

# TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 15 Issue 1

JANUARY 2024

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## Congregational & Corporation Mtg

Sunday,  
January 28th

(following worship)

## From Pastor Ed...

**“Be making yourselves perfect and complete as your heavenly Father is perfect and complete.” Mt. 5:48**

Dear Friends,

I always feel a little dizzy from the sudden transition between Christmas and the New Year. There's quite a distance, for me, between the joyous warmth of the Christmas season and the inevitable, awkward self-examination I give myself at the start of another year.

It has helped me to learn that Jesus' words at the top of the page are closer to the literal translation. As such, we aren't really asked to “be as perfect as God is.” Instead, it's more about being a work in progress. It's more about moving in a positive direction - ongoing “make-overs” for ourselves.

So, as we look over the past year, we want to know if we've learned anything new, about ourselves or life. We want to see if we've made some strides. We want to see if we're doing a better job with the way we live and the things we do. We hope to find that awareness has increased, and faith has deepened, and understanding has grown. We hope to find that we're more apt to stretch the limits, and try new things, and to risk living with an open heart and willing hands.

One thing about this process that's so encouraging, is how faith can be a *powerful* resource for this. The great news Christ came to impress upon the world is that God is totally *for* us; forgiving us, helping us, providing us *whatever* we need to change and grow. The great news of Christmas is that there just isn't anything God won't do to reach us - even when it means becoming one of us. But one thing Christ also made crystal clear, is that God's love and grace are given so that we can totally live for God and neighbor. That's the way our lives will be shaped if we live in the Spirit, and the promise is, we will be led towards the most fulfilling, complete and “abundant” life we can know.

Peace and Blessings,  
Ed

## Wanted: Flea Market Helpers

Recently we have been overwhelmed with donations for our flea markets. That is a good problem to have, however, we could use more people to help us sort, clean, price, and store these donations. Look for announcements requesting help when we meet to do this. As always, we would welcome your assistance in doing this.



## “Fabulous Finds” Community Thrift Mini Mart

Our next “Fabulous Finds” Mini Mart will be Saturday, January 6, 2024, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. People in our community are really getting excited to have these monthly opportunities to come in, browse, find treasures, furniture, wall art, and household items that they wanted at reduced prices. It is very rewarding seeing their faces when they discover something that they really want or need. Please consider helping out some Saturday. We are always happy to get new volunteers to help, so please prayerfully consider working with us. Call JoAnn Roesch and let her know that you are coming on January 6<sup>th</sup> to help.



## Life Group Fireside Gatherings

Fireside gatherings are held @ 7pm on the manse patio (weather permitting) or inside on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of each month.

Feel free to call Ed or Diane if you want confirmation.

**January Friday Gatherings: 5th & 19th**



*Come, Relax, see what emerges...*



**A New Year's Celebration**

EVERYONE is invited! ... to celebrate the New Year, with a *Sunday brunch* immediately after worship on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> 2024! This is a time to celebrate all that our church is doing towards continuing our endeavor to be a light in our community, reflecting the Love of God. Session is very excited about our new enterprise to create a Community Center for Rahway in Squier Hall and to become the site for Rahway's premier food pantry. We hope you can join us when we rejoice at the beginning of 2024, and the new initiatives we are embarking on. January 14<sup>th</sup> will be the final Sunday for us to bring and dedicate our gifts (pledges) for 2024. Come let us enjoy this time together!



**Church Angels**

The Church Angels will meet on Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, to work on several areas that need our attention. We would welcome anyone, male or female, who would like to join us in our endeavor to make our church more organized and inviting. Please consider coming. We begin at 10:00 a.m. and work for several hours. Come when you can and leave when you must. Just call JoAnn's cell phone when you arrive so she can let you in.



**Requesting All Photos**



Its now been several months since I began requesting everyone to submit a photo of themselves and/or their family for a new church bulletin board. Please give me your photo(s) at our New Year's Brunch. We are anxious to create this bulletin board. The bulletin board will help everyone match a name with a face. For our new members & visitors this will be especially helpful. We only have a few new names to remember, but they have many. Please help make this happen by submitting your photo(s) by January 14, 2024.



**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

Jean loved being a part of Old First; had a life time of family memories. Our wedding there in 1984 was one of the defining moments of my life.



Thank you everyone for the wonderful support.

Ray Montanari



### ***It's that time of year again!***

Dear Friends,

We all love the Christmas season, the season of giving, when we show how much we love and care, through the gifts we give. We all appreciate the spirit of giving that *is* Christmas! How often during this season do we hear the refrain, "I wish the Christmas spirit could last all year!" We love the warmth and satisfaction we feel during this season, from giving to our loved ones. When we think about it, throughout his life, Jesus taught that the life in the Spirit, is about a *life-*

*style* of self-giving love.

Self-giving love can be expressed in so many ways. It can be something we do with a portion of our possessions and money. It can be something we do with our time and talents. But the truth is, it can be anything we care for and care about. It may be the health of our bodies and our spirituality, and our church. It may be how we care for our family, friends, community, and congregation. It may be the causes we care about. It's really about *whatever* love prompts us to do, and give, and be. Jesus said that all of this can be summarized as, "Loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves."

This Advent provided a time to pause and reflect; to help us discern what God is calling us to do, and give, and be. It was a time to specifically figure how we may contribute to furthering the life and mission of FPC. This new year can be a time to enter into a deeper vision as people of faith, that can bear great fruit for our individual lives, and for the life of our congregation.

Our acts of giving (pledges) will be received each Sunday until they are dedicated to God on January 14<sup>th</sup> during worship.

***May the generous spirit of Christmas be with us throughout the Year to come!***

## **Recipe For a Happy New Year**

**Take twelve whole months and clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate, and jealousy.**

**Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.**

**Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or thirty-one parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once.**

**Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.**

**Mix well into each day one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work.**

**Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity, and kindness.**

**Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation, and one good deed.**

**Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play, and a cupful of good humor.**

**Pour all of this into a vessel of love.**

**Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness, unselfishness and cheerfulness.**

***You're bound to have a happy new year.***

Submitted by: JoAnn Roesch

### **2024 Per Capita Assessment - \$38.00**

Our Presbytery, The Presbytery of The Northeast, has announced that the assessment by and for each person on the rolls of its congregations will be \$38.00 for 2024.

The Presbytery of The Northeast is a governing body of the Presbyterian Church USA, which has the responsibility of spreading the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Our Presbytery shares its financial and human resources with a regional body called the Synod and a national body called the General Assembly.

A blessing of being a part of a connectional church is that each member of the congregation can help support the work of our denomination through per capita giving. When we each pay our share, we enable our Presbytery – Synod – and General Assembly to do the creative work of the Holy Spirit throughout the world.

It is important that each member of First Pres pay their per capita amount of \$38.00 so that our Church may continue to be faithful in sending our Presbytery the amount we are assessed. We are prayerful that this year, as in past years, our membership will respond. Young and old members, and all those in between, are asked to use the enclosed envelope to reflect your response.

Thank You,  
Administrative Committee



The Souper Bowl of Caring program began in 1990 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 time, over thirty years ago, close to \$193 million has been raised for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement, with more than 305,000 groups participating, that is transforming Super Bowl weekend into the nation’s largest weekend of giving and serving.

At First Pres, we have been collecting canned and boxed food products on Super Bowl Sunday every year for the past 23 years. This year, our congregation is again encouraged to support the Souper Bowl program by bringing food donations to church each Sunday during the month of February. At the end of the month, all items will be brought to the Food for Friends food pantry where they will be distributed to families in need. Our totals are always sent to the Souper Bowl of Caring organization to be added to the national totals.

Last year, at the conclusion of the February collection, our congregation decided to expand our giving by collecting food items three times during the year, in February, June, and October. We now help even more families.



**Unleash Your Souper Power...help change the game.**

**Debbie Cornwall, *The Dash Poem***

I had the pleasure of knowing Debbie Cornwall. The first time I met her, I believe was almost twenty-five years ago when I was the coordinator for Rahway's Crop Walk. Debbie was a Girl Scout leader and she and her troop hosted the walkers when they completed the 5 km walk in the fellowship hall of Second Presbyterian Church. Debbie became involved with an after-school group we had at First Pres., called Achieve to Excel. Here she was involved in supervising the children and providing them with educational and organized things to do. Before the merger of First and Second Pres., she organized a youth program for young people called "Redirect". When First and Second Pres. merged, Debbie continued her involvement with the young people in this program. Throughout her life, Debbie always wanted to help people and she devoted many hours for many years doing just that. Unfortunately this year Debbie passed away. When I attended her funeral, a pastor friend of hers gave the eulogy. She emphasized that Debbie was always concerned about her dash. Debbie lived each day determined to create the best dash she could and she didn't disappoint. Debbie was truly a "one-of-a-kind" person. While I sat in the pew during her memorial service, I decided that I wanted to share the poem that inspired Debbie to do what she did best – love, help, and care for everyone. After you read it, I invite you to consider your dash and think what you can do in 2024 to make your dash a testament to what you believe God is calling you to be!

"...consider your dash and think what you can do in 2024 to make your dash a testament to what you believe God is calling you to be!"

fore

Fondly, JoAnn Roesch

*The Dash*

By Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak  
at the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on her tombstone  
from the beginning...to the end.  
He noted that first came the date of her birth  
and spoke of the following date with tears,  
but he said what mattered most of all  
was the dash between those years.  
For that date represents all the time  
that she spent alive on earth  
and now only those who loved her  
know what that little line is worth.  
For it matter not, how much we own,  
The cars...the house...the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love  
and how we spend our dash.  
So think about this long and hard:  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left  
That can still be rearranged.  
If we could just slow down enough  
To consider what's true and real  
And always try to understand  
The way other people feel.



*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., Arleene, Avril Muller & family, Bill & Candy K., Bob H., Bruce & family, Bryant family, Carlos B., Carol H., Christine H., Danny M., Dave, Diane H., Eileen P., Gail, Gladys S., Grace P., Jane S., Joan Cubino & Roy’s family, Joe K., John H., Kristen & family, Laura W., Mary Ann, Mary Ann R., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Molly, Nancy T., Olga S., Patty-Travis & family, Robert S., Savannah B., Tina Marie & family, Tom P., Toni B., Whitney S., Those in war-ravaged areas

Those that are homebound—Caroline Balla, Doris Kapus



*Our deepest condolences to...*

Rachel and Sarah Remelgado & family on the recent passing of Rachel’s grandmother. Your church family & friends wish you hope in the midst of sorrow; comfort in the midst of pain.

Please keep the Remelgado family in your thoughts and prayers.



**Prayer Persons**

**JANUARY**

- Jan. 7th - Richard McCarthy**
- Jan. 14th - Doris Kapus**
- Jan. 21st - Caitlyn Gutches Camuccio**
- Jan. 28th - Will Marsh**

**FEBRUARY**

- Feb. 4th - Helene Haith**
- Feb. 11th - Kristin Bapst**
- Feb. 18th - Thomas Maye**
- Feb. 25th - Ebbe Family**

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