline for the May edition of The Bridge is April 21.</i></p>		



Suffolk Presbyterian Church
105 Saint James Avenue
Suffolk, Virginia 23434



Visit our website!
suffolkpresbyterian.org

Suffolk
Presbyterian Church

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Pastor E-Mail:
pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org

CHOIR PRACTICE

9:00 AM

WORSHIP

9:30 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:45 AM

Upcoming Events:

April 6—Ecumenical Youth Group (St. Paul's Episcopal)

April 13—Lenten Cantata & Reception

April 14—Presbyterian Women

April 16—Session Meeting

April 17—Maundy Thursday Service

April 18—Good Friday Service (Oxford UMC)

April 19—Easter Egg Hunt

April 20—Easter Sunrise Service

April 20—Joint Easter Service

Wednesdays—Lenten Study & Lunch (through 4/9)

Thursdays—Spiritual Fellowship & Choir Rehearsal



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