

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 14 Issue 9

SEPTEMBER 2023

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Did you know that we send a weekly email?

Each Friday a weekly email is sent with the latest news, worship info, b-days & anniversaries, and a special weekly message from Pastor Ed with a prayer as you journey through your week. Send an email to: office@1stpresrahway.org if you would like to receive it.

FPC is Paying It Forward!!!

Our Church has been deeply involved in building and serving the Rahway community throughout its history! The buildings on our campus testify to just two examples of this commitment we have always had. Davis Hall honors the ministry to the poor and destitute our former pastor and his wife engaged in. They were also unequivocal in their advocacy for racial equality. Mrs. Squier, for whom our Sunday School wing is named, was a strong champion and benefactor for the quality of education in our town. Our Church's history speaks clearly and demonstrably of the many ways this congregation has worked for the welfare of our neighbors here in Rahway.

One of the tasks our Session has been pursuing in this transition period has been to discern and identify its core values – those characteristics that are profoundly part of who we are. Our commitment to this community's well being is truly one of our most deeply held values. Our Session has been reflecting prayerfully throughout this interim period, seeking to discern our response to the question, "What is God calling us to do and be at this time in our history"? We trust that God has answered this prayer!

We believe we are being called to create a Community Center for the city of Rahway in Squier Hall. We recently learned that Food for Friends will no longer be able to be housed at the former Second Pres. Church, and we are planning for them to be the first ministry operating in our building. The amazing news is that the initial funding will be coming from the Mission fund which was created when Second Pres. sold its building. The fund will make it possible to hire the contractors and expertise to repair and restore the building in fine fashion. Furthermore we are planning to create additional programs to meet the needs in the community which will make it eligible for Grants and 501c3 status!

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Throughout this Fall season we will be offering opportunities for the congregation to share thoughts and concerns, receive progress reports, and learn the Whys and Hows that led Session to this point. Dates, times and venues will be forthcoming.

Eugene Peterson has said, “*God is always doing something.... So, the task is not to get God to do something I think needs to be done, but to become aware of what God is doing, so that I can respond to it, and participate in it.*”

Peace and Blessings,
Your Session

Shall we Start a Life Groups Ministry?

Another initiative Session is beginning to explore is the formation of Life groups in our congregation.

Life groups are simply small gatherings of people with a purpose. There are *at least* 5 types. There are Working Together groups, that gather around doing some sort of task or project. Caring Together Groups gather around supporting each other. Learning Together groups gather around learning various topics, both spiritual and “secular”. Being Together groups gather around fellowship and recreation. Mixed Agenda groups that divide their time between all of the above and more.

Life groups help our spiritual growth because so much of what we learn about the Christian life comes from other people’s experiences, and the lessons learned. Life groups can help increase congregational care because they provide increased opportunities for supporting each other. Life groups also provide an easy, non-threatening way to grow our congregation because they provide the opportunity for non- church-goers to get to know us, and become friends.

A brief training is available to equip anyone who’d like to be a small group leader. If you’re interested, contact Ed or any member of Session.

SO, the first Life Group that is starting will be a weekly gathering of folks gathering at one of the establishments in our town to share conversation over a beverage or snack!

The date and time will probably be different each week, and will be announced on Sunday mornings, posted in our weekly newsletter, and website. This is a *come when you can, leave when you must* gathering.

The first weekly fellowship gathering will be on Thursday, August 30 @ 7 pm at the Wet Ticket Microbrewery. If the weather good we will gather in the outdoor section.



Fall Flea Market



SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

9 AM-2 PM



Our annual fall sale will be coming up in a couple of weeks. As always, we need volunteers to help, but 1 & 3 are the ones we could use the most help with since it requires many hands to get these jobs done. So if you can, we'd so greatly appreciate any time you can give us. Let Carol or Jake know you'll be able to help, or call or send an email to the church office.

**1. Bringing items up from the downstairs area,
Sunday, September 10**

Please consider staying after worship and lending a hand as we move items from downstairs into Davis Hall and the hallway. If you can't attend worship but can come to the church and help after 11:30am, wonderful. The more help there is, the easier and quicker this gets done.

2. Setting up Davis Hall & the Hallway, Monday - Friday

Setup will be from approximately 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Lunch is provided.

3. Workers on the day of the sale from 7 am-3:30 pm

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, we hope it will continue for this one as well. Please consider helping from 7am and throughout the day, if possible. Lunch is provided. (The time noted above includes helping with cleanup by bringing the outside items in.)

Reminder:

We are not taking used clothing, computers, VCRs, VHS tapes, encyclopedias, TVs, books, or printers. Please call the church office if you have a donation, or items can be dropped off on Wednesdays from 10 am-12 noon, however, the week of the sale you can drop off items all week until Thursday, Sept. 14.

Next Session-approved 2023 flea market date:

- **Saturday, November 11th, 9 am-2 pm**
Indoor / Holiday Sale

Save the Date



Sept.

- 1 - Andrew R.
- 4 - Rev. Howard Bryant
- 5 - Ryan C.
- 7 - Rachel R.
- 9 - Anga N.
- 11 - Patrick W.
- 12 - Gail W.
- 13 - Ted P.
- 15 - Francis N.
- 18 - Emily O.
- 20 - Steven O.
- 23 - Hudson R.
- 26 - Rev. Ed Hoener
- 26 - Bryan K.
- 29 - Sarah R.
- 30 - Christine J.



Sept.

- 1 - Dana & Bill
- 2 - Tara & Eric
- 7 - Hillary & Daniel
- 29 - Annelise & Evan



*As we see the beauty of autumn,
let us see the blessings which are ours.*



Pastor Ed's Traveling Mercies 'Special Times Edition for September'

"Run the race, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

Heb.12

Dear Friends,

So many of the biblical stories are cliffhangers, where people are poised on the edge of a threshold, upon which the entire shape of the future will hinge. I think of Abram standing before his suitcase deciding whether to pack or not. I think about Noah standing before his tool box deciding whether to pick it up or not. I think about the people of Israel staring tentatively down into the canyon God made through the Red Sea waters. I think about Isaiah kneeling in heaven's courtyard, and Daniel in the lion's den, praying after the king's decree. I think of Jesus in Gethsemane's garden, and Paul, on the Damascus road.

When we think of these stories it's so easy to concentrate on the spectacular miracles that they contain. The parting of the sea. The glory of the God's throne room. The shutting of the lions' mouths. The comfort of the angels.

But there is another less conspicuous miracle in each of these stories, and that is how these people *went forward*. In each story they were stepping into the unknown. In each story there were scant guarantees about "success". In each story there was the precarious moment when it was all about taking that step into the darkness and hoping for the best. It's all about letting go and giving ourselves over to the One who loves us into being. This is the essence of faith - and it's essential to our growth and progress. It's proceeding on the basis of trusting that God is with us. It's proceeding in faith that God will lead and strengthen us, whatever the situations we meet, until the journey's through.

What makes this so difficult is simply, *fear*. Fear of loss, and failure, and change. Counselor, educator, and spiritual director, Parker Palmer said, "We all have places of fear inside us, but *we have other places as well* - places like trust, hope, faith. We can choose to live from those places - to stand on that ground instead, and move forward from a place of promise rather than anxiety."

This truth asks us to examine the choices we are making as individuals and a congregation during this time of transition, and *anticipation*. The good news is, we *can* choose the alternative to fear and anxiety. When we do, Jesus will be ready to "run the races before us" - *right beside us*: towards new life and growth and transformation. May God help us run *that* race, every step of the way into our future!

Peace and Blessing, Ed



User Friendly Faith Formation is Coming!

You're invited to join a **Zoom conversation**, led by Sue Krivenko, to check out several options we've discovered for excellent CE programming for our kids.

We know the challenges so many of us have trying to sustain a traditional Sunday School program. There are sports practices and games on weekends. Sunday may be the *only* day when parents can have "family time", or, it *may be a regular work day*.

The good news is there are excellent resources that are *user friendly*, interesting, and fun to help our children's, (and youth's) faith formation. At the Zoom meeting we will explore these together, and implement those that we decide will work best.

***Stay tuned for the date and time TB Announced!!!
Join the Conversation!***





The Celebration of a Life Wonderfully Lived, The Reverend Douglas Muller

On July 23, Rev. Douglas Muller, former pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, passed away peacefully at his home in Cape Town, South Africa with family by his side. The day before his death marked sixty-five years of marriage for Douglas and his wife, Avril. He also left behind four children (Neil, Alan, Carol, and Daphne) and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Rev. Muller came to Second Presbyterian Church in Rahway from South Africa, deciding that he wanted to continue his pastoral calling in America despite being at an age when retirement is often the norm. He had already had a fulfilling pastorate which included serving as the Moderator of the South Africa General Assembly, birthing a new church from the ground up which later branched off to another church, as well as serving as the pastor for several smaller churches earlier in his career. If you were to have asked Douglas about the work he was most proud of, he probably would have said the reconciliation ministry he led during apartheid. He helped organize the churches throughout South Africa to unite to end apartheid, often doing this discreetly and very much behind the scenes during dangerous times.

His networking skills were immediately put to use in Rahway when he arrived just days after 9/11. Rahway, like many communities at that time, was reeling from this tragedy and did not know where to turn for solace. Despite being a newcomer to our community, Rev. Muller managed to unite eleven of the local churches to come together for a day of praise dubbed Festival of Praise. This event was well attended and successfully helped unite the community in its time of need.

Rev. Muller would continue his ministry at Second Pres for ten years, leading the congregation through a rollercoaster of highs and lows, ultimately guiding them to seek a new union with First Presbyterian Church. After the Second Pres building was sold, Douglas decided it was time for him to return to South Africa. He would visit America several times after his return.

Rev. Muller was a soft-spoken, thoughtful, and faithful man. Those that had the privilege of getting to know him both in and out of his pastoral role, found him to be a wonderful mentor, listener, and friend. He was a man of humility, always caring more about others and how he might help to make their lives better. Throughout many of his years at Second Pres, he spent them separated from his wife, Avril, as she had been banned by the US and unable to return due to an immigration glitch. He worked tirelessly with attorneys and government officials to get that ban lifted, which he successfully managed near the end of his time with Second Pres. Anyone who knew both Avril and Douglas, knew that they were quite the opposite of one another, but together made an interesting couple. Rev. Muller would later become a dual citizen of both South Africa and America.

We celebrate the life of the Rev. Douglas Muller and are thankful we had the opportunity to meet him. Heaven has gained a good and faithful servant and a beautiful soul.

Submitted by Dana Marsh

**ALL
ARE
WELCOME**

The Chosen Season 2 will begin in September.

Each episode can stand alone. Feel free to drop in, even if you haven't seen Season 1.

If there is a small group of people wanting to view and discuss Season 1, Diane would be happy to lead the group at an agreed upon day and time.

Contact Diane if interested in either Season 1 or 2.

Please mark these Sundays at noon on your calendars. We meet at the manse.

- September 10, 17, 24,
- October 8, 15,
- November 5, 12,
- December 3, and 17 (at 12:30 pm for the 17th only)



Church Angels

The "Church Angels" are going to begin working on different areas of our church on Thursday, September 7th. Please consider joining them because there is much to be done. They begin at 10 a.m. and work for 3 or 4 hours. We hope both men and women would consider joining us. Come when you can and leave when you must. We are not sure if we will have another work day because of the flea market in September, but an announcement will be put in our weekly announcements if we do. In an effort to help people plan to join us, we will continue to meet the first Thursday of every month. Please mark your calendars for Thursday, October 5th, Thursday, November 2nd, and Thursday, December 7th. Each month we will decide if we can have another workday for the "Church Angels" and an announcement will be placed in our weekly announcements if there are additional workdays.



We are also planning on having a fall clean-up, but the date has yet to be determined.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
PLAN TO JOIN US
WHEN WE CELEBRATE
OUR BELOVED CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR,**

CAROL ANN BREGMAN
Sunday, October 29th
After church with a luncheon

Carol Ann has served our church for over sixteen dedicated years. She has always been ready, willing and able to help our pastor, Session, committees, and members with anything that she was asked to do. During the pandemic she was the glue that kept us together by seeing to mailings, bulletins for online, updating our website each day with a new bible verse, etc. Our hopes were to celebrate her upon the completion of 15 years of dedicated service to her role. Unfortunately with the cancellation of coffee hours, church dinners and Senior Member celebrations over the past few years, recognizing her impact was delayed. So, mark your calendars and plan to stay after worship on Sunday, October 29th for a luncheon in her honor.

If possible, please RSVP to JoAnn Roesch via email, text, or call and let her know that you are coming. If you didn't respond and attend service that Sunday, you will be more than welcome to join us in this important celebration. We hope to see you there.



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., Andrew D. & family, Ann H., Anthony & family, Avril Muller & family, Bruce & family, Carlos B., Christine H., Danny M., Debbie C., Doris & Celeste, Eileen P., Eric & Judy R., Gail, Gladys B., Harry, Harnett family, Jane S., Kristen & family, Marc, Mary Ann, Mary Ann R., Matt P., Megan B., Michael & Marty, Molly, Nancy T., Patty-Travis & family, Savannah B., Tina Marie & family, Tom P., Whitney S., Ukrainian Sisters & Brothers

Those that are homebound—Caroline Balla, Doris Kapus, Beverly Woolley



Prayer Persons

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 3rd - John Ludington & Family
Sept. 10th - Orijei Awa
Sept. 17th - Dawn Mandela
Sept. 24th - Christine Jeffries

OCTOBER

Oct. 1st - Danny Martin & Family
Oct. 8th - Jean Montanari
Oct. 15th - Nyambi Family
Oct. 22nd - Michele Panila
Oct. 29th - Allison Purcell & Family

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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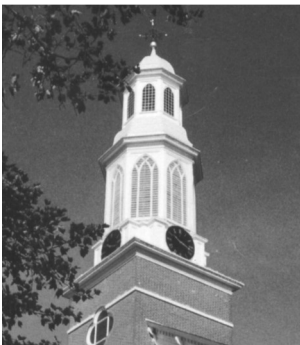
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**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH**



**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**



1stpresrahway.org

