

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 17 Issues 9 & 10

September / October 2026

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"The Chosen" UPDATE

Season 6 isn't available until mid-November, so our sessions are on hold until November 20. You can take this opportunity to catch up on the other seasons to join us in November for Season 6 (hint, hint).

Editor:
CAB
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From Pastor Ed...

"Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon you and you will bring forth justice to the nations. You will not grow faint until you have established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for your teaching. I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations. To open the eyes that are blind and to bring out the prisoners who sit in darkness."

Isaiah 42 sel.vss.

Dear Friends,

There are several ways that these verses are interpreted. One is that it refers to an actual person Isaiah knew. Another is that it is the nation of Israel's calling. A third is that it is Jesus. However, it can also refer to every servant of God. It can describe *anyone* who chooses to serve God's ways in this world, like you and me. Take note that there are *absolutely no job requirements* listed in Isaiah's classified ad for being God's servant. God merely declares, "Here is my servant, the one I have chosen, in whom my soul delights." This says that the only qualification for getting the job, is God's delight. That means that our entire life of faith is founded on God's prior stamp of approval. Even more, God promises to take the responsibility of empowering us all along the way in our serving God journey. That's what God meant when he said, "my servant whom I uphold."

Before we look at the job description, it's important to notice that there aren't any misconceptions about the state of the world where we serve God. These verses suggest that there will be wrongs and problems to contend with. That's why we're called to bring forth justice to the nations. When God said, "we open eyes that are blind", it means that we show people the alternative way of life that is informed by God's truths. We are a light that shows people the way out of one kind of life, and the way into God's new kind of life.

The best part of those verses, is that they say that ordinary servants like us, living our ordinary lives, can show people the "light" just by living our faith beside them. That's what being given as a covenant to the people is about. We are an expression of God's loving ways just by the way we live each day. All we need do is let go of anything that keeps us tethered to the old systems, the old ways we're used to doing things, and enter into the flow of the Spirit. Going with that flow is simply a matter of the day-to-day opportunities that come to love, and be just, and make peace. It is the power of an authentic spiritual life. This message in Isaiah is reminiscent of the time when Jesus was talking to his ragtag little band of men and women about their own journey of discipleship. Jesus said, "You did not choose me, I chose you, and commissioned you to go and bear fruit that will last, and the Father will give you whatever you need *to do that* in my name." This is good news for our congregation as we are heading towards our next chapter.

Peace and Blessings,
Ed



Updates

JULY - Summer Tutor Program

Sixteen students ages 5 to 8 received 2 hours of free one-on-one tutoring in reading, word recognition and literacy each week during July. The four tutors were all teachers in the Rahway school system.



AUGUST - Life Skills Teen Summer Camp

Thirteen teenagers ages 13 to 16 attended the Life Skills Teen Summer Camp the week of August 5th. Presentations included real estate, gardening, business entrepreneurship, photography, local politics and first responders, police and firefighters. Councilmembers Darlene Eastman and Karla Timmons volunteered as leaders beside Cheryl Anne Cammann.

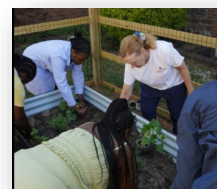
SEPTEMBER – Community Garden Free Events

All children and adults are invited to participate in the free Community Garden events on September 12, 19 and 26. Each event will feature learning a different aspect of gardening followed by a craft project. Adults & children welcome. RSVP via email ([office @1stpresrahayway.org](mailto:office@1stpresrahayway.org)) is optional.

September 12 - making bouquets of flowers and herbs, selecting which crop seeds to plant this Fall

September 19 - planting seeds in starter pots, preparing garden beds for planting, craft project

September 26 - harvesting peppers, mixing soil, craft project



OCTOBER Community Garden Free Events will be held on October 3, 17 and 21.

Check the FPC website for details after September 20th.

Prayer REQUESTS

Deacons: Prayer Chain & Requests

It's been a while since the last communication about the prayer chain and requests received for it.

Ilanda currently has a "prayer chain" distribution list for those who volunteered to participate ; it does not go out to the entire congregation & friends list . This ensures that those on the email thread will receive the request and will take the time to read the email and pray for those in need.

TO MAKE SURE THE CHAIN IS KEPT CURRENT, WE ARE ASKING YOU TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1: REMAIN ON THE LIST, or

2: BE REMOVED FROM THE LIST, or

3: HAVE YOUR NAME ADDED TO THE LIST.

And of course, if you're unsure whether you're on the list or not, Ilanda will be able to tell you.

TO REQUEST A PRAYER:

Please email your request to Ilanda. If you have a time-sensitive or urgent request, Ilanda included her phone number so you can call her.

As always, we're here to respond to your needs at all times. We hope this update helps to keep our prayer requests flowing smoothly and in a timely manner. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of the deacons.

Prayerfully,
Gail Anderson
Helene Haith
Cheryl Martin



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'L.
- 20 - Steven O'L.
- 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

Chair Yoga

Morning sessions are on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. in Squier Hall. Evening sessions are on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Bring 2 full water bottles to be used as weights or dumbbells if you have them.

Join US !

Community Garden Hours

The Community Garden gate is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am until 2pm, weather permitting.

Bring a bag for the items that you pick.



First Pres. opens Food Pantry for those in need

When the Rahway Food for Friends Pantry permanently closed on Monday, March 2nd, our Session was faced with an unusual dilemma. We had just completed our tri-annual food collection in February and at the same time were promised a large donation of food from an outside source that we were scheduled to pick up in April. As things stood, we had plenty of food but nowhere to bring it. Plus, our next food collection from church members was to be held in June so we would end up with an ever greater supply.

After Session discussed the situation, it was decided to convert our library/meeting room into a food pantry and fill the shelves with cans and boxes. Two dates were also selected when we would host our own distribution.

As a result, on Saturday, June 20 and Saturday, August 8, we opened our doors to help feed our neighbors. The initial response was favorable and we plan on continuing our food distributions.

Session has set **Saturday, September 26 and Saturday, November 21** as the next dates our food pantry will be open to the public. We are very optimistic that our food distributions can develop into an important outreach program for our church and one that will help us build relationships with other groups and individuals in the community.



October Food Collection

Throughout the month of October, canned and boxed food items, may be brought to church on Sundays as our congregation continues its discipleship of feeding the hungry.

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

Kraft Mac and Cheese in a box
Pasta sauce and spaghetti noodles
Rice a-Roni
Cooking oil
Tea bags and coffee
Canned tuna
Crackers
Cake mix and frosting

Boxed milk (such as Parmalat)
Canned pasta
Canned veggies and soup
Spices, salt and pepper
Sugar and flour
Cereal
Peanut butter and Jelly
Stove top stuffing



The Family Dinner will begin at 4 PM for apps and games! Then we will sit together as a family and enjoy a meal prepared by all of us in POT LUCK fashion at 5 PM.

A sign-up sheet will be located in Davis Hall. You can choose to bring an appetizer, veggie, side-dish, or main dish. Session will supplement the meal with a couple extra main dishes. Please make enough for your family plus 2 people. If you miss the sign-up sheet, please email Elder Sue or give her a call.



**Rahway Day,
 Saturday Oct. 17th, 11am – 3pm,
 Rahway Recreation Center**

FPC will have a table at the Rahway Chamber of Commerce's annual "Rahway Day" event. Stop by our table and help us greet attendees and share what we are all about.



Oct.

3 - Matthew S.
 4 - Carlos A.
 12 - Michaela W.
 12 - Cheryl Anne C.
 16 - Helene H.
 17 - Emma O'L.
 19 - Robin S.
 20 - Makenzie M.
 21 - Florence O.
 29 - Bill M.
 31 - Richard E.
 31 - Ashley N.



Oct.

3 - Rachel & Sarah
 6 - Joanne & Ted
 ..8 - Carlos & Erwin
 20 - Elizabeth & Vincent
 20 - Diane & Ed

REMINDER:

**Fabulous Finds Mini Mart
 Saturday, Oct. 3
 9 am — 1 pm**

If you find that you have time and would like to come to the church and help, please do so.

Share Our Social Media Posts

The Dr. Shannon Reilly Gutches Memorial Fund was founded by Shannon's family in 2021 in order to preserve and maintain her legacy. Our mission is to provide a platform to host and promote fundraising events that will produce scholarships for students connected to Dr. Shannon's life, career and passions.

Shannon was truly heaven sent. She dedicated her life to education and helping others. Her love for helping people was unparalleled. As an elementary school Child Psychologist and dance teacher, Shannon loved working with children. Deepening their love of education and exposure to the arts was just part of her impact on the students who were lucky enough to work with her.

After her sudden passing on October 6, 2019 her, her family and friends knew Shannon's work here was nowhere near finished. When considering how we could continue honoring her commitment and dedication to her students, it was difficult to choose just one organization to set our sights on. Instead, it is our intention to fund a variety of scholarships that apply to the multiple schools, organizations and children that Dr. Shannon worked with. Our annual fundraising events differ in their individual focus, and the funds raised from specific events will be allocated to specific scholarships for students who meet predetermined criteria.

While we know we can never replace Dr. Shannon in the lives of her family, friends or students, we will never stop working with her schools and associated organizations. We hope to let her "kids" know Shannon will always continue to care for them.

Thank you for reading our story.
The Gutches Family

THE 6TH ANNUAL SHENANIGANS IN THE PARK

Help support The Dr. Shannon Reilly Gutches Memorial fund and share in a celebration of her life

Participation in our event includes:

- Raffle tickets for over 20+ items (*donation required)
- 50/50 tickets (*donation required)
- Games
- Crafts
- Food
- Friends and fun!

Donations encouraged but not required

Saturday
10.03.2026
11am - 5pm



Please visit us:
www.srgscholarship.org

Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center Women's Retreat

SOUL FEAST: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR A PRACTICAL PEOPLE

In the middle of full schedules and endless to-do lists, we so often long for a quiet place to catch our breath. We want to be deeply rooted in our faith, but we are practical people who live in a fast-paced world. How do we close the gap between our desire for a closer walk with God and the realities of our everyday lives?

Women's Retreats offer adult women a chance to step away from the daily routines and find rest, renewal, and connection.

- ✓ Scripture exploration & worship
- ✓ Small-group discussions
- ✓ Community building
- ✓ Time for reflection & prayer
- ✓ Exploration of our 300 acres of lake and forested trails

OCTOBER 23 – 25
ALL WEEKEND LONG

REGISTER TODAY:
JOHNSONBURG.ORG



GUEST SPEAKER:
Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy



Johnsonburg's Women's Retreat

Diane has already signed up; take a look at this and see if this is something you'd like to attend. Diane has gone to many of these; ask her about them if you'd like some firsthand insight.

Good afternoon, everyone!

Just a reminder that our women's retreat registration is open! Some lodges are filling up, so I encourage you to register as soon as you can. Thank you to those who have already completed your registration. I've also attached a flyer for the event and hope that you will share it with friends, family, churches, etc. Help us spread the word for this wonderful opportunity to share in faith and fellowship at Johnsonburg this fall!

Many blessings,

Linda Thorstenson (she/her)

Office Manager/Assistant to the Executive Director
908.852.2349

Prayer REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request please give Ilanda a call or send her an email. Ilanda will ensure that your request is addressed/sent to our wonderful prayer warriors.

Tara / accident victims & their families, Helene & her sister, Barbara's family, Jayden, Dante, Bobby's family, Doris, Patricia H., Fran, Paul, Eunice, Barbra & Dave, William S., Abisiji B., Damilola B., Rosemary B., Bob M., Doug A., Patrick W., Michele P., Louise & Teddy, Barbara, Agnes N. & family, Savannah B. & family, Becky, Sam, Michael, Sara & Joan P., Mary "Cookie" F., Nicole, Allison, Mary R., Helen, Logan, Harper, Dorothy R., Amy



Our deepest condolences to...

Joan Pender & family on the passing of her son, *Stephen Pender*, on June 29th.
Please keep them in your prayers as they navigate this devastating loss.



Prayer Persons

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 6th - Judy & Eric Rickes
Sept. 13th - Candace King
Sept. 20th - Sean Simpson & family
Sept. 27th - Levi Knippel

OCTOBER

Oct. 4th - Helene Haith
Oct. 11th - Ashley Nevi & family
Oct. 18th - Anne & William Siocha
Oct. 25th - Steven O'Loughlin & family

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PLEASE RUSH**



Photo: D. Hoener



QR Code for donations

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

Office: office@1stpresrahway.org
Rev. Ed Hoener: edhoener1@gmail.com

www.1stpresrahway.org

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