

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 15 Issue 2

FEBRUARY 2024

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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**Would you like a
box of Offering
Envelopes?**

**If so, please give
Robin a call and let
her know:**

Editor:
CAB
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From Pastor Ed...

“Jesus said, “I am the Good Shepherd. I call my sheep by name and lead them, and they follow Me because they know my voice.” John 10

Dear Friends,

Jesus called Himself the good shepherd, which was His way of helping us understand the depth of understanding, care, and compassion He has for our needs and total well-being. In that context, Jesus chooses to work collaboratively and co-creatively with us whenever we are open to it. The challenge for us is, “Do we trust Christ enough to follow His voice, His teachings, His leadership? Are we willing to let God challenge us moving forward? Will we let God call forth our gifts, and use them in situations we never anticipated?”

Before we answer those questions, remember this. We live in a culture that tells us we have to be expert in every endeavor. We're taught that being professionally equipped is the prerequisite for anything we want to do. This is true even in the church. There is a prevalent notion that the work of the church isn't *supposed* to be done by people in the pews.

But the truth is, that was never Jesus' way. Jesus was intentionally breaking those presumptions, by inviting the inexperienced, everyday women and men He did, to be His disciples. He wanted to highlight the true meaning of discipleship, which is to be someone who keeps on learning their craft, by imitating the Master. The church was never meant to be about membership in an organization. It always was meant to be about mentorship in a Spirit-led and empowered community.

The church is actually meant to be a fellowship of people who are “out of their depth” but who keep asking questions, and learning from their mistakes, about what they do in service to God and each other. This is the way God chooses to make all things new in partnership with us.

We are about to enter the season of Lent, and perhaps we can move through the season with a different focus. Perhaps we can decide to be open to asking new questions, and seeking new answers for the life and future of our church. We can use this season to make ourselves ready to do the possibly new and different work God has in store for us. The promise is, when we do, Jesus will lead us in ways that will fulfill us individually, as well as the mission He has in store.

Peace and Blessings!

Ed

Ash Wednesday, February 14th

The Beginning of the Lenten Season is right around the corner!

Lent is a time every year, for reflection, self-examination, and discovering new practices leading to spiritual transformation and growth. It is kind of like a pilgrimage, where we take the time to journey with Christ towards the cross, and the resurrection

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of that pilgrimage.

This year our Ash Wednesday service will be held at 7:30 pm. A key part of this service is about taking the time to mark our personal intentions for renewing our faith, and commitment to God. IF there are people who prefer to attend virtually you may wish to have (water and/or ashes) ready for that part of the service. They will be blessed by prayer, and then people will be invited to anoint themselves with the elements of their choice.



On Sunday, February 18, there will be a *surprise* special celebration to mark the first Sunday of our Lenten pilgrimage! **Come and check it out!**

For 2023, ***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, Casey, was contacted. Casey is beginning her second year at school and remains excited about the program's concept and past partnership with the school. She reviewed her records and presented us with names of five families from the community. Upon requesting donations of gift cards from the congregation, we were preparing to provide assistance to a total of eight families.

Due to the generous donations, received from church members, a total of \$1440.00 in gift cards were distributed to the families prior to Christmas. Along with the envelope of gift cards and a comfort throw, giftbags holding a Panettone, a bag of oranges, a large box of hot chocolate mix, and a boneless ham were presented to the families. A separate donation of children books was received, allowing the children and parents to choose ones of their liking.

A supply of gift cards totaling \$525.00 remains in place for any need occurring throughout the months ahead.



It is with great pleasure and pride to extend our **THANKS!** to all. The success of this program only exists because of the participation and generosity of this Church's congregation.

With God's Blessings to all,
The Outreach Committee

Life Group Fireside Gatherings UPDATE

Fireside gatherings are held @ 7pm on the manse patio (weather permitting) or inside on the **2nd & 4th Fridays** of each month.

If you want confirmation, feel free to call Ed or Diane.



**February Friday Gatherings:
9th & 23rd**



Weekend Indoor Clean Up Planned...



**Opportunities to Help
Beautify First Presbyterian Church**

Some people have requested to have work days over the weekend because they are working when the "Church Angels" meet. We're so glad that you would like to lend a hand, so here's an opportunity to become involved with this important project.

On Saturday, February 17th, we are going to have an indoor work day from 9 am – 1 pm. Come when you can and leave when you must! We're looking forward to your assistance in the many jobs that must be done on a regular basis, as well as your help doing some special projects that will help organize our different areas of our church.



Church Angels, February 8th

The "Church Angels" will work this month on Thursday, February 8th. Please join them as they work on various projects around our church in an effort to organize and clean our very large building. They would truly appreciate your help. They begin at 10 am and work until approximately 2 pm, but you are welcome to come and go as your time allows. Just call JoAnn when you arrive so that she can let you into the church.



Feb.

- 4 - Kathleen R.
- 7 - Patti P.
- 8 - Ilanda K.
- 9 - Nicholas T.
- 10 - Scott R.
- 18 - Linda G.
- 20 - Juliet Mireya S.
- 20 - Andrew John R.
- 22 - Asher R.
- 23 - Hillary M.
- 28 - Nathan H.



Feb.

- 15 – Shawna & Allie



Grace Persaud is Home

The church office received a note with some great news about Patti's mom, Grace:

I would like to thank the members of Rahway Presbyterian Church for praying for my mom, Grace Persaud. She was discharged from JFK Medical and is recovering at home. All your prayers were greatly appreciated for her recovery.

*God Bless All of You!
--Patti Persaud*

During the month of February...

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



St. Patrick’s Family and Friends Dinner

The Building and Grounds committee is hosting a corned beef and cabbage dinner on Saturday, March 9th. We will begin gathering at 5:30 pm and dinner will be served at 6 pm. Please sign up in Davis Hall during coffee hour. A sign-up sheet will be placed on the front table where the cookies, cakes and chips are beginning February 4th. Please be sure to include how many people you are bringing when you sign up.

The Menu: Corned Beef, Boiled Potatoes, Carrots and Cabbage, Rye Bread, Irish Soda Bread, Cole Slaw, and Dessert.



Be sure to join us for an evening of fun, fellowship and food!





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., Amy, Arleene, Avril Muller & family, Bill & Candy K., Bob H., Bruce & family, Carlos B., Carol H., Christine H., Danny M., Dave, Edna, Eileen P., Elizabeth M., Gail, Gladys S., Grace P., Jane S., Jasmine, Joan Cubino & Roy’s family, Joannie S., Joe K., John H., Kristen & family, Laura W., Marilyn, Mary Ann, Mary Ann R., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Molly, Nancy T., Noel, Olga S., Patty-Travis & family, Robert S., Sandy G. C. & family, Savannah B., Tina Marie & family, Tom P., Toni B., Victoria & her sister, Whitney S., Those in war-ravaged areas

Those that are homebound—Caroline Balla, Doris Kapus



Prayer Persons

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- Mar. 3rd - Carmen Davies**
- Mar. 10th - Nwosu Family**
- Mar. 17th - Levi Knippel**
- Mar. 24th - Carol & Jake Hayes**
- Mar. 31st - Patti Persaud**

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**Worship with us
Each Sunday at 10:30 AM**

**In-person / Facebook & YouTube Live Streams
Recorded Video Available Also**

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1stpresrahway.org

