



The Bridge

March 2025



From the Pastor

Rev. Julie Sterling

Taking Time for Lent

The Lenten season is almost here. March 5th marks the beginning of our 2025 Lenten journey. The path to Easter begins on Ash Wednesday with the Imposition of ashes. The ash marks on the forehead or hand represent our repentance for sin. They are a reminder of our own humanity, and the importance of God in our lives. Author N.T. Wright explains the importance of our journey to Easter:

“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.”

Over the course of five weeks, believers are encouraged to focus on faith through prayer, penance, fasting, giving, and reflection. The purpose of this time not only prepares us for Easter but also allows us to grow in faith, deepen our relationship with God, and serve others. There are many ways to express your

Lenten discipline. You may consider doing one of these as a celebration of your life with God:

- ✦ Fast or give up something such as a favorite sweet or limit screen time. You may consider having a ‘meatless meal’ once a week.
- ✦ Follow a Lenten devotion each morning or join a weekly Lenten study group.
- ✦ Attend special services during Lent and Holy Week at the church.
- ✦ Schedule time for prayer and meditation throughout the week.
- ✦ Donate or volunteer for a charity.
- ✦ Make health choices such as walking 10000 steps each day.

As in past years, our church will provide a daily devotional and a weekly Lenten study. A digital copy of [The Sanctuary for Lent 2025](#) by Justin LaRosa has been sent out as an email attachment and physical copies will be available at the church on Sunday mornings. We are partnering with West End Baptist for a Lenten Lunch and Learn on Wednesdays starting March 5th following a brief Ash Wednesday service. Our weekly study will focus on the Psalms. The copies of the book [Pause: Sending Lent with the Psalms](#) by Elizabeth F. Caldwell are available at the church and can also be purchased as a

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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

- ✝ The family of Homer Smith
- ✝ Eric Sterling
- ✝ Joan Anderson
- ✝ Jeffery Birkey
- ✝ Charlotte Davidson
- ✝ Richard Alan Goforth, Sr.
- ✝ Pat Jones
- ✝ Tommy Morrison
- ✝ Charlie Powell
- ✝ Mary Ann Sterling
- ✝ Ron Ventura
- ✝ Caroline

Happy Birthday

- 3/1 Bruce Sharp
- 3/30 Cheryl Super

Happy Anniversary

- 3/7 Jack & Susie Stoughton

Pray for our Military

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

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.



Be sure to check out the new sign! Many thanks to the SPC and WEBC volunteers who worked on the new sign approval and placement.

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.

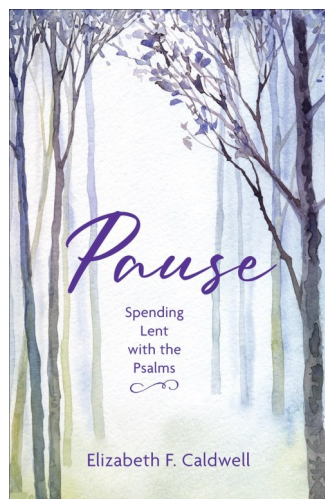
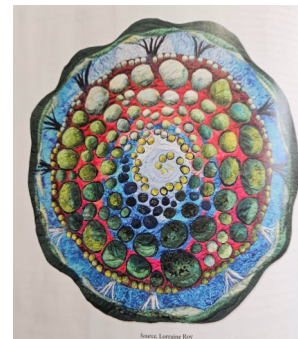
Directory updates: If you have a new address, phone number, or email, please contact the church office. If you are not in the directory, and would like to be added, please email your information.

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, March 10 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:

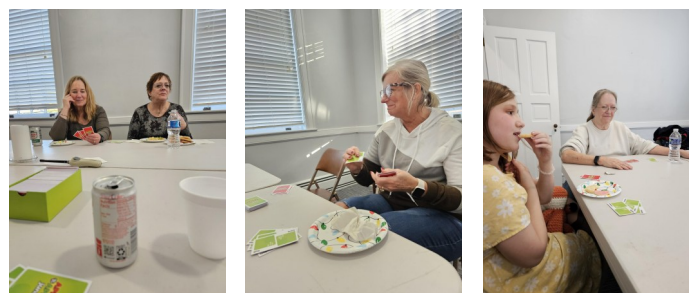
Water is so essential, and its presence and absence so impactful, that both Scripture and contemporary events reflect its multidimensional effects on human life.

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!



What are you doing for lunch? Join us on Wednesdays at noon starting March 5th for Lenten Lunch and Learn. Each session will include a soup and salad lunch followed by a discussion of Elisabeth Caldwell's book *Pause: Spending Lent with the Psalms*. This is a joint program with West End Baptist Church and will be led by both Rev. Dale and Rev. Julie. Books are available at the church or can be ordered online but are not required for the study. Digital downloads are available for purchase at the Amazon link below.

<https://www.amazon.com/Pause-Spending-Elizabeth-F-Caldwell/dp/0664268439>



Pictures from the Game Night held in February.

February Session Notes - from the Clerk

At the February 2025 stated Session meeting, circumstances meant that only the moderator, the clerk and one Session member were able to sign onto the online meeting. Although this attendance was technically a quorum based on the church's current Manual of Administrative Operations, it was agreed that all actions requiring a vote by the Session would be sent out to all Session members for a vote by email after the meeting.

At the meeting, the pastor reported on her activities and a financial report was received from Jack Stoughton. By email vote after the meeting, the Session approved the minutes of the January 15, 2025 stated meeting and approved and ordered to be published the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation held on January 26, 2025. In other actions, the Session appointed Bruce Sharp to be the church's representative to the Small Church Cohort of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia. It accepted the resignation of Rob Saunders from the position of church Trustee and appointed Jack Stoughton as trader and manager of a stock account holding shares of Dominion energy and a bank account holding funds for the maintenance of the carillon. The Session also approved the dissolution of the cross maintenance fund and transfer of those funds to the Building Fund for further development of our space in the West End Baptist Church building.

The Session also discussed revisions to the Manual of Administrative Operations and received a report on the January 25th meeting of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.

Bruce Sharp



SPC will collect the One Great Hour of Sharing offering through Easter. Thank you for the continued support!



Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession and contrition. Acknowledging that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we stand in solidarity as fellow creatures before our Creator, acutely aware of our mortality. In the face of our transience, we pledge ourselves anew to live unto God's Word in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that remains forever.

Historically, Ash Wednesday was a time when penitents were presented for church discipline during Lent, culminating in reconciliation on Maundy Thursday. Ash Wednesday is also the occasion when would-be disciples of Christ known as catechumens were enrolled in the catechumenate, a special time of learning the basics of the faith in preparation for baptism on Easter Sunday or during the Easter Vigil. In some traditions, Ash Wednesday is a fast day, beginning the Lenten time of fasting and preparation for the Great Three Days that culminate in Easter.

Excerpt from: PCUSA Mission Agency: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/christianyear/ash-wednesday/>

This year Ash Wednesday falls on March 5th . We will have an imposition of ashes service at the church at noon and at 7 pm.

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digital download through Amazon. We are also doing joint Ash Wednesday services on March 5th at noon and at 7pm in the sanctuary with WEB. Ashes can also be received during my office hours between 9:30am and noon.

There are many ways to experience Lent. You may want to consider ways that best speak to your specific journey. If you are interested in devotions to read on your own, you can check out suggested material through the pcusastore.com. I have also provided a PDF copy by email of the PCUSA giving calendar which is part of the One Great Hour of Sharing curriculum and provides daily prayer opportunities and calls to action.

Remember, this time is a gift to grow in faith and love with God and also connect through service with others. Pope Francis says that Lent comes providentially to reawaken us and shake us from our lethargy. Each year we begin our Lenten Journey with the following message from Isaiah 58:6-7

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

May we hear his words and use this opportunity to remember our fragile humanity and to act with humility and mercy.



March 2025

Suffolk Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School	3	4	5 12 PM Imposi- tion of Ashes, Study, & Lunch 7 PM Imposi- tion of Ashes	6 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	7	8
9 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School	10 6 PM Presby- terian Women	11	12 12 PM Lenten Study & Lunch 3 PM Session Meeting	13 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	14	15
16 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School	17	18	19 12 PM Lenten Study & Lunch	20 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	21	22
23 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School	24	25	26 12 PM Lenten Study & Lunch	27 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal	28	29
30 5th Sunday 9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School	31				The deadline for the April edition of The Bridge is March 20.	



Suffolk Presbyterian Church
105 Saint James Avenue
Suffolk, Virginia 23434



Visit our website!
suffolkpresbyterian.org

Suffolk
Presbyterian Church

Reverend Julie Sterling,
Pastor

Church Office:
757.539.3213

Office E-mail:
office@suffolkpresbyterian.org
Pastor E-Mail:
pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org

CHOIR PRACTICE

9:00 AM

WORSHIP

9:30 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:45 AM

Upcoming Events:

March 5—Ash Wednesday
March 10—Presbyterian Women
March 19—Session Meeting
March 30—5th Sunday Offering

Wednesdays—Lenten Study & Lunch
Thursdays—Spiritual Fellowship & Choir Rehearsal



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