

# TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 17 Issue 2

February 2026

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Special points of interest:

- Church Community News - pg. 3
- Prayer Requests pg. 9

### Inside this issue:

FPC's Future / Community Garden Beds	Pg. 2
Lenten Special Service / Souper Bowl	Pg. 4
Parking Signs / Inclement Weather	Pg. 5
Per Capita	Pg. 6
Mugs of Love Mission	Pg. 7
Church Updates	Pg. 8

### The Chosen

We will meet in the manse at 12:30 pm. Here are the dates; if something should change for the April\* date, Diane will let us know when it is being rescheduled:

February 8 and 15,  
March 1, 15, and 29,  
April 12\*.

## From Pastor Ed...

Dear Friends,

Quite a few years ago, I received an amaryllis plant for Christmas, complete with flower pot, the bulb, a bag of soil, and planting instructions. To this day, I'm still amazed when I remember how that plant *blossomed* so beautifully!

There is a kind of parable in that experience that corresponds to where we are in the church year.

Whenever we plant flowers, we do so believing in a promise - the coming of something fruitful, and fragrant. In just a few weeks, the season of Lent is coming, and traditionally, it is considered a time for taking stock of our faults or "giving things up for Lent" as a kind of sacrificial penance. Paying attention to the places in our lives and faith that need work is a good thing. But there is another way to envision this season.

The Lenten season can be like planting a flower, as we prepare the soil and plant the seeds, and give them water and light. In the same way, Lent can be a time to prepare our hearts by clearing away any debris that has accumulated in them. We prepare our souls by breaking open the hard-packed places in our lives, so that we can receive the Spirit's light and refreshment. Lent can also be a time to prayerfully consider how we may need to grow into a deeper faith, and a greater understanding of it. We can use this time to consider how we might change in order to be more fruitful in our discipleship. This season can be an opportunity to spend more time with God, and to receive whatever we need, to emerge from where we are, into a more vibrant and fulfilling life... If we think about it, isn't that something like what *resurrection* is about?

Peace, and Love,  
Ed

### Our FPC Journey Towards our Future is Underway

#### Important Update !

The first major steps towards searching for, and finding our church's next pastor is beginning! By the time you have received this issue of the CHIMES, you will have received a congregational survey, which you have taken online or in paper form.

*(If you have not already done so please return your paper survey to the Session or submit your responses online.)*

The survey is part one of a two-part process. The second part is a time for sharing and discernment that will be held on **Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 am in Davis Hall**. We will gather in several small groups, each led by a Session member, who will draw upon our stories and responses regarding our experiences in our church family. During this time, there will be some prayers, songs, and reflections, with a catered **luncheon**, and we will close our time with a service of Communion.

Please add this date to your phones, iPads, and calendars because we want to hear from as many of our church family as possible. If you are unable to come, or just need transportation, please let the Session know. For homebound people, we are planning to gather small groups in members' homes. This exercise makes sure that prospective pastors get to know who we are, what we value and where we believe God is leading us. Your participation is greatly *wanted* and *needed* to provide a bright, clear picture of our church!

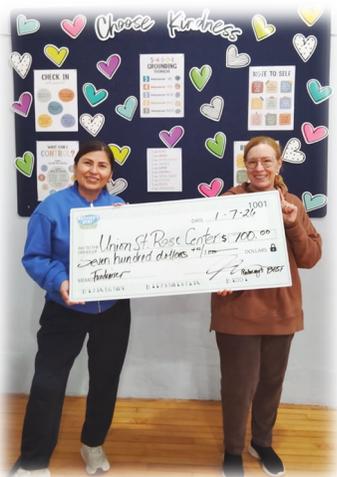


### Community Garden Taking Shape

As the new year began, David assembled the first of the garden bed frames in our hallway. Several weeks later, a work day was held in Davis Hall and more frames were assembled. Thank you, David, and to those who helped.

*2026 is going to be an amazing year at First Pres!!!*





**Thank you,  
Rahway's Best!**

Joie from Rahway's Best presented Cheryl Anne a \$700 check for the Union Street Resource Center.

The funds were a part of the proceeds from their Grinch Breakfast Fundraiser.

**WE  
APPRECIATE  
YOU**



**SIGN UP  
TO HOST  
COFFEE HOUR**

We are looking for people to host coffee hour. Sign-up sheets are in the kitchen in Davis Hall. February is spoken for; sign-ups begin in March.

**Come Join Us for Chair Yoga**

The morning session is on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. The February sessions will be on February 3, 10, 17, and 24. The evening session is on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. The evening sessions will be on the 5, 12, 19, and 26. All are welcome! Bring 2 full water bottles to be used as weights or dumbbells if you have them.



**REMINDER:**

**Fabulous Finds Mini Mart  
Saturday, March 7  
9 am — 1 pm**

As always, if you find that you have time and would like to come to the church and help, please do so. There are always things that you can do.

**Spread the Word**



**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.**

- 1 – Susan & Cliff

**Johnsonburg** Women's Retreat  
Camp & Retreat Center in April

Ladies,

I have really enjoyed the women's retreats at Camp Johnsonburg! It is an opportunity to take in a little and to breathe. Below are links to sign up for the retreat. Please join me.

Diane

Registration is now open for the 2026 Spring Women's Retreat being held the weekend of April 24th. Options and costs can be found on our website: [www.campjburg.org](http://www.campjburg.org).

**Kim Italiano (she/her)**  
Registrar  
908.852.2349 Ext. 209

**The Lenten Season is Coming!**

This year the Lenten season begins on Wednesday, February 18. Traditionally, we begin with an Ash Wednesday Service. This year, we're planning to start the season with a related, distinctive worship service. There have been so many losses of so many kinds in the past year or so. Loved ones have died. People have gotten ill. Changes from the world around us have made some of us lose hope and feeling unsafe. People are losing basic necessities and benefits that they had relied upon, which leads to anxiety and fearfulness. So many sources of stability, morality, and justice seem to be eroding a little more every day.



To begin the Lenten season, we are planning a **Service for Healing and Well-being at 7:30 pm, Wednesday evening**. It will be a casual service, aiming to address wellbeing in our minds, bodies, and spirits. Let's gather to find refreshment, renewal, and healing for our souls.

*Details about Holy Week and Easter are coming soon!*



Throughout the month of February, canned and boxed food items, may be brought to church on Sundays as our congregation continues its discipleship of feeding the hungry. At the end of the month all items will be brought to the Rahway Food for Friends Food Pantry for distribution to those in need.

Food items may also be brought to the Church Office on Thursdays between 10 AM and noon; please call ahead to let the office know you're coming.



The items that follow are some suggestions of food most needed and appreciated:

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Kraft Mac and Cheese in a box     | Boxed milk (such as Parmalat) |
| Pasta sauce and spaghetti noodles | Canned pasta                  |
| Rice a-Roni                       | Canned veggies and soup       |
| Cooking oil                       | Spices, salt and pepper       |
| Tea bags and coffee               | Sugar and flour               |
| Canned tuna                       | Cereal                        |
| Crackers                          | Peanut butter and Jelly       |
| Cake mix and frosting             | Stove top stuffing            |





## Parking Signs in Front of Squier Hall

If you've been at the church you might have noticed the two new parking signs in front of Squier Hall. There will be no parking permitted between the hours of 2 pm—4 pm right in front of Squier so that the school bus has easy and safe pickups and drop-offs for the children enrolled in various programs.

Previously the bus would have to park in the middle of the road because cars were parked, preventing the bus from pulling over to the curb. As you can guess, not only wasn't it safe for the children but it also created unnecessary traffic. Problem now solved!



Unless a 'state of emergency' has been issued, we will hold worship, if possible. The service will be livestreamed and recorded, so if you're not able to join us in person, please join us via our live stream, or you can watch the recording at a later time.

If an emergency is declared, a Zoom worship service will be created instead. Cheryl Anne and Sue set up a successful Zoom call / worship service on Sunday, January 25th. You will receive an email with all of the Zoom information needed to join.

If a live stream or Zoom service can not be held, the Elders will be making phone calls alerting members and friends that the church will not be holding a worship service.

Our social media and website will have posts as well letting you know the latest developments.

**The great news:  
Spring is less than 2 months away!**

*Inclement Weather  
Update*



## Time for Rahway First Pres Members to Submit their 2026 Per Capita Assessment - \$37

### What is this assessment?

First, Rahway First Pres is a connectional church.

We are connected to the Presbyterian Church USA, which has the responsibility of spreading the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Under the Presbyterian Church USA, the national body is called the General Assembly, the regional body is called the Synod and the local body is called the Presbytery. Our Church is a member of The Presbytery of The Northeast which includes Rahway.

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.

### What is the 2026 per capita assessment?

Our Presbytery, The Presbytery of The Northeast, has announced that the assessment for 2026 is \$37.00 per person, \$1 less than last year.

### Who should pay the 2026 per capita assessment as per the formula?

**All Active members** (Please write a check indicating in the memo that the payment is for per capita.)

**All members who were Active in 2024 but not in 2025 nor 2026.**

### The importance of paying your per capita assessment:

It is important that each member of First Pres pay their per capita amount of \$37.00 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.

Thank You,  
Administrative Committee

**HOT CHOCOLATE**

**COFFEE PACKETS**

**CUP OF SOUP**

**TEA BAGS**



# **MUGS OF LOVE**

**February 15th**

Our first congregational mission project is Mugs of Love! We will meet in Davis Hall after service and put together mugs with a variety of items that will be distributed to people in Rahway.

Please bring in your donations by February 15th.



**MINI HAND LOTION**

**MINI CHOCOLATES**

**LIP BALM**

**SOCKS**

@1stpresrahway



New Furnace

### **Boiler Replacement**

Of course, no sooner than an arctic blast hit us, Cheryl Anne had to deal with one of the furnaces not working. However, not only did it temporarily stop working, but when Palmer came in to service it, the corrosion was so bad, that it had become a fire hazard as well.

We were fortunate that a “warm spell” was upon us with temps above freezing when Palmer came to the church and worked non stop to replace the furnace so we would have heat for the affected areas. Plus, having a working furnace would prevent the pipes from freezing.

**ANOTHER BUILDING UPDATE:** Thursday, January 15th the church's main water line was replaced as part of the City of Rahway's Lead Abatement Program. Our 2-inch water pipe from the curb on Union Street to Squier Hall qualified for FREE replacement thanks to a grant the City received. The pipe runs under the parking lot off of Union Street which had to be dug up in order to put the new pipe in. Fortunately, the trench was filled and new pavement placed on top to restore the parking lot.



### **Mini Mart Furniture Donations**

Many times people will tell us that one of our members recommended donating their furniture to our church. We appreciate that tremendously. However, given the limited amount of space we have available, please ask the person to email a photo, or photos, to the church office so we can decide on whether we're able to take the donation. Carol Ann will forward the pics, decisions can be made, and someone will get back to them on if we're able to take them or not. The church email is: [office@1stpresrahway.org](mailto:office@1stpresrahway.org).

Hopefully, this will eliminate some of the back and forth calls for those wanting to donate, making it a more easy process for all involved.



***We received a card from one of the residents at the Kennedy Apartments, who was so appreciative of our caroling and gifts.***

"Thank you so much for the Christmas caroling, it was fantastic, and the thoughtful gift. Wishing you all the amazing things this season has to offer. Blessed New Year Ahead!" — Karen R



# Prayer REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request please give Ilanda a call at 732-382-6193 or send her an email: [ikerobo@comcast.net](mailto:ikerobo@comcast.net). Ilanda will ensure that your request is addressed/sent to our wonderful prayer warriors.

Patrick W., Lynn H., Michele P., Louise & Teddy, Bernadette, Russell & Purcell families, Lola & family, Barbara, Bill Siocha's friend, Flynn family, Carol DeLuca's cousin & family, Michael, Tom M., Dante B., Portia, Kaiser, Connie J., William S. Jr., Carol & Jake, Sue K., Agnes N. & family, Anne H., Flo, Savannah B. & family, Carole H., Becky, John, Sam, Michael, Sara & Joan P., Mary "Cookie" F., Nicole, Allison, Mary R., Helen, Logan, Harper, Helene & Diane, Dorothy R., Amy

God of renewal,  
As we begin a new year,  
help us to love boldly,  
even when it's hard.  
Help us to serve joyfully,  
even when we're weary.  
Help us to lead courageously,  
even when the way is uncertain.  
May your Spirit guide us in every step.  
Amen.

Love Boldly  
Serve Joyfully  
Lead Courageously

## Prayer Persons

### **FEBRUARY**

**Feb. 1st** - Cheryl Anne Cammann  
**Feb. 8th** - Will Marsh  
**Feb. 15th** - Gail Anderson  
**Feb. 22nd** - Barbra Maskarinetz

### **MARCH**

**Mar. 1st** - Rebecca Abungwo  
**Mar. 8th** - Eunice Schwietering  
**Mar. 15th** - Jon-Paul Daye  
**Mar. 22nd** - Carole Huntley  
**Mar. 29th** - Beverly Woolley

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
1731 CHURCH STREET  
RAHWAY, NJ 07065  
732.382.0803

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
RAHWAY, NJ 07065

**DATED MATERIAL  
PLEASE RUSH**



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

Office: [office@1stpresrahway.org](mailto:office@1stpresrahway.org)  
Rev. Ed Hoener: [edhoener1@gmail.com](mailto:edhoener1@gmail.com)

**[1stpresrahway.org](http://1stpresrahway.org)**



QR Code for donations

Follow us on social media!

