

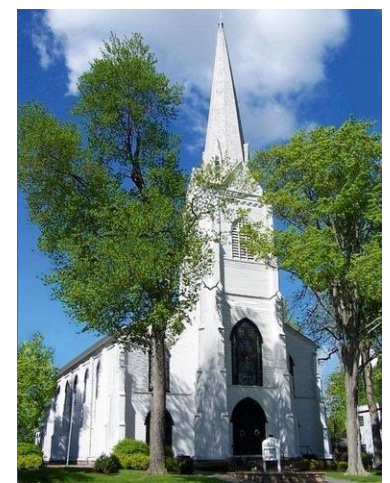
**First Presbyterian  
Church  
298 Main Street**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
298 MAIN STREET  
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ 07840  
REV. ERIN HAYES-COOK  
OFFICE: 908-852-4011  
e-mail: [fpchnj@gmail.com](mailto:fpchnj@gmail.com)  
Church website,  
<http://www.fpchackettstown.org>  
Editor: MaryAnn Simmons  
[maryann.simmons3@verizon.net](mailto:maryann.simmons3@verizon.net)**

**FEBRUARY  
2024**



*Light  
from the*



*Steeple*

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ  
CHURCH OFFICE: (908) 852-4011

**Pastor:** Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook  
**Choir Director/Organist:** Lorinda Ravo  
**Treasurer:** Al Ravo  
**Financial Secretary:** Deborah Gulick-Shepherd  
**Head Usher:** Kim Newton  
**Church Secretary:** Pattie Huff

### 2024 SESSION

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Bruce Bergman	Donna Erickson	Bill Cors
Michele Cameron	Diane Hull	Geof Gohlich
MaryAnn Simmons	Ray Sookhoo	Sharon Heil

**Clerk of Session:** Donna Erickson

### 2024 BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Pat Gohlich	Ellen Bergman	Jackie Hammel
Janette Hendershot	Patricia Butts	Kathy Maier
Justin Simmons	Carol Miller	Lorinda Ravo

**Moderator:** Ellen Bergman

### 2024 HEAVEN SENT NURSERY SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**OFFICE: 852-2006**

**Director:** Jen Bujno

Pam Venturini	- 2025	Pat Butts	- 2026
Kaitlyn Elliot	- HS Parent	Heather Pittman	- HS Parent

Sharon Heil - Session Rep  
Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook - Ex-Officio

## A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

Hello, Readers!

I am so pleased to bring you the news of our congregation this month.

As we prepare for the season of Lent, we need to recognize that we have a desire to find ourselves and know that God is with us every step of the way on this journey. The road may be bumpy at times, but it can be smooth if we seek His guidance. Pastor Erin reminds us of this fact in her note to us all.

Our Deacons have been busy attempting to find ways to continue with their missions at the start of the calendar year. To that end, they have been collecting hats, gloves, and scarves to be distributed to the children of our local schools. Their drive will continue into the first two weeks of February. In addition to this collection, they have continued to provide Kids' Care Kits with personal care items on an as needed basis. Thank you to all who have assisted in these endeavors. Be sure to look at the News From the Deacons to learn about their plans for future activities.

As you know this time of year we have the signups for our Secret Valentine program with the elementary school aged children. Thank you to those who volunteered to be a part of this fun. Please see the article for ways to bring a smile to the faces of our youngsters. In addition, take note of Second Sunday dates. During the next three months our Confirmation students will be meeting with Pastor Erin and MaryAnn Simmons to continue their faith journey.

You can see that we have other news available about the ice hockey trip to Allentown in March, Super Bowl Sunday collection on February 11th, the opportunity to sponsor Easter Flowers, and an informational article about the need to contribute to the Per Capita Campaign this year.

Finally, take a look at the calendar of events for the month of February. It too is packed with many activities.

As you may know, our beloved Don Luques passed away at the end of January. At the time of this publication, information concerning his passing were not available. Once information is known, it will be made available through the church office. Please keep Cynthia and her family in your prayers.

As always, thanks for your readership and continued support.

Yours in Christ,  
MaryAnn Simmons

## DATES TO REMEMBER - FEBRUARY 2024

- 01: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 03: Leadership Training for Elders and Deacons at Camp Johnsonburg 9:00 AM - 1 PM
- 04: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; no Sunday School for Middle School Students; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 05: Worship Committee meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room  
Blood Drive at the Chapel - 2 PM - 8 PM
- 07: Yarn Girls - 1 PM - Conference Room
- 08: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 10: Men's Breakfast at the Chapel - 8 AM
- 10: Community Dinner - 5:30-7 PM, at the Chapel
- 11: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Super Bowl of Caring; Scout Sunday; Sunday School grades Pre-K - 5 and grades 6 & 7; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 11: Second Sunday AND Confirmation Class 11:30-1 PM at the Chapel
- 12: PLEFF Dinner at Stonewood Tavern, Byram, NJ - 6 PM
- 13: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 14: Ash Wednesday - 7 pm
- 15: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 17: Scouts Blue and Gold Dinner - 3-5 PM at the Chapel
- 18: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Meeting of Secret Valentines after worship
- 18: Deadline for ticket purchase to Phantoms Hockey Game (3/3/24)
- 20: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 22: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 25: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 26: Session Meeting with Rose Niles
- 27: Ladies Who Lunch - 12 PM at Taste of Italy
- 29: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room

## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR



### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

If you were to take stock of your heart right now what would it say to you? I imagine many of us haven't done a check in with our centers in a while. Many of us are anxious, unsure, and wondering where life might lead us. We know that what breaks the heart of God is when we fail to love each other and ourselves. The world aches for love, for our hearts to be bound and healed together.

I recently heard the story of a woman who was able to flee her home in Palestine during the war in Gaza. She, her husband, and her children were able to enter into Egypt, but not before she experienced the ravages of war, the sights and sounds she cannot get out of her head. She said that even though she is in safety, her mind is still with the people in Gaza. It is as if her experiences are locked tight in a room and she is scared that if she opens that door it will all spill out and who knows what might happen. We might not be at war in Gaza, but we might be at war with other powers in our lives. What happens if we open that door to the room and let the light in? I pray that you might trust God and in turn, trust us as a community of faith to hold it along with you.

This Lent we will enter the rooms of our hearts and re-discover the story of Peter with help from our friends at A Sanctified Art. We will use the words to the song, "Come Thou Fount, 'come thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy praise, streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise, prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart, o take and seal it, seal for thy courts above.'" Each week we will delve in prayer and practice, hope and waiting for the story of faith and life to unveil itself before us. Join as we wander together. Amen.

**Pastor Erin**

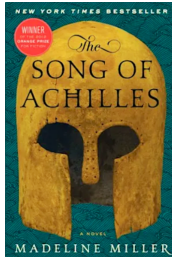


## BOOKS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE

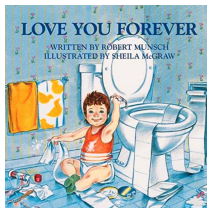


BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

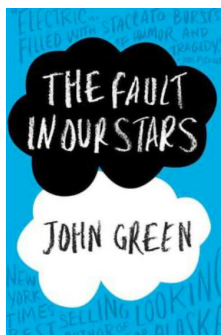
February is a time for us to think about those we love and the needs of others. This month, in the spirit of Valentine's Day and the desire to nurture others, I provide you with the following titles for your reading enjoyment.



**The Song of Achilles** by Madeline Miller is a rewrite of the epic poem *The Illiad*. In ancient Greece, exiled mortal Patroclus and famed demigod Achilles are drawn into a star-crossed love affair that inevitably ends in tragedy. You will enjoy the plot twists and the adventure of the love between two men during a time of war.



Robert Munsch wrote a wonderful story about the love between parents and their children, regardless of the antics that go on in the home. **Love You Forever** centers on a mother who sings a lullaby to her son at each stage of his life. During his childhood, she becomes frustrated with his rebellious nature, yet always sings to him after he falls asleep. Children and parents alike will love this book.



John Greene's novel **The Fault in Our Stars** is a story narrated by Hazel Grace Lancaster, a 16-year-old girl with thyroid cancer that has affected her lungs. Hazel's parents force her to attend a support group where she subsequently meets and falls in love with 17-year-old Augustus Waters, an ex-basketball player, amputee, and survivor of osteosarcoma. The title is inspired by Act 1, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*, in which the nobleman Cassius says to Brutus: "Men at some time were masters of their fates, / The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves, that we are underlings." This is a tear jerker of a love story which reveals how we all can love even when faced with the most difficult circumstances. Young adults will love this book.

Enjoy these selections this month. Happy Reading!

## GET READY FOR SOME ICE HOCKEY ON 3/3/24

BY: CHRIS AND GABE ROGUSO

Get ready for our annual trip to the PPL Center in Allentown, PA to witness the Lehigh Valley Phantoms take on the Hershey Bears on Sunday, March 3 at 3:05 PM.



In addition to seeing some great ice hockey, you will also help celebrate mascot Melvin's birthday and enjoy some music from various Christian groups during intermission. In addition, the members of the congregation who attend will have an opportunity to talk with one of the Phantoms who will sit with them for a brief photo op.

Tickets are \$30.00 each and checks can be made payable to FPCH with a note in the memo line indicating the money is for the hockey game. A caravan of cars will leave the church parking lot after Sunday worship on game day.

Please see Chris or Gabe Roguso if interested. Money is due by February 18th. Come on out and have a great time with the Phantoms.

## CONSIDER GIVING TO THE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Each year during Lent, Presbyterians around the world are asked to contribute to the "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering. Each gift supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Please consider this offering when our congregation announces it in early March. More info will follow in our next newsletter.



# EASTER FLOWERS

Sunday, March 31, 2024 marks the anniversary of Jesus' Resurrection! In celebration the Deacons are asking you to help fill the sanctuary with the colors of spring by sponsoring a silk Easter flower. Sponsorships are \$5.00 per plant and may be *In Thanksgiving for* anyone dear to you or *In Memory of* friends or family that have enriched your life.

Please make checks payable to *The Deacons* and mail to First Presbyterian Church, c/o The Deacons, 298 Main St, Hackettstown, NJ 07840 or you may drop off your forms and payment in the church mailbox.

**All forms and payment must be received no later than Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Please return the bottom portion with your payment, if you need additional space you may use the back of this form or submit on an additional piece of paper, thank you!

Sponsor:  
In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_

# of Plants Sponsored: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Have questions? Need more Information?  
Please contact: Pat Butts – 908 391-2006  
or Pat Gohlich – 201 925-7158

# NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

BY: JUSTIN SIMMONS

The Deacons held their monthly meeting on January 9th and discussed past activities and outlined a number of plans for the upcoming months.

At the monthly free community dinner in January, the Deacons made available 12 bags of personal care items for those in need. These bags will remain available throughout the year during the free dinners. A special thank you to all who contributed to the creation of these bags.

We continue to provide Kids' Care Kits for the schools in Hackettstown and Great Meadows. During the month of January we happily accepted donations of hats, scarves, and gloves for the children in these schools. We will continue to collect these items in the first week of February. Thank you to all have already donated items. The children of the schools have already benefited from the first collection. More will be sent to the schools mid-February.

During the month of February and into the first week of March we will be seeking sponsorships of Easter flowers. See the order form located in this newsletter for more information. These forms will also be available in the church.

As part of a fundraising campaign for the missions of the church, our Deacon Board is considering participation in the 2024 Town Wide Garage Sale which usually takes place in April. We will discuss this issue at our next meeting on February 13th.

Finally, the 2024 Free Market will occur some time at the end of September. More information will follow in the Summer newsletter.

As always, we thank you for your continued support of our missions throughout the year. If you have any concerns, ideas, or recommendations for the Deacons, please reach out to us.

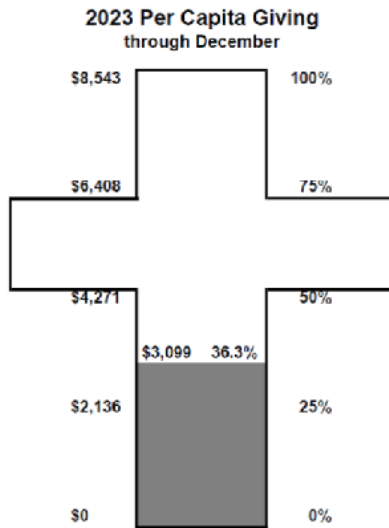
## DECEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

BY: AL RAVO

The Expenses Paid and Income amounts below do not include the funds transferred from the Endowment to meet the church operating expenses.

	December	Year to Date
<b>Income</b>	\$34,232.44	\$211,217.45
Expenses Paid	\$22,966.67	\$234,598.35
Net Operating Income /(Deficit)	\$11,265.77	(\$23,380.90)
Amount of Checking Surplus Used to pay operating expenses	\$ 0.00	\$14,500.00
Amount Needed from <b>Endowment</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 8,000.00

### Financial Comments / Observations:



1. The December operating income was the largest monthly amount received at the church, **\$34,232.44**.

2. In December, **\$12,000.00** was returned to the Endowment that was transferred earlier in the year to pay operating expenses.

3. The total operating shortfall for 2023 was **\$23,380.90**. The difference was made up using **\$14,500.00** of surplus funds in the checking account and **\$8,000.00** from the Endowment.

4. The five largest operating expenses in December were:

- 1.) **\$7,984.00** – Insurance, quarterly liability & workers compensation.
- 2.) **\$7,378.77** – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).
- 3.) **\$4,180.52** – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.
- 4.) **\$1,390.78** – Gas expenses (3 buildings).
- 5.) **\$380.05** – Facilities Supplies & Maintenance.

**CONTINUED - SEE DECEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT**

## DECEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT CONTINUED

5. The December and Year To Date operating net income / (deficit) were **\$11,265.77** and **(\$23,380.90)** respectively.

- The actual December operating expenses were **\$4,134** above the average monthly budgeted expenses.
- The actual December operating income was **\$17,857** above the average monthly budgeted income.
- The Year-To-Date operating incomes were **\$14,717** above the budgeted amount and expenses were **\$8,598** above the budgeted amounts.

6. In December, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts increased **\$13,200.76** to **\$324,720.75**.

7. The total endowment fund on December 31, 2023, was **\$339,665.63**. The total endowment fund was up **\$25,251.85** since December 1, 2023, and up **\$30,890.87** since January 1, 2023. The increase includes the **\$12,000.00** returned to the endowment in December.

8. No community dinner expenses were submitted for December. The donations collected at the dinner were \$42.00.

9. The Christmas dinner expenses were \$130.99. The donations collected at the Christmas dinner were \$95.00 and \$35.99 was used from the Nurture Team fund to make up the difference.

**The 2024 Per Capita amount at \$42.50 for each member of our congregation. This is the same amount as 2023.**

The 2023 Per Capita was \$42.50 for each of the 201 members of our Church. (The number is the membership of FPCH on December 31, 2021.) The total amount due in 2023 was \$8,542.50 or \$711.88 monthly. In December, **\$225.00** was received for Per Capita bringing the total received in 2023 to **\$3,099.00** or **36.3%** of the amount due. A Per Capita payment of **\$225.00** was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in December bringing the total sent to **\$3,099.00** or **36.3%** of the total amount due.

Please contact Al Ravo if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Church's operational finances, the Endowment Funds, Per Capita or the Building On Generosity Capital Campaign.

## CONFIRMATION CLASS TO MEET DURING SECOND SUNDAYS THROUGH APRIL

Confirmation Sunday is just four months away for our six students. This note is a kind reminder for parents that the students will meet on 2/11, 3/10, and 4/14. Students will meet with Pastor Erin and Mrs. Simmons to continue their faith journey. To that end, at each session we will hold discussions about their community service projects, time with their mentors, and how to pray and read the Bible, with a focus on creeds and Psalms. Students will use this information to create a final visual project which represents their faith journey and will be presented to the congregation on Confirmation Sunday.

## SECRET VALENTINE SPONSORSHIP TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 1

BY: DONNA ANNUNZIATA

During the month of January, you signed up to sponsor one of the children of the congregation in the Pre-K through grade 5 Sunday school class. Thank you for volunteering. Now that you've volunteered, here's what you can do.

Beginning February 1st, start sending your Valentine little messages/cards, notes, 3-4 times total. Don't sign your name, but you might want to give little "clues" about who you are to add to the fun.



We don't want this to become too costly or burdensome to any of our generous volunteer Valentines, so please don't think that you need to spend significant amounts of money. The children will be delighted with mail, including cards and notes!

Then, plan to stop in our Sunday School room after worship on Sunday, February 18th. We will match up the Sunday School children with their Secret Valentines. At that time, you might want to have a special card or small gift to cap off this event. Again something small will be perfect.

If you have any questions, you can contact Donna Annunziata (201-679-0573 call or text or email her at [dja.annunziata@gmail.com](mailto:dja.annunziata@gmail.com))

## MUSIC NOTES

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In February, our anthems during worship services will include:

- Feb. 4: "Change My Heart, O God": Sr. Choir  
"Sing Praise!": Joyful Noise Bells
- Feb. 11: "Santo, Santo, Santo": Little Lights Sunday School Choir
- Feb. 18: "Chapel Chimings": FPCH Ringers  
"Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord": Sr. Choir
- Feb. 25: "God Himself is With Us": Unity Chimes

## BUILDING ON GENEROSITY (BOG) CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Donations received during December, **\$807.00.**
- Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from September 2019 (BOG Kickoff dinner) through December 31, 2023, **\$643,693.89.**
- No expenses were paid using the BOG funds in December.
- Total BOG funds are **\$13,532.38**. The breakdown is **\$10,032.38** for the next BOG project with an additional **\$2,500.00** designated for parking lot pavement and **\$1,000.00** designated for the Chapel range hood replacement.
- Donations breakdown by source:
  - **5.2% - \$33,648.38 from nonmembers**
  - **86.1% - \$554,179.30 from members**
  - **8.7% - \$55,866.21 from anonymous & dinners**
  - **100.0% - \$643,693.89 Total**
  -

Please contact Al Ravo if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Church's operating finances, the Endowment Funds, Per Capita or the Building On Generosity Capital Campaign.

## FEBRUARY GREETERS

FEB 4: Grace and Richard Clegg

FEB 11: Della and Jose Irby

FEB 14: Kim Newton and Pattie Huff

FEB 18: Emily and James Tischler

FEB 25: Patt Butts and Kathy Maier

GREETER

## DEACONS TO COLLECT WINTER ACCESSORIES FOR CHILDREN

Drive to Benefit Children in Hackettstown and Great Meadows Elementary Schools

BY: JUSTIN SIMMONS

As we see children in town walking to and from school in these winter months, we notice too many of them without warm outerwear. As you recall from last month's newsletter, we wish to help alleviate that issue. The Deacons have extended their collection of NEW winter hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves that will be given to the Hackettstown and Great Meadows elementary schools for distribution to children who don't have those items to keep them warmer while outdoors. Look for the collection bin in the church, and thanks for helping us help children!



## SOUPER BOWL OF CARING ENTERS 24TH YEAR AT FPCH

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In 1990, a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" was delivered to a small youth group at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC led by Brad Smith, who was serving as a seminary intern at the time.

This gave birth to an idea. Why not harness the energy and enthusiasm of Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football, food and fun, to unite the nation for a higher good? Individuals and groups could collect dollars in soup pots and canned food for those in need and send every dollar and food donation DIRECTLY to a local charity of THEIR choice.

The first year, they invited 22 area churches to join the team and collected \$5,700 with 100% of donations distributed to local-area charities.

That was 1990. Since then, Tackle Hunger, with its signature Souper Bowl of Caring event has become a national, grass-roots, youth-inspired movement where ordinary people are doing extraordinary good. Over \$193 MILLION in dollars and food has been generated while benefiting thousands of soup kitchens, food banks, meal programs and other hunger-relief charities in local communities.



This year, FPCH will be participating for our 24<sup>th</sup> year as we encourage all attending church to wear apparel from your favorite team: high school, college, or professional. Then, resolve to bring at least one canned food item to church and/or donate at least \$1 as you leave worship on February 11. All proceeds will benefit our Little Pantry. As always, thank you for your generosity.



# “SECOND SUNDAY” SEEKS PEOPLE TO LEAD ACTIVITIES

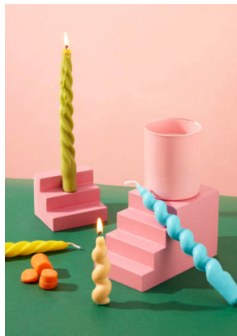
BY: LORINDA RAVO

Second Sundays are a terrific way to let the kids of our congregation know that their church cares about them! Each month, we have an event on the second Sunday and after a light lunch, the kids have an activity and often a story to complement the activity. Would you like to help provide the kids with a memorable experience? What (perhaps hidden?) talent do you have that you can share with eager young minds? We'd love to hear from you, and will give you any assistance that we can to make the experience happen! Contact Lorinda for more information.

## SECOND SUNDAY ON FEBRUARY 11 TO EXPLORE CANDLE MAKING THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 5:14

BY: LORINDA RAVO

This month, on February 11, we will be using the scripture verses from the Gospel of Matthew 5: 14: “You are the light of the world.” We’ll be talking about how we can let our lights shine, and then all participants will get to make candles. Our event will last from 11:30-1:30 pm, and we encourage pre-registration so that we can have enough supplies for everyone. Please sign up on the clipboard located on the dais to save your spot for this wonderful activity.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM JANUARY 2024

We are so pleased to share the following highlights of the PLEFF dinner and our church worship during the month of January. Photos courtesy of Diane Hull and MaryAnn Simmons.



## SOME INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS ABOUT PER CAPITA

Being part of the Presbyterian Church USA means we have the blessing of being a part of the connectional church. The per capita amount requested from a congregation is a combined total of requests from that congregation's presbytery, the synod in which the presbytery is located, and the General Assembly — based on their respective budgets for the coming year(s). The total per capita for 2024 will be **\$42.50 per active member**. Of that total, \$28.55 is used by our Presbytery with the remainder sent, as required, to the Synod, \$4.10, and General Assembly, \$9.85.

The funding provides for the cost of:

- Bringing together commissioners and advisory delegates as the General Assembly
- Publishing (in multiple languages) and distribution (in multiple formats) of the *Book of Order*, *The Book of Confessions*, and other General Assembly publications
- Underwriting the expenses of the Co-Moderators of the General Assembly as they travel across the church and around the world to interpret the work of the General Assembly and attend church anniversaries, presbytery meetings, retreats, and ecumenical gatherings
- Gathering church leaders from presbyteries and synods for training events
- Supporting work in the area of ordered ministry, helping all Presbyterians respond to God's call in their lives as teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons
- Providing necessary tools to develop and administer ordination exams to seminarians preparing to become future pastors
- Maintaining Church Leadership Connection, the online system that supports the call process for pastors and congregations

**Continued - see Per Capita**

## SOME INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS ABOUT PER CAPITA

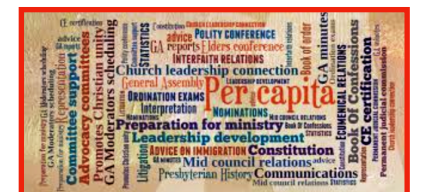
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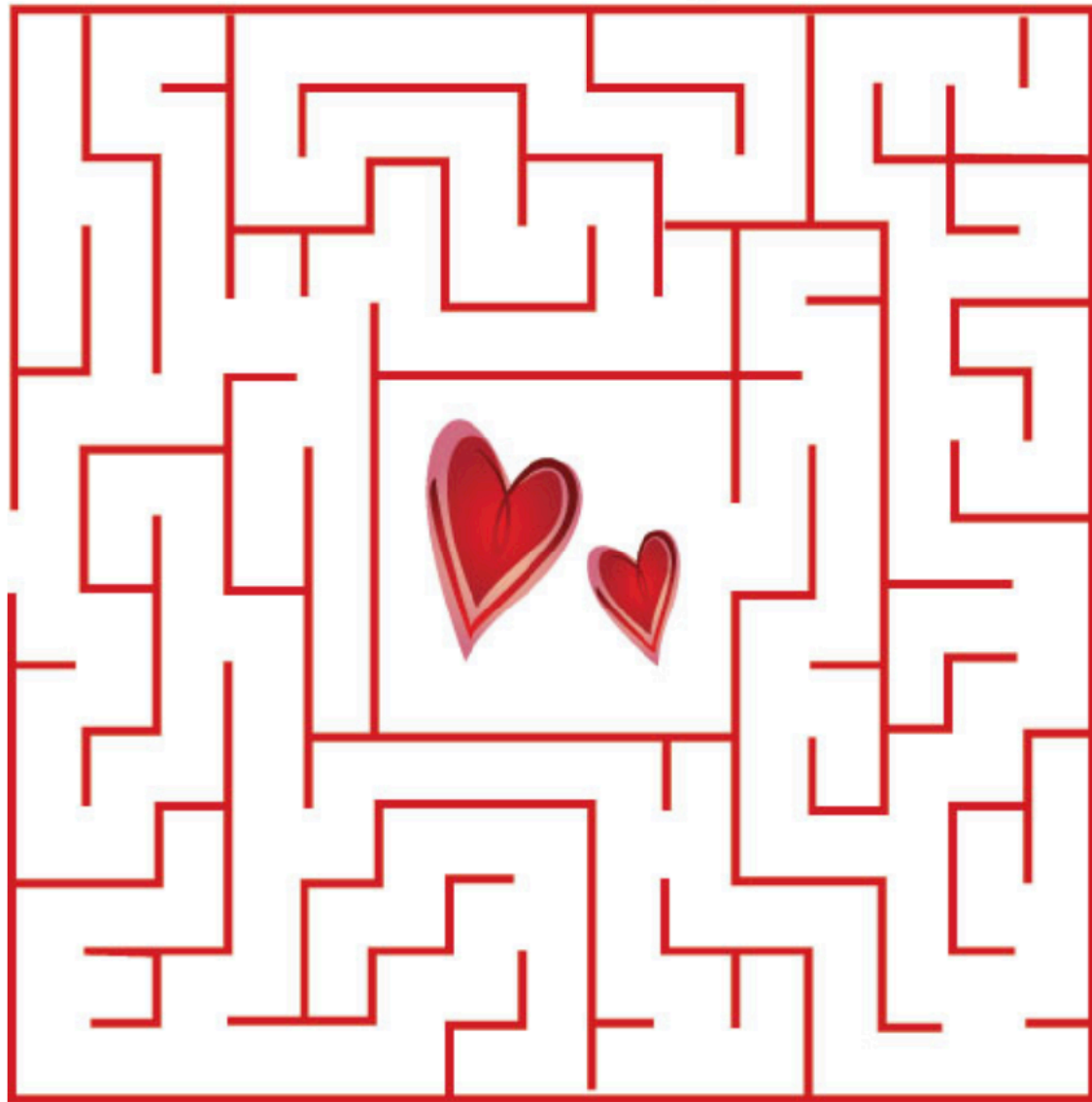
- Supporting those elected to serve on permanent General Assembly committees, such as the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations, the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and the General Assembly Committee on Representation
- Providing information, advice, and counsel to presbyteries and pastors whose members have immigration issues
- Supporting the Presbyterian Historical Society, ensuring that our witness to the gospel today will be preserved for future generations, just as we have learned about the history of past generations
- Providing a Presbyterian presence at ecumenical groups and gatherings in this country and worldwide-- extending our mission efforts and our work for peace and justice far beyond what we can do by ourselves to promote Christian unity

I hope that information provided gives our members some understanding of the purpose behind filling the yearly envelop with your apportioned monetary donation. If you think about it, \$42.50 for all of these services seems like a small amount of money which provides much needed support throughout the Presbytery.

If you have any questions regarding the Per Capita assessment, please see Al Ravo or Pastor Erin for clarification.

Note: This information was taken from [oga.pcusa.org](http://oga.pcusa.org)





*Find your way to the hearts  
in the center of the maze.*

## **IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO GET READY FOR THE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE OF 2024**

**BY: LORINDA RAVO**

It's Valentine's Day, followed quickly this year by Lent and Easter, so what does that mean? It means that it's time to begin planning for our church's participation in the annual Memorial Day parade.

The church's Public Relations committee is looking for someone interested in heading up the float committee. What does that mean? You'd be gathering people to help apply for a spot in the parade, plan for decorations and when the float would be decorated, who will ride (if we get a truck and flatbed) or walk the parade route (no vehicle involved), decide on give-aways (if any), and any other ideas you might have to be sure that FPCH has a presence in this year's parade! Please contact Michele Cameron, Jan Courtright, Al or Lorinda Ravo if you're interested. It's cold and wintry now, but Memorial Day will be here before we know it!



Hey, Kids. Color this image for the month of February. Then post it on your refrigerator for all to see.

Have fun!

# Sharing God's Bounty

## Give Credit Where Credit Is Due

A steward is one who manages the resources and affairs for someone else. On behalf of the owner, a steward is given the latitude to make far-reaching decisions. As God's stewards, we recognize that we are managers, not owners, of all that God has entrusted to us.

Perhaps the best example of stewardship the Bible gives us is in the life of Joseph. We know about his youth ... that he was the favored son of his father, but hated and resented by his brothers whose bitterness led them to sell him into slavery. Throughout the account of Joseph's life in the book of Genesis, the words, "*God was with Joseph*" are repeated.

Joseph recognized God's control over his life. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, he rejected her, saying, "*How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?*" (Genesis 39:9) And he fled from evil, trusting in God to protect him. Although the result of this encounter was that Joseph landed in prison, he still relied on his God. When the cup-bearer finally remembered Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, and Pharaoh called for Joseph, it was his chance to build himself up and get back into good standing. Instead, Joseph answered, "*I cannot [interpret your dreams], but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires*" (Genesis 41:16).

As second only to Pharaoh and with the wisdom God had given, Joseph saved not only Egypt from starvation but surrounding nations as well. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, seeking to buy grain so they wouldn't starve, Joseph had the right and the power to punish them. Instead he saw God's hand in all the events of his life and forgave his brothers, saying, "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good . . .*" (Genesis 50:20).

As stewards, we work and serve under God's direction. We use our gifts wherever he places us and we work for him, not for Earthly bosses. We acknowledge that he is the one who gives us our gifts and enables and equips us to use them. And we thank him, giving him the credit, for it is his due.

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Anaelle Djongang
- 5: Blair Gulick
- 6: Shaun O'Brien
- 9: Henry Butts  
Kyle Gulick
- 11: Andrea Sobolewski
- 13: Mary Brodt
- 14: Brenda Zellars  
Alex Muessig
- 18: Dan Gardner
- 19: Joan Grover
- 20: Alexis Bravakis
- 21: Jim Simmons
- 23: Christian Cochran
- 26: Lorinda Ravo
- 26: Heather Alfano-DeRosa
- 28: Shane Butts

### CONGRATS TO ALL!

### FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 17: John & Sharon Wojcicki

### PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following  
in your prayers:



- Gwenn and Louis
- Bartku and the  
George family
- Joan Beddow
- The Budd Family
- Eris Bunnell
- Eugenie Chetangie
- Churches throughout  
the U.S.
- FPCH
- Friends of FPCH
- Dan Gardner
- Terry Gretchen
- Joan Grover
- Maikuu congregation,  
Kibwezi Kenya
- The Luques Family
- Members of the Armed Forces
- Edna Ort
- Barbara Pace, niece of the  
Prestopines
- Shirley Pennington
- Alice Phoebus
- Carol Spitzer
- Muriel Stellingwerf
- Students on holiday break
- Those who are food insecure
- Those who are homeless
- Those struggling with  
addictions and mental health
- Those recovering from surgery
- Those suffering from acts of  
terrorism by the Hamas/Islamic  
Resistance Movement