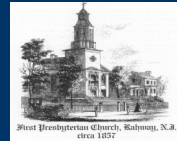


TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 14 Issue 1

January 2023

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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There will be a brief New Year's day worship service to ring in the new year.

Holy Communion will be postponed until January 7, Epiphany Sunday.

From Pastor Ed...

The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people to go forward into the sea, on dry ground." Ex. 14

Dear Friends,

This has to be one of the most heart-stopping scenes ever. When you read the surrounding verses, it 's pretty clear that Charlton Heston was playing it way too cool in the movie. The people were literally scared to death. They said to Moses, "You had to bring us all the way out here to go to our graves?" Then Moses, took a chance, and replied with a quivering voice, "Uh, just, stay where you are, and watch how we get out of this one." That's when God joined the conversation, and told them plainly, to stop talking, and get moving. I read somewhere, that the *real* miracle of this story is not that the Red Sea waters parted, but that the people actually started moving forward.

This story has to be the premier illustration of the old adage, that "you can never go back". Even when there isn't a hostile army at our heels, what's done is *done*, and consequences have to be dealt with. More than that, this story illustrates the truth that we can't stay still for long either - at least not without its own repercussions. In order to "get somewhere" the only way forward, is *forward*.

The key insight of this story is in what was behind Moses' reply to the people. In a word, it was hope. Hope is about having faith in a future that is yet unaccomplished. It's about turning corners and expecting that there will be some kind of grace waiting there. It's about believing that God's will is *good* - and so, the Spirit will lead us in good directions.

Hope and faith are partners in this. They tell us that since God is the Creator, we can trust that the enterprise of creation will continue until it's completed. They assure us that God isn't finished with any of us either. Until the kingdom comes, there will always be more to learn, more to change, and more to grow. Life is always more than we can see, and we can bet our lives on that. That is good news to carry with us, as we take our first fresh steps into a brand new year.

Editor:
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Peace and Blessings
Ed

Stewardship 2022

'Tis the Season for Giving...our gifts to God, and God's Church.

For many reasons, our church has not had a formal "stewardship time" in several years. The pandemic certainly hampered our ability to do a formal "campaign." The mounting responsibilities of keeping the church up and running took significant time and energy! However, when we think about it, Christian stewardship isn't meant to be about our pledges for church membership. It's meant to be a way of life that is characterized by giving and receiving.

During each of the four Sundays in Advent, there's been opportunities to bring our Personal Commitment cards to Christ and the ministries in our church. To help us *discern* what our personal commitments will be, there is a daily devotional available for use. You can find it on our website, receive it by email, or it can be sent to you (please contact Carol Ann).

In this post-pandemic time, some of us in our congregation, for many reasons, are participating *virtually* in the life of our church. We recognize that *wherever we may be* we are always members of Christ's church. This stewardship campaign offers you the opportunity to support the life and ministries of our church. Among the new initiatives that are coming true, is a complete upgrade of the sound and live streaming, so that there will no longer be interruptions or poor sound for our worship services, and meetings.

This Advent, we've been on a journey that at its' heart asks us to reflect on our commitment to God, and our stewardship of all we've been given. Our response, as always, is between ourselves and God. The truth is, we give, because *God* does in so many ways. Please take some time to reflect upon all that you have received, and consider what God is calling you to do with it. The truth is, God has a job for each of us, and for our church to do, at this time and place in our history. Please prayerfully consider your answer to this question, "How will I be part of that endeavor?" We will be receiving your personal commitment cards and dedicate them in worship on January 15, 2023.

A suggested prayer: "Lord, help me to realize and be thankful for all Your gifts to me, large and small. Fill my heart with gratitude, and help me to express it through the gifts I return to You in my life, and my stewardship to Your church, and it's work. Amen."





Per Capita Assessment 2022 and 2023

Our Presbytery of Northeast NJ has announced that the per capita assessment for all its active members on their church's rolls will be \$40.00. This is the same dollar amount as last year. We will supply envelopes for our active members to pay their 2023 assessment in February 2023.

Everyone on the Active Roll of our Church is asked to pay their \$40.00 per capita by December 31, 2020. We thank those of you who have already done so. First Pres has always been faithful in sending our Presbytery the full amount we are assessed as a congregation, so it will be especially helpful if we all do our part!

Blessings and Peace!

Thank You,
Administrative Committee



Wanted! New Church Angels

As you know, things don't happen magically. They result because someone takes the time to make them happen. We don't have any fairies here at First Pres., but we do have several church angels who notice things that need to be done and do it to make our church cleaner and more inviting. This year our church angels are inviting you to join them once or twice a month for a few hours to help dust, vacuum and spruce up our sanctuary and very large church building. Please prayerfully consider joining them if you are available. Not only will you enjoy their fellowship, but you will also receive the satisfaction of helping make our church home more inviting to everyone who comes. Please let Gail Anderson or JoAnn Roesch know that you are interested and what day and time works best for you. Then they will let you know when our church angels will gather here again. Thank you.



Jan.

- 1 - William D.
- 2 - Princeton N.
- 8 - Dona M.
- 12 - Cheryl M.
- 12 - Lucas P.
- 21 - Caroline D.
- 21 - Alyne B.
- 25 - James C.
- 25 - Megan R.
- 25 - Ukoha K.
- 27 - Hagen E.
- 29 - Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook
- 29 - "New Dawn"



Jan.

- 20 - Andrea & Sean



Young People's Group Update

Sue Krivenko, Diane Hoener, and Cheryl Anne Cammann have started a young people's . Ages 8 to 20 are welcome, and feel free to bring friends. Currently, meetings will take place at least once a month.



More than just a
football game...

February 12, 2023

...it's a game
changer!

More than 20 years ago, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: *"Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat."*

Since that day, more than \$60 million has been raised for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming Super Bowl weekend into the nation's largest youth-led weekend of giving and serving.

At First Pres, we have been collecting canned and boxed food products every year for the past 22 years. All through the month of January our congregation is encouraged to bring their food donations to church each Sunday and place them on the collection display table set in the Narthex. The collection will culminate on Souper Bowl Sunday, February 12th. All items are brought to the Food for Friends food pantry where they will be distributed to families in need.

If you choose to make a monetary donation, the Outreach Committee will send those donations to the Food for Friends soup kitchen that operates out of Davis Hall on Saturdays throughout the year. For the last three years, the lunch program was limited to take-out lunches only due to the pandemic of 2020 and the cautions taken in its aftermath. At the start of the New Year, the sit-down dinners will finally resume. The diners will surely welcome back the camaraderie of eating with their friends. You may send a check to the church office or leave a check in the Sunday offering plate.

Unleash your Souper Power ... help change the game.



Please consider either calling or sending a card to church family who are homebound; call the church office (732-382-0803) if you need phone numbers and/or addresses.

Prayer Requests

Alyne B., Christine H., Dan M., Debbie C., Diane W., Ed L., Eileen P., Eric R., Evan's mom, Gail, Gene S., Gladys B., Jamie & Michael, Jackie, Jane S., Lori, Mark A., Mary Ann R., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Molly, Nancy, Nancy T., Patty-Travis & family, Russ G., Savannah B., Sedlak family, Tommy, Ukranian Sisters & Brothers



Prayer Persons

JANUARY

- Jan. 1st** - Betsy Traficante
- Jan. 8th** - Craig Ludington
- Jan. 15th** - Hazel Rickes
- Jan. 22nd** - Kenneth MacFarlane
- Jan. 29th** - Mary Ellen Sforza

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 5th** - Carlos Allende & Erwin Altona
- Feb. 12th** - Alyne Borst
- Feb. 19th** - Ernest Awutey
- Feb. 26th** - Rosalind Casey

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**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH**



**Worship with us
Each Sunday at 10:30AM**
In-person / Facebook & YouTube Live Streams
Recorded Video Available Also

Office: office@1stpresrahway.org
Rev. Ed Hoener: edhoener1@gmail.com



1stpresrahway.org

