

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 14 Issue 2

February 2023

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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February 22nd

We will be having a service on Ash Wednesday which will include a Pot Luck Soup and Bread meal. The details are still being worked out with a gathering time TBD. More information to come on Facebook, emails, & website within the next few weeks.

From Pastor Ed...

Dear Friends,

Lent is beginning this month and it can be rather difficult to change our demeanor so soon after Christmas. It's hard, in just a matter of weeks to move from the lights of that season to the darkness of Lent. Part of what makes it hard is that the Lenten stories are, sadly, so much more like life as we know it. There are no bright stars and heavenly angels in our lives most of the time. The stories we remember in Lent are full of the difficult times and feelings that Jesus faced, and that *we face* in our lives. They are about being severely misunderstood, feeling like a failure, and being hurt by people we love. They are stories about people in power, misusing it for their own ends, at the expense of the poor, and justice, and the common good. They are stories about the kinds of human suffering we are all well acquainted with.

Perhaps another reason the Lenten stories are hard to bear is because of the way we may see God's purposes in them. For centuries, the shape of Lent has been molded by the idea that the events surrounding the cross were the overriding purpose for Jesus' coming. For centuries, the cross has been understood as a bloody payment for the world's sin, *demanding* by an angry God.

However, it is so important to let go of that portrait of God, and Christ's coming to earth. Lent is about *so much more* than the cross. It's about Jesus bringing us a clear picture of God - the God who looks for lost lambs, and welcomes "prodigal" children home, and loves *the world*. It's about Jesus showing us how to live with faith and love and peace and justice, because it's *better* to live that way. It's how God created us to be.

Still, the Lenten stories also show us how to live with the unavoidable sufferings that befall us. They tell us that Jesus "knows our every weakness" because he experienced them, even to death on that cross. Moreover, they tell us that we can make it through the *worse* of times, with faith and love still beating in our hearts, because God provides the strength and grace that we need to get through. Suffering is part of life, and it was part of Jesus' life, but one marvelous thing his Lenten story promises us, is that *suffering never has the last word* - and there is always *more life to come*. Alleluia!

Editor:
CAB
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Peace and grace, Ed

Come one, come all! Church Valentine's Dinner Saturday, February 11, 2023



We're very excited to reinstate the Valentine Dinner. Please mark your calendars and invite your family or friends to join us as we gather together in Davis Hall to celebrate Valentine's Day. Appetizers will be served at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will follow. Please call or text JoAnn Roesch @ 848-316-9147 to let her know how many people you will be bringing, so that the committee can plan accordingly.



We hope that you will join us!



Souper Bowl – 2023

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. Please make checks payable to the First Presbyterian Church, Rahway and write “Food for Friends” on the memo line.



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

Tackle Hunger

Church Angels

WE JUST WANT TO SAY... **THANK YOU!**

We would like to thank all the church ladies who volunteered to help us do various things around our church to help make it clean and inviting to everyone who comes. Not only will the results improve our building, but it will also provide an opportunity for fellowship as we work together. We are going to begin with selecting two dates each month to work on projects around the church. Hopefully the projects that we select can be completed within two to three hours. Also, if you hadn't volunteered to be a "Church Angel", but now feel so inclined, we would welcome your help.

We would like to begin our first project on Monday or Tuesday, February 6th or 7th at 10:00 a.m. JoAnn is going to send everyone who volunteered an email checking their availability for those dates. Whatever date works best for most will be the date selected and it will be announced at church on Sunday. On the day we are working please call JoAnn's cell phone @ 848-316-9147 so she can open the door for you.

Of course, we understand that everyone has different schedules, so we are going to select different days so all our "Church Angels" get an opportunity to beautify our church. Gail and I are very excited that so many have come forward and offered their help. We are grateful for your assistance and we look forward to working with you.



Surprise Christmas Greeting

Before Christmas, I received a letter from Church. I was puzzled. This piece of mail wasn't in a business envelope like I usually receive from the Church but in an envelope that was square-shaped. When I opened the envelope, it was a Christmas Card. How nice! Inside the card, I saw that the sender was a Church teenager who had grown up in our Church who is a part of the Young People's Group. My daughter also received a card from the same group. We were both delighted that the youth of our Church took time to send their greetings. I would later learn that it was the young people who suggested sending Christmas cards.

Many thanks to the group advisers, Cheryl Anne Cammann, Diane Hoener and Sue Krivenko for leading the young members. The group is made up of youth from ages 11 to 20. All are welcome and are free to bring friends. Great job by all.

Robin Shipley



Feb.

- 4 - Kathleen R.
- 8 - Ilanda K.
- 9 - Nicholas T.
- 10 - Scott R.
- 18 - Linda G.
- 20 - Andrew John R.
- 22 - Asher R.
- 23 - Hillary M.
- 28 - Nathan Alexander H.



Feb.

- 20 - Shawna & Allie

Pledge Reminder We thank those members who ded-

icated a portion of God's material blessing on them so that our Church and our mission for Christ can continue.

If you have yet to make your pledge, we ask that you please bring your pledge card to worship service and place it in the offering plate or send your card to the Church Office. Remember, your pledge allows Session to plan and dream as they lead the congregation in continuing to do God's work in 2023.



The Giving Tree

Helping Those
in Need



For 2022, *The Giving Tree* provided assistance to families by means of gift cards from ShopRite, Target, and Walmart.

As in previous years, the Franklin School nurse was contacted. Casey is new to the position since Barbara retired at the end of school year, June 2022. Casey knew little of the program, but was excited about it after speaking with her, on several occasions,

on its concept and past partnership with the school. She reviewed her records and presented us with names of families from the community. Upon requested donations of gift cards from the congregation, we were preparing to provide assistance to seven families.

Due to the generous donations, received from church members, a total of \$1,880.00 in gift cards were distributed to the families by December 18th. Along with the envelope of gift cards, a separate donation provided a 3lb tin of cookies, a bag of oranges, and a ham steak to each family. The Deacons presented a "a comfort throw" to each family as well.

As of December 14th, 93 gift cards were donated: totaling \$2,345.00! Deducting the amount distributed (\$1,880.00), a supply of gift cards totaling \$465.00 remains in place for any need occurring throughout the months ahead.

It is with great pleasure and pride to extend our THANKS! The success of this program only exists because of the participation and generosity of the gift cards donated.

With God's Blessings to all,
The Outreach Committee



Thank You *for your* **Generosity**

From Pastor Ed's Traveling Mercies for the 2nd week in February:

I Pray: For those who are sick and alone, and who need healing, strength and God's presence. For those on the front lines of healthcare and crisis intervention, and all who need God's strength and protection. For the capacity to rely on Your Spirit's power for all I do. The Lord's Prayer.

Blessing: Christ is with me sleeping, Christ is with me waking, Christ is with me in all I do and say this day. Christ is with me until this day's ending. And always. Amen.

2023 Per Capita Assessment - \$40.00

Our Presbytery, The Presbytery of The Northeast, has announced that the assessment of its members on the rolls of its congregations will be \$40.00 for 2023.

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.

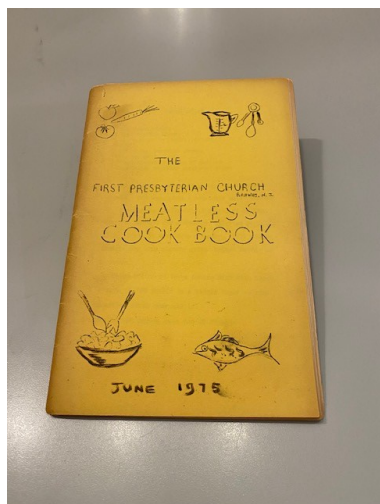


A blessing of being a member of a connectional church is that we are able to support the work of our denomination through per capita giving. When we each share, we enable our Presbytery – Synod – and General Assembly to do the creative work of the Holy Spirit throughout the world. In 2022, our Presbytery was instrumental in providing our Church with pulpit supply every Sunday. Under the guidance of Claire Davis from Presbytery, our Interim Pastor Nominating Committee was successful in hiring an interim minister for our Church.

Our church has always been faithful in sending our Presbytery the full amount we are assessed. Each year our budget contains a line item that covers the cost of each member on our role. It is important that each member of First Pres pay their per capita amount of \$40.00. 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 attached envelope to reflect your response.

Did you know that if you were an Active Member at the end of 2021, you are assessed the 2023 per capita amount?

Thank You,
Administrative Committee



The First Presbyterian Church – Rahway, NJ Meatless Cook Book

Does anyone remember this cookbook published in June, 1975?

This cookbook was compiled by the Parish Care and Evangelism Committee of the Session in response to the emphasis on hunger brought to their attention by the Church & Society Committee.

Most recipes were contributed by members of the congregation. Our 50+ year member, Dona MacFarlane contributed many recipes. The cook book even had a recipe from Hellmann's Mayonnaise.

Gladys Whitehead, an active member of the Church until her passing in 2000, recalled that on meatless days in World War I, her mother often served corn fritters. Her grandmother made "Johnny Cakes" from white corn meal, cooked on a griddle, and served with honey or syrup. She remembered that for lunch, they often had boiled or steamed rice with raisins, served with brown sugar and milk.

Dear church family & friends,

Amazing news - Zion Lutheran is opening its homeless shelter once again in February. Pastor Carmine provided Pastor Ed with instructions on volunteering opportunities as well as a link to signup. If you would like more information, you can either call or email their church secretary using the info provided in the article below.



ZION LUTHERAN REOPENING HOMELESS SHELTER

From Pastor Carmine:

Zion Lutheran Church, Rahway, NJ has used the Fellowship Hall of the Church for the past 10 years as a homeless shelter. Zion's shelter is primarily operated by volunteers from the church and community. Food, entertainment, and services are all provided by volunteers - about 300 of them!

We are opening up our shelter again on February 1, 2023!

If you are preparing food, desserts, or drinks for the shelter, a best practice is to contact Pat Ogarek, the church's office administrator, a day or two before you are scheduled to volunteer to get the most accurate head count of how many homeless guests will be in the shelter the night you are volunteering. Pat can be reached by phone at 732-388-1815 or by email: secy@zionlutherannj.net.

Our shelter is a communal space where our guests are fed a hot meal, dessert, and drinks. Our guests sleep on cots. We shelter from 6pm to 7am the following morning where breakfast is served. All of our meals are provided to our guests by the community. We are always accepting donations of food for breakfast - cereal, instant oatmeal, fruit, bagels, donuts, coffee, and tea. Anything easy to prepare!

Zion's kitchen has two ovens and two microwaves, a refrigerator and freezer, a kitchen island for ample counter space, and a two-bin sink. Our homeless guests usually arrive by 6pm and we typically serve dinner between 6:30-7pm. If you would like access to the social hall prior to 6pm, please contact Pat Ogarek (above) and we can open up the hall early for food preparation and set up.

This service is essential in keeping our most vulnerable people from sleeping on the street! This life-saving work wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for you! Thank you for volunteering at Zion, Rahway's Operation Warm Heart Homeless Shelter!

[Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rahway: Zion, Rahway's Homeless Shelter \(signupgenius.com\)](http://www.zionlutherannj.net)



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., Debbie C., Diane W., Ed L., Eileen P., Eric R., Evan’s mom, Gail, Gene S., Gladys B., Jane S., Mary Ann, Mary Ann R., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Michele P., Molly, Nancy T., Patty-Travis & family, Russ G., Sandy T., Savannah B., Ukrainian Sisters & Brothers



Our heartfelt condolences to...

The Martin & Sola families on the passing of **Daniel Martin**, who entered eternal peace on December 21, 2022. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend.



Prayer Persons

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- Mar. 5th** - Sam Shipley
- Mar. 12th** - Debby & Fred Russell
- Mar. 19th** - Dona MacFarlane
- Mar. 26th** - Jonathan Russell

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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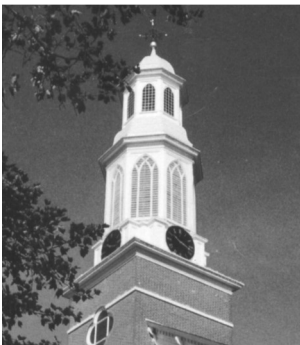
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**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH**



**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**



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