

# TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 14 Issue 3

March 2023

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Special points of interest:

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### Deacons-Easter Flowers



The deacons will be decorating the altar with a mix of tulips, daffodils, and perhaps a few other varieties for Easter Sunday, April 9th. After the service, the flowers will be available for purchase @ \$5 per plant. If you are interested in a plant, be sure to see Gail after the Easter service so you can choose a plant to take home. Any plants that are not purchased will be planted on church grounds.

Editor:  
CAB  
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## From Pastor Ed...

Dear Friends,

When I was growing up (on Ridge Road ) I had a friend who had tropical fish. Every once in a while, he'd have to empty the fish tank and thoroughly clean. I happened to be there on one occasion when he had to do this chore. The first thing he did was to fill the bathtub with water, making sure that the temperature was the same as in the fish tank. Then he released his fish into the tub, "to give them a treat" - to let them revel in the wide open waters. Then he and I went into his backyard where he began scrubbing. He loved his fish, so he polished the tank until it was gleaming in the sunlight. The fish castle looked like it belonged in Disneyland, and every piece of fish "furniture" looked like it was fresh from the showroom. So we carried it all triumphantly into the house, filled it with fresh water and new gravel, arranged all the filters and all the fish-homey touches, and went to retrieve the residents from the tub. When we arrived at tub-side, I was surprised to find the fish all together in one corner, in an area *the same size* as their tank. It was as though there were invisible walls containing them there. My friend looked at me and said, "I don't get it. They do that every time," as he scooped them into his net.

There could be a parable for us in that. There are potentially lots of ways that we learn to confine ourselves, or fear life outside of the "fish bowls" we may live in. Maybe we learned that only doing things, or living a certain way, is "acceptable." Maybe we've been confined by the "walls" that guard us against being spontaneous, or reaching out, or inquiring more deeply into life's possibilities. Maybe we live inside fences that confine our beliefs - about God, and life, and spirituality, and ministry, and more.

One of the most helpful opportunities that Lent can bring, is the time and space to reflect on our lives, in light of the gospel. One thing Jesus brings home to us is that our faith invites to enter into a larger life. If we are listening, the Spirit is ever inviting us to explore, and experience life to its fullest. The Spirit invites us to risk venturing even into the places where pain and difficulty may be - if only to discover that God is there too - strengthening us and supporting us. Jesus taught that the more we venture "outside the bowl" the more we'll know the abundant life Jesus makes possible. As we continue our Lenten journey this month, let's ask the Spirit to reveal the invisible "walls" whatever they may be, that confine us. Let's find the time and space to listen for what our next steps of faith and growth and transformation may be. If we do, we may enter more deeply into the possibilities that Easter morning brings. We may also be surprised and blessed, by the greater difference we can be part of making in our community, as his disciples.

Love and Peace!  
Ed

**Come one, come all!**

**Church Family Corned Beef Dinner  
Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>**

*Appetizers will be served at 5:30 p.m.*

*Followed by*

*A Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner*

*Complete with boiled potatoes and carrots,*

*Irish Soda Bread and butter, and*

*Delightful Desserts*

Please be sure to sign up in Davis Hall after church this Sunday or call JoAnn Roesch and let her know how many will be in your party by Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup> so that the committee purchases enough corned beefs.

If you would like to help, there is a sign-up sheet in Davis Hall or you could call JoAnn and let her know what you would like to do.

Everyone who came out for the church Valentine's Dinner had a great time. Please join us on March 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be activities to do and our talented organist might be there to provide us with some music to enjoy.





**Spring Flea Market**  
**April 22**  
**9am-2pm**

Our annual spring sale will be coming up at the end of April. As always, we need volunteers to help since it requires many hands to get these jobs done. We'd so greatly appreciate any time you can spare. Let Carol or Jake know you'll be able to help.

1. **Bringing items up from the downstairs area on Sunday, April 16**
2. **Setting up during the week, Monday - Friday**
3. **Workers on the day of the sale, April 22, 7a-3:30p**

One of the biggest jobs is getting the outside ready, which begins at 7am. We've been blessed with a lot of help over the last few flea markets. Please consider helping at that time and throughout the day, if possible. As always, lunch is provided.



**Church Angels**

**WE WELCOME YOU  
 TO JOIN US**

The church angels are going to be working on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. til 1 p.m. We would welcome anyone who would like to join us to come. So far we have met twice and each time we enjoyed working together and making our church facility look nicer. There is still a lot to do, so please consider coming. Since the doors are locked during the week, call JoAnn so that she can let you into the building.

**Mar.**

- 7 - Jennifer S.
- 13 - Doris K.
- 14 - Jon-Paul Daye
- 16 - Russ G.
- 18 - Brian N.
- 19 - Debby R.
- 20 - Ruby R.
- 28 - Elizabeth O'L.
- 28 - Robert B., Jr.
- 29 - Marisa E.
- 29 - William M.
- 29 - Leslie F.
- 30 - Jean M.
- 30 - Lilliann Queenie S.

**Mar.**

- 19 - Uchechi & Ukoha



## Stepping Forward at FPC !



On February 25<sup>th</sup>, we had our first Saturday retreat! The purpose of such retreats is to provide a time for learning some of the latest information about church transformation and growth, and envisioning authentic possibilities for the church. Furthermore each gathering works to develop next steps that our congregation can *do*, guided by the following acronym S.M.A.R.T. which stands for Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, with a Timeline.

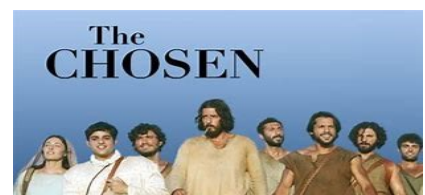
SO, the following initiatives are the result of our first retreat:

1. Our Session will be transforming the ways it does its work to make planning, and implementation of various ministries easier, more focused. and flexible. Session will be focusing more on equipping people in the congregation to use their gifts! This forward focus will be guided by three questions: What do you want to do?, What do you need?, and How is it going?
2. The very first initiative that has already started along these lines is that during Sunday worship we will be celebrating the projects someone is doing, and feels passionate about, (and may invite others to join in!).
3. A new small group is forming during Lent, watching the film series entitled "The Chosen", which is an excellent portrayal of the Life of Christ.
4. Session will be compiling a wish list of items that will enhance the ministries of the church.
5. Plans are being pursued for reviving the Youth Group ministry.
6. All committees and other groups in the church will employ the practices that characterize small group ministry.

There will be more opportunities coming on the horizon to participate in Saturday retreats, coffee hour information presentations and more. Everyone is enthusiastically invited to come!



### **The Chosen (TV Series) – Let's Talk About It**



During Lent, Diane Hoener would like to start a small group that meets to view & discuss the TV Series many are talking about, *The Chosen*.

*The Chosen* is an American historical drama television series created, directed, and co-written by Christian filmmaker Dallas Jenkins. It is the first multi-season series about the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Primarily set in Judaea and Galilee in the 1st century, the series centers on Jesus and the different people who met and followed him. The series stars Jonathan Roumie as Jesus, alongside Shahar Isaac, Elizabeth Tabish, Paras Patel, Noah James and George H. Xanthis.

#### **First viewing:**

**Sunday, March 5 at the manse (552 Union St Rahway) from noon - 1:30 pm.**

Everyone is invited to bring their own lunch to eat during the program. The time will be spent viewing and discussing the first episode. There will be a time to share the ups and downs of the week and a short time for prayer. Anyone is invited who would like to view the first episode. The group gathered will decide the best day and time to meet if they wish to continue watching, discussing, sharing, praying, and, of course, eating. *No church affiliation is required.*



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., Briele, Carol Ann, Christine H., Debbie C., Diane W., Ed L., Eileen P., Eric R., Evan’s mom, & dad Gail, Gladys B., Ilanda K., Jane S., Kristen & family, Mary Ann, Mary Ann R., Matt P., Michael & Marty, Michele P., Molly, Nancy T., Patty-Travis & family, Robert, Russ G., Samantha M., Savannah B., Ukrainian Sisters &



Our heartfelt condolences to...

The Simpson family on the passing of **Gene H. Simpson**, who entered eternal peace on February 23, 2023. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, fur-daddy, and friend.



## Prayer Persons

### MARCH

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

### APRIL

- Apr. 2nd - Jennifer, Ashley & James Clemens
- Apr. 9th - Ryne Ludington
- Apr. 16th - Lauren Davis
- Apr. 23rd - Patrick Weaver
- Apr. 30th - Aleya Daye Hall

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
1731 CHURCH STREET  
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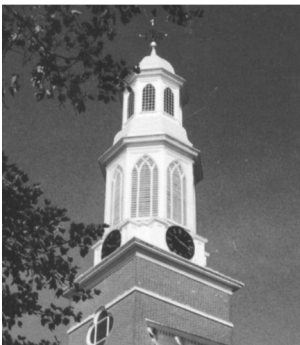
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**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

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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**

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