

Grace Notes

Summer 2020 • Vol. 205



I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Psalm 122:1

It has been more than three months since we have been able to gather in our sanctuary for worship together. Our hopes for reopening our building have swung with varying predictions from experts and with evolving learning about COVID-19 infections. Not long ago, recommendations suggested that reopening of worship services would most likely be allowed in Phase 4, later on in the summer. Recently, Governor Cuomo announced that religious services will be allowed to resume with restrictions during Phase 2, which for the Mid-Hudson area has just begun. While it is very encouraging that the State's phases of reopening are being reached even earlier than at first predicted, many questions remain. For example, public health experts are very concerned about when (more likely than if) a second wave will hit our area.

A reopening task force was established by the Session to deliberate carefully regarding the most prudent course going forward for Rye Presbyterian Church. It has studied recommendations and guidelines from the NYS Department of Health, the CDC, and Presbytery. The task force has outlined several procedural steps to aid in our reopening. The guiding principle of the task force has been to ensure the health and safety of our congregants and of our leadership.

Our live stream services are going well, and we feel that being cautious is prudent, especially with so many in our congregation having one or more COVID-19 risk factors. At the same time, we recognize that many are eager to return to gathering together in person in our lovely church building if that can be done safely. Church areas have been thoroughly disinfected and sanitized. With ongoing diligent care to follow cleaning and other recommendations, reopening should be minimally risky to many people.

If the metrics for our area continue to be satisfied, the task force has recommended that we experiment with first steps at having some people allowed into our church for 10 o'clock worship on June 28. Note that we will continue to live stream our services even when we return to worshipping in person.

The procedures we will use as we reopen the sanctuary for worship are on page 2. Thank you for taking the time to read this. It is a lot to think about and keep in mind as we gather, but by taking these precautions we trust that we will be both glad and safe as we return to our "house of the Lord."

Daniel Love Co-pastor

Kathryn Ridley Clerk of Session

June 29 update:

The first Sunday with people back in the sanctuary went very well. Many thanks to all those who have worked hard to make this happen, both staff and volunteers! It would not have been able to happen without you! There were about 30 in worship on June 28, well below our 25% capacity, which means there is plenty of space for you to come and worship in person. Over the summer we will continue to make adjustments as we keep a watchful eye on safety and seek to offer the best possible worship experience to those present in the sanctuary, as well as those online. Feedback welcome!

The following are procedures we will follow as we reopen the sanctuary for worship:

- 1. Worship attendance is limited to 25% of capacity. For our sanctuary, that is approximately 100 people.
- 2. We will be using a reservation system for worship. The link will be sent out via email. You must register to attend wor- 10. For a time, worship will look and sound different. ship each week so that we can maintain the mandated attendance limits. You will be asked your family name, and how many from your family will be attending. If the service registration fills to capacity, your name will be placed on a waiting list, with notifications sent out if a space opens up.
- 3. We request that you attend only if you are healthy, are showing no signs or symptoms of illness, and have not had any known exposure to COVID-19 in the preceding two weeks. If you have any symptoms, please stay home. You can still watch the worship via YouTube or Zoom.
- 4. If you are in a high risk group due to health issues or age (over 65), the current recommendation is to continue to stay home. Please consider asking your doctor how prudent it is for you to attend worship in person at this point in time.
- 5. Since it may take more time than usual to get everyone in place, we ask that you plan to arrive around 9:50 a.m.
- 6. You must wear a mask at all times during the service. You are encouraged to bring your own, though we will have a limited supply of adult-sized masks if you should forget
- 7. You will be asked to use hand sanitizer before entering the sanctuary.
- 8. For entry into the church everyone will use the main sanctuary doors facing the Post Road. Ushers will be there to greet you, confirm your good health, and help you find a seat safely distanced from other congregants, filling the available pews from front to back.
- 9. There will be no child care or Sunday School, but children are welcome to sit with their families during worship. We will provide coloring pages and illustrated children's bulletins that will be connected to each Sunday's scriptures. We ask that families bring their own crayons or colored pencils

- for their children to use during worship. It might also be helpful to bring a hard surface (a book or clipboard) for them to use while coloring.
- - a. Upon entering the sanctuary, you will be asked to check in and then shown where to sit. You will not be able to simply choose your "usual" pew. Families will be able to sit together.
 - b. Pews will be marked off to maintain social distancing.
 - c. To increase air circulation, while the AC will be running, we will also have windows open. Please feel free to dress comfortably.
 - d. There will be no use of bibles or hymnals, which have been removed from the sanctuary.
 - e. Bulletins will be preplaced on usable pew seats.
 - f. There will be no congregational singing of the hymns. Hymns will still be included in the service and may be sung by those worshipping from home via our live stream broadcast.
 - g. There will be no physical contact with those outside family groups, such as handshakes, elbow bumps or hugs.
 - h. There will be no offering plate passed. Offerings (checks preferred) may be put in the offering plates at the exits.
 - Until our permanent video system is installed, there will be cameras and microphones visible in the sanctuary to allow for our live stream broadcast.
- 11. Following worship, you will be asked to leave the sanctuary, with the north side aisle exiting through chapel doors, the center aisle through the main door, and those in the south aisle through the library door, with everyone practicing social distancing. To minimize crossing over, those nearest the doors will exit first. There will be no Coffee Hour at this time.
- 12. We ask that you do not go to any other part of the building. You are also asked to use the restrooms only if absolutely necessary. (Please plan ahead.)



Sanctuary Re-opens for In-Person Worship—Sunday, June 28, 2020

Confirmation Class

Congratulations to the Confirmation Class of 2020!

As this unique year continues on, this year's class was welcomed by the Session into adult membership at Rye Presbyterian at a joint Zoom meeting of the class and the Session on May 27. The elders were pleased to hear from all members of the class about their faith journeys and their intentions to continue seeking God and God's direction in their lives. All that is missing is Confirmation Sunday! We look forward to seeing this class make their public profession of faith once it is safe to gather a class and congregation of this size. In the meantime, please welcome the newest members of Rye Presbyterian Church:

Carter Appleyard, son of Sheryl and Randy Appleyard Luke Azer, son of Robin and Richard Azer Madison Barber, daughter of Cynthia and Mark Barber Campbell Billingsley, daughter of Julia and Jim Billingsley J. Latham Billingsley, son of Julia and Jim Billingsley Blaise Denson, son of Denise and Terry Denson Palmer Estep, son of Shelly and Chad Estep Tanner Howson, son of Molly and Jud Howson Cian Keegan, son of Lisa and Mark Keegan Hannah Keegan, daughter of Lisa and Mark Keegan Andrew Keller, son of Helen and Andrew Keller Thomas Keller, son of Helen and Andrew Keller Victoria Medow, daughter of Lea and Eric Medow Tyler Moyer, son of Elizabeth and Grant Moyer

Charlie O'Rorke, son of Hollis and Thomas O'Rorke
Spencer Owen, son of Susan and David Owen
Cameron Park, son of Addy and Charlies Park
Benjamin Poole, son of Stacy and Ben Poole
Sam Rafa, son of Kristen and Michael Rafa,
Lane Russell, daughter of Carolyn and Christopher Russell
Toma Sellar, son of Virginie Baur-Sellar and John Sellar
Avery Smith, daughter of Lila and Nicholas Smith
Leigh Smith, daughter of Lila and Nicholas Smith
Jeremie Thinat, son of Mireille Ferrier and Julien Thinat
Ellie Thurston, daughter of Kimberly and Charlie Thurston
Lili Waters, daughter of Sarah and Alex Waters
William Weber, son of Nicole and Rob Weber



The Session and Confirmation Class meet on Zoom.

Speaking Out for Peace and Justice

On Saturday and Sunday, June 13 and 14, RPC created and hosted two powerful events to enable church members and others in the community to first creatively express their views on issues relating to race, policing, and other matters in the forefront of current public discourse and then to participate in an Interfaith Gathering in Solidarity with our black brothers and sisters. The concepts were created by Dr. John Miller and Rebecca Emmanuel Rooney, with help from Nancy Steed, Allison Reynolds, Cynthia Deen, Dolores Eyler, Emily Carriero, and Dinah Howland.

PANELS FOR PEACE



Lining the exterior of the stone wall of RPC for 192 feet from Parsons St. to the Post Road were two-foot tall plywood panels on which members of RPC and others in the community wrote or posted messages of peace, unity, justice, and equality. John Miller and Juan Velasquez had barely finished putting up the panels on Saturday, June 13, and posted instructions about what they were for, than the panels began to be filled with posters, handwritten signs, statements of solidarity with Black Lives Matter, and calls to love one another.



The Show-Up & Make team and others painted large segments of the panels with bright colors, so peoples' statements could stand out. The panels gave those who marched in the protest on Saturday down the Post Road to Rye, a great opportunity to show their solidarity with our black brothers and sisters in creative and meaningful ways. One that stood out was a list of the names of all the African Americans who had been killed by police in the time between the deaths of Eric Garner and George Floyd. The number was stunning.

Many posters had been prepared in advance and contributed by those who marched in the local protests, including one that said, "Laundry is the only thing that should be separated by color." Many who passed by stopped to reflect and to share the feelings of race, support for Black Americans and reconciliation. The panels will stay up for several more days as a reminder of the challenge to erase racism.

INTERFAITH GATHERING IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR BLACK BROTHERS AND SISTERS



The afternoon of Sunday, June 14, was a beautiful sunlit day, as a large crowd gathered on the lawn in front of RPC for this Celebration of Solidarity. After an opening hymn, "He's Got The Whole World in His Hands" by Joseph Moses from Bethesda Baptist Church in Port Chester, Rev. Dan Love welcomed those who had come and suggested that after the program they might want to walk along the sidewalk fronting the Panels for Peace and add their own thoughts. Rev. Love took special note of RPC's ongoing commitment to racial justice.

The Rev. Kate Malin, Rector of Christ's Church, spoke next celebrating the rich heritage of all the faith traditions represented and their common belief in a God who wraps all of humanity in a loving embrace. She spoke of the parable of the Good Samaritan and reminding us to be like the Samaritan and not remain standing silently on the other side of the street.



The next speaker was Charles Lewis, a formerly incarcerated individual who was a graduate of RPC's Coming Home program and later its peer facilitator. He told a rapt audience what it was like growing up as a black man in America. One story that resonated especially was when he was sitting in the middle of the back seat of a car, riding with four white friends. The driver was pulled over and his registration didn't match his plates. One officer was writing up a ticket for the driver, while the other dragged Charles out from the middle of the

back seat, threw him on the hood of the car for a complete pat down, which came up empty. No one else was touched. No apologies.

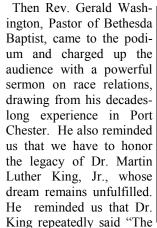


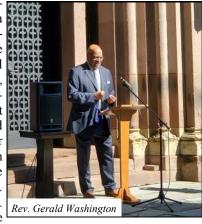
After a song from Margaret Richmond of Bethesda Baptist, Rabbi Daniel Gropper, from Community Synagogue, stepped to the microphone. He held the crowd spell-bound with stories from the Torah of slavery of the Jewish people from Egypt to Babylon. That history of slavery lasted 430 years, a connection with the African American ancestors who first arrived in this country in slave ships starting over 400 years ago. Rabbi Gropper challenged us to bring justice and peace now.



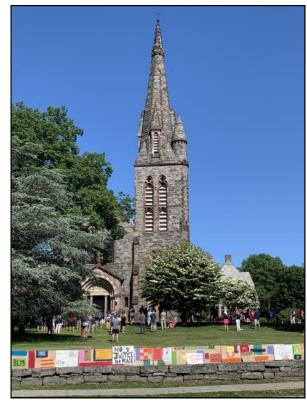








time is always right to do right" and that now is a particularly good time to take that to heart, while the wind is at our back. He ended his sermon with a clear call to action—that we should treat this gathering as only the first step in building unity and ethnic lines, so those lines no longer divide us but rather enable us connecting with one another across racial, religious, and to work together in solidarity.





Panels of Peace













Christian Education



Sunday School

For the first few weeks of July, we will continue with Illustrated Ministry's Compassion Camp! The curriculum's theme is compassion for others, ourselves, and the world, and it is geared toward K-5th graders, plus activities specifically for preschool-age children.

Each week will focus on a different theme:

Session 3-For Myself (Mark 12:28-31) Session 4-As We Move (Ruth 1:1-22) Session 5-With the World (Leviticus 25)

The curriculum's flexible structure allows families to choose from a variety of ways to engage the theme and scripture readings for each week at home. We will use the Christian Ed weekly newsletter to send out all materials and videos. If you would like to receive these materials and are not already signed up for our newsletter, please contact Rev. JP. We hope you and your families will join us as we engage scripture and cultivate compassion together!

Starting Sunday, July 26, we will take a break from virtual Sunday School so we all can come back refreshed for the beginning of the program year in September!

During that time, we will continue to support our families through our regular weekly Christian Ed newsletter.

Children in Worship

While we have begun gathering in person for worship again, it will be a while until we can start up Sunday School and Child Care. So to our families with young children:

"Jesus said to them, 'Allow the children to come to me. Don't forbid them, because God's kingdom belongs to people like these children...' Then he hugged the children and blessed them."

-Mark 10:14-16

Jesus not only welcomed children, he also blessed them. Know that your children's presence in worship is both welcomed and a blessing to us all! Here are some ideas to help make the most out of worship as a family:

- ♦ Bring crayons or colored pencils from home so your children can color the provided coloring pages and illustrated children's bulletins.
- ◆ Explain what is happening during worship and what is coming next. Let children cross things off in the bulletin as they happen. Whispering is okay!
- When it's time to stand, allow children to kneel on the pews if they would like.
- ◆ Allow children to participate in the offering by putting in your envelope or putting in their own gift. A picture drawn for God is appropriate!

Most importantly, relax and be at peace. We know that God made children to be full of energy and excitement. We look forward to seeing you all in worship!



Middle School Connection & High School Youth Group

• Group Me

We are keeping the connections going through our middle school and high school GroupMe group chats! If your youth would like to be a part of these chats, please send **Rev. JP** either their cell-phone number or email.

• Gatherings

For the summer, we will meet when the Spirit moves us, so please keep an eye out for more information coming your way soon!

• Service Opportunities

We are planning some ways we can serve our community together while following social distance guidelines. As of right now, the plan for July is to help out the Midnight Run program in NYC either by collecting clothes or preparing food. More information coming your way soon! If you have any ideas for service opportunities in August, please contact Rev. JP.







Sesquicentennial Service Challenge, Baby Bundle Drive

Volunteering at RPC... Reflections on NOLA Trips - by Emma Marshall

When the time had finally come when I reached the age where I could go on the NOLA mission trip, I was ecstatic. Growing up six years apart from my older sister, she always got to do things before me. When she returned from her NOLA trip seven years ago she couldn't stop talking about how the trip changed her perspective of life and brought her closer to God. As a naive nine year old at the time, I couldn't quite grasp what she meant.

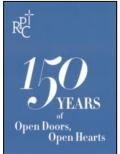
Six years later it was my time to experience this trip that she raved about. From arriving to departing a smile never left my face. I was fortunate enough to work on Ms. Brown's house while others worked on renovating a school. I will never forget Ms. Brown, her generosity, gratitude, and hospitality was something I admired about her. She wanted to pass down her house to her daughter, but at the time it wasn't in the condition to do so. From scraping, painting, drilling, to hammering we were constantly putting an unconditional amount of love into her house. Even though it reached 95 degrees and 100% humidity, the positivity did not evaporate from the air. We would end the day

reflecting on where we saw our three J's (Joy, Junk, and Jesus). This made me realize that Jesus is really looking over us and appears in our life every day if we truly choose to see him. His values live inside of us and are carried onto others when we choose to aid. Every time we finished the day working on her house a warm feeling filled my body knowing I am helping change the life of Ms. Brown for the better.

NOLA enhanced my perspective of life by showing me just how lucky I have it. I was always grateful for everything I received, but when I experienced firsthand what less fortunate people have to endure every day it made me realize how much I can help. We, as citizens of Westchester County, have an ample amount of resources at our fingertips. There are so many more homes and schools just in New Orleans that need the love we poured into Ms. Brown's house. We are the ones that can make an impact on the lives of the less fortunate. So why not reach out a helping hand? If you're reading this and you're coming of age to go on this trip I strongly urge you to go, it was life changing. This trip ingrained in me that God put us on this Earth to help others.

Emma Marshall is a high school junior in our church's youth group. Last summer, Emma joined us for our service trip to New Orleans. During the year, she serves regularly as a teaching assistant in our Sunday School program.

The Sesquicentennial Service Challenge



2020 marks the sesquicentennial of our sanctuary. 150 years of people coming in and going out through the doors of our beautiful sanctuary. People come in to find their faith strengthened and renewed as we worship together. People then go out in service to the world beyond our doors.

The Mission and Outreach Committee invites you to join your fellow disciples of Rye Presbyterian Church in the 2020 Sesquicentennial Service Challenge!

The goal: at least 150 minutes of service from every member for every month of 2020. With 1052 members, that would mean the total number of services minutes for 2020 would be 1,893,600!

Please know that ANY volunteer service you do either with the church or in the community COUNTS. If you are giving the gift of your time, it counts. When logging your minutes, you can group your minutes

together. You don't need to log each activity separately. Simply total your minutes and then list, as briefly as possible, what activities you did. The two things we are tracking are total number of minutes (not hours), and the variety of activities that people are involved in as they give the gift of their time by volunteering.

Minutes logged thus far: 178,361

TO LOG YOUR MINUTES, GO TO: https://ryepc.com/150



Music Notes



From Jason Charneski

What You Likely Will See and Hear in the Foreseeable Future

Approximately 10 years ago, a colleague gave me a sheet of paper on which was printed a supplemental Beatitude: Blessed are the flexible, for they will not be bent out of shape. I posted it on the hallway side of the door to my office; thus, it served as a daily reminder to me.

As we "reopen" worship to include a limited number of persons in the pews, we are aware that flexibility will be necessary in order to operate as normally as we can while adhering to safety protocols. How might this pertain to the music offered in worship? How might we engage in education and enrichment in new ways?

We are pleased that the Chancel Choir's section leaders have agreed to a schedule of serving as soloists. This fills a desire for additional music in worship. It also will supplement the hymn singing offered by the pastors, as, unfortunately, those of you in the pews will not be able to sing (this due to current evidence demonstrating that group singing is a significant contributor to spread/receipt of the virus). The soloist will be distanced some 27' (yes, feet!) from the nearest person in the chancel, and all of us in the chancel will wear masks when not having to speak or sing (persons in the pews will be required to wear masks). The placement of camera(s) and microphones necessary in order to continue the feed to Zoom and YouTube means that the soloist will not be "front-and-center;" rather, he or she likely will be positioned in the right corner of the uppermost choir riser. As we learn more, we will adapt.

I plan to use the technology now available to create and share some brief videos: We'll take a tour of the sanctuary organ; we'll witness the process of the removal of the existing organ in the chapel and the installation of the new one (more details about this project will be published in the September edition of *Grace Notes*); and, we'll explore aspects of the music that will be offered in worship each Sunday. Lisa Rawson is planning ways (in person and online) that she can engage children and youth in activities that do not involve group singing. Again, as we learn more, we will adapt.

Reading the Bible: Update

On June 1, I began my daily discipline (well, almost daily...) of reading the Bible (*The New Oxford Annotated* version of the NRSV). As of today (June 18), I have read the introductory essays to the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus, along with the entire books of Genesis and Exodus. I now am in chapter 15 of Leviticus. I set a timer for 30 minutes and read at a pace wherein I do not feel rushed, nor compelled to complete x-number of chapters or pages.

I have observed the degree to which much of these first three books of the Old Testament is the result of synthesis from many sources (there is a remarkable amount of redundancy of material, especially the genealogies and the instructions from God to Moses — and thus to the people — about worship/sacrifice/offering rituals, medical evaluation (by the priests), and community living.

Jason

BABY BUNDLE DRIVE Story of a Job Well Done by Kylia Goodner



As some of you may know, I work at a food pantry a few times a week. Recently we were able to hand out around ~25 of the baby bundles that our church has been donating to over the past few weeks. I wanted to pass along a picture and share a quick story of how great it was, and how thankful the families were to have these helpful bags as they welcome these new people into the world.

Although all of the families were very thankful, one

particular new father really stood out to me from that day. Many right now are very quick in their interactions, as to limit exposure and practice social distancing, and so we're very used to the "in and out" process at the food pantry right now. However, this father, whose daughter was born just two days prior to receiving a bag, just couldn't help himself and had to spend a few extra minutes walking around to each of us showing a picture of his daughter to all of us. It was a bit comical as he was holding out the phone, extending his arm as far as he could, and we were all taking turns bending in a bit to get a better view of this grainy picture on his flip phone, but it was such a special moment and one I haven't had in a while - of just taking an extra moment to be excited with a complete stranger about their new addition to the world. I am sure there is a very long list of people he would rather show that picture to in person - family, friends, or neighbors - but for now, and in this time, it was us at the food pantry who were blessed to be excited with him.

So, I just wanted to pass along the image of a job well done, and this fun story to you all!

Worship, Bible Study, July/August Meetings

WORSHIP

♦ 10:00 a.m. Every Sunday

Worship in the Sanctuary In Person

(Reservation required—<u>Click here</u> to reserve a pew.)
Please read our worship safety guidelines which can be
found on page 2 of this newsletter
or online Click here.

Sunday Services also Online via Live Stream!

Bulletin and instructions on joining via Zoom or YouTube are on the church website here.

JULY-AUGUST MEETINGS

3 Ts: Tuesday, July 21, 10:00 a.m., via Zoom. Contact <u>Jane Mickatavage</u> (914-967-8622) or <u>Nancy Steed</u> (914-328-9658).

Coming Home BBQ: Sunday, July 12, 3:00 p.m.. **Stephen Ministry:**

Even Stephens: Wednesday, July 1, 15, 29; August 12, 26, 10:00 a.m., via Zoom Prime Ministers: Thursday, July 9, 23; August 6, 20, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom Thrift Shop: Closed until further notice Tuesday Afternoon Women's Discipleship:

On hiatus until September 15

Worship & Music: Monday, July 6, 7:30 p.m., via Zoom

give online COD'S TITHES & YOUR OFFERINGS

Online donation options are available on the RPC Website Giving page.

To access, <u>click here</u>, or scan the QR Code to the right with your cell phone.

Please contact Maida Robinson: mrobinson@ryepc.com
if you have any questions or need assistance.



BIBLE STUDIES

Men's Sunday Evening Bible Study

Sundays, July 12 and 26, and August 9, at 8:00 p.m. via Zoom – contact Dan Love for the link

Over the summer, the men of Sunday night will continue their discussion and fellowship as we enjoy our way through the Gospel of Luke. We will meet every other Sunday at 8:00 p.m. via Zoom on the following dates: July 12 and 26, and August 9. If you would like to be on the email reminder list for this great group, please contact <u>Dan Love</u>.

Monday Morning Bible Discussion

Mondays through July and August, at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom – contact Dan Love for the link

In a break from our tradition of a summer pause, the Monday Morning Bible Discussion will continue on through July and August! With <u>The Bible Project</u> videos guiding our way and framing our discussion, we will continue our overview of the writings of the New Testament. Our dates are yet to be determined, but if you'd like to be on the email reminder list, please be in touch with <u>Dan Love</u>.





PRAYER WALL

As a way to connect to one another and to God throughout this time, you are invited to make prayer requests known on the RPC website Prayer Wall (click here). Together we continue to pray for all those in need throughout this unique time. All can share anonymously, but please keep in mind that it is a public forum.

Rye Presbyterian Nursery School

Greetings to the RPC Community from Kristin Bassett Kumar

The last week of school, the teachers made visits to their students' houses. We missed their beautiful faces and seeing their smiles in person again brought us tremendous joy! It was a heartwarming experience for all.

In addition, the faculty acknowledged the preschool Class of 2020 by placing yard signs for the children on their front lawns. As is RPNS tradition, all of the four and five year old students at Rye Presbyterian Nursery School participate in "moving-up" celebrations that are called "Rainbow Ceremonies."

This year Rainbow Ceremonies will take place over the summer months, but the yard signs were a fun way to honor this tradition during this time of separation.













The Rev. Daniel Love, Co-Pastor
The Rev. Dr. John Miller, Co-Pastor
The Rev. Jean-Paul Marshall, Associate Pastor for Christian Education
Jason Charneski, Director of Music and Organist
Lisa Rawson, Director of Choirs for Children and Youth
Maida Robinson, Chief Administrative Officer
Peggy Berretta, Administrative Assistant
Denise LeVan, Pastoral Assistant
Juan Velasquez, Head Sexton/Building Manager
Alonso Osorio, Sunday Sexton

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We are a Stephen Ministry church.