

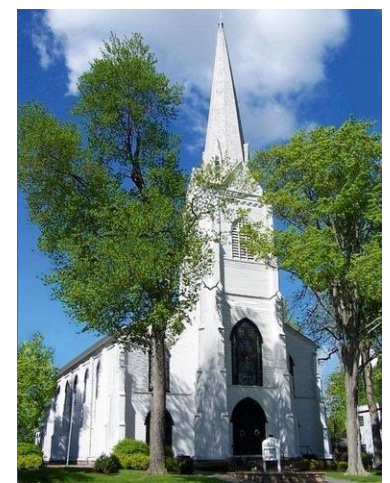
**First Presbyterian  
Church  
298 Main Street**

**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)**

**MARCH  
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

Welcome back, Readers!

I trust you are well and ready to spring forward into a new Lenten season.

This month I bring you a recap of the many activities that have been happening here at First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown. I trust that you may have partaken in some of them.

As you can see through the articles in this publication, Second Sunday was enjoyable and creative. Students thoroughly enjoyed making candles and sharing them with their families. Super Bowl Sunday was very successful and two scouts from Troops 143 and 158 told the church of their Eagle Scout projects. See the article about Scout Sunday for this information if you were unable to attend worship that day. As always, I have included pictorial highlights from February and I have given you a report of the financial status of the church and news from our Deacon Board.

I have brought back the **Did You Know** section of the newsletter, courtesy of Lorinda Ravo. We will continue to include this throughout the year so that you can learn some of the history of our church congregation and its various missions.

This month, you have an opportunity to sponsor an Easter flower in memory of or in thanksgiving for a special someone in your life. Please see the form located next to the Deacons article. In addition, take note of the opportunity to give to the One Great Hour of Sharing sponsored by the Presbytery. I have included an article which explains its purpose and mission so that you can contribute to this worthy cause.

Finally, on behalf of the congregation, I would like to express our sincerest condolences to the Luques and Tang families for the loss of their loved ones. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you all during this difficult time of transition.

As Pastor Erin has indicated in her note to us this month, we must take courage when journeying through faith as we prepare for Jesus' resurrection. Let us wander together to make this journey worthwhile. Let us spring into action to find courage to be a part of His life.

As always, thanks for your readership and continued support.  
Yours in Christ,

MaryAnn Simmons

## DATES TO REMEMBER - MARCH 2024

- 03: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; no Sunday School for Middle School Students; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 03: Hockey game - depart from church parking lot after worship
- 04: Lenten Bible Study - 10 AM - Conference Room
- 06: Yarn Girls - 1 PM - Conference Room
- 06: Lenten Bible Study - 6:30 PM - Conference Room
- 07: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 09: Men's Breakfast at the Chapel - 8 AM
- 09: Community Dinner - 5:30-7 PM, at the Chapel - Corned Beef & Cabbage
- 10: 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
- 10: Second Sunday AND Confirmation Class 11:30-1 PM at the Chapel
- 11: Lenten Bible Study - 10 AM - Conference Room
- 11: Albright College Choir Concert - 6 PM in the Sanctuary
- 12: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 12: Stated meeting of the Presbytery - 7-9 PM via Zoom
- 13: Lenten Bible Study - 6:30 PM - Conference Room
- 14: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 17: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Easter flower sponsorships due
- 18: PLEFF Dinner 6 PM at Maria Bonita, Rte 46, Hackettstown, NJ
- 18: Lenten Bible Study - 10AM - Conference Room
- 19: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 20: Lenten Bible Study - 6:30 PM - Conference Room
- 21: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 24: Palm Sunday - Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; One Great Hour of Sharing Collection; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 25: Lenten Bible Study - 10 AM - Conference Room
- 26: Ladies Who Lunch - 12 PM at OMG Burger & Brew, Long Valley
- 27: Lenten Bible Study - 6:30 PM - Conference Room
- 28: Worship Maundy Thursday - 7:30 PM service with communion; livestream through Facebook
- 31: Worship - 10 AM - Easter Sunday; livestream through Facebook; decorate the Easter Flower Cross; No Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship

## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

### "Courage"

Written by Rev. Sarah Speed | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

We summon every ounce of courage. We give ourselves pep talks and we call our friends. We dig deep within. We practice the words out loud,

rolling them around in our mouths, imagining the response. We deal out every "what if" card our brain holds on to and spend absurd amounts of time imagining all the ways it could go wrong. And then finally, blessedly, we say it: I love you.

To speak the truth of your heart takes courage. It always has. But please, summon your courage, join the parade, and speak with conviction. For God has been saying to the world since day one: I love you. What is your response?



### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to the month of March when we move into the second part of Lent. You can feel a sense of the earth getting ready for a change with a season of Spring. Our world desperately needs to know that hope can spring out of even the hardest of circumstances.

In worship and Bible study we've let our wandering hearts move through the story of the disciple Peter. What a joy to know that wherever we are on our journey of faith, new to a life with God or well-seasoned, Jesus seeks to bind our wandering hearts to him. I've found such rich story and spirit in following Peter's journey of faith.

I chose Rev. Sarah Speed's poem "Courage" because I felt like it helps frame the rest of Lent and the holy practice of moving into Holy Week. Whatever doubt that is bridging us to the next leg of our faithful journey and wherever Jesus seeks us, we need courage to face each day. Courage to speak the truth of our hearts, to speak the truth in love to those who need to hear a word of correction and hope. We need courage to claim the resurrection power of Jesus in our families, our vocations, at dinner tables, and in board meetings.

Friends, I truly pray that this Lent and Holy Week you might find the courage to claim that you know Jesus and you will follow Him. May you find new life springing out around you as you step onto the courageous ground of a life of faith.

In Christ,

**Pastor Erin**



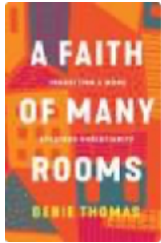
# BOOKS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE



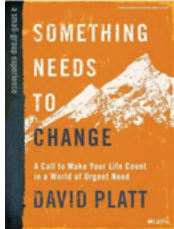
S

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

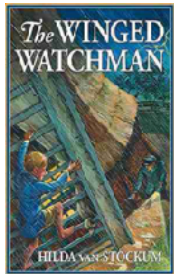
To maintain the thoughts of Lenten Bible study, try these titles which can help you find the courage to continue through your journey of faith. These titles come from a variety of sources which focus on “wandering hearts.”



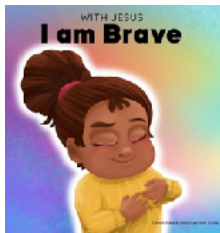
***A Faith of Many Rooms: Inhabiting a More Spacious Christianity*** by Debie Thomas, is an autobiographical journey of the author’s life. Thomas takes readers on a deeply personal theological journey to help us transfigure our faith to fit our needs when we think we cannot fit a life of faith into our lives.



Amazon states, “David Platt took a trip to the Himalayan mountains that transformed the trajectory of his life. There he was confronted with staggering physical and spiritual needs unlike any he had seen before. On leaving, Platt found himself asking fundamental questions about his life and ministry. He realized that something needed to change.” The concepts revealed in ***Something Needs to Change*** are applicable to all people who are feeling these same needs.



This story of World War II is rich in suspense, characterization, plot and spiritual truth. People living in occupied Holland are united in a story of courage and hope. The Verhagen family, who live in the old windmill called ***The Winged Watchman***, are memorable individuals whose lives powerfully demonstrate the resilience of those who suffer but do not lose faith.



***I am Brave*** is a Christian inspiring kid story about being courageous in any situation. Join Mia as she learns to become brave by overcoming her fear of the dark. An uplifting story that encourages kids to remember that Jesus is with them so they can be brave and embrace His presence in their lives no matter what they’re facing. A bible verse is added at the end of the story for your devotion times with your child.

Give these books a try. Your lives will be richly enhanced.

# ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING TO OCCUR ON PALM SUNDAY

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

PC(USA) is a mainline Protestant denomination in the United States. It is the largest Presbyterian denomination in the country, known for its compassionate stance and its generosity to those in need. Since the 1990s, the General Assembly of PC(USA) adopted several social justice initiatives, which covered a range of topics including: stewardship of God's creation, world hunger, homelessness, and LGBT issues. One way to assist these groups is through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering typically received during the season of Lent.

Each gift to **One Great Hour of Sharing** helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need. In fact, **OGHS** is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

Each gift to **One Great Hour of Sharing** 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*.

This year, First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown will collect the offering for **One Great Hour of Sharing** on **Palm Sunday, March 24th**. Please find it in your heart to give generously to this cause. Your offering will go a long way in helping millions of people who lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity.

As always, thank you in advance for your faithful giving.





# 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

At its February meeting, the Deacons assigned chairpersons for their service committees. See your Deacons for a list.

We are pleased to announce that the church will be hosting the Albright College Concert Choir. A committee will provide dinner for the members of the choir and prior to the concert. After dinner, members of the middle school and confirmation classes will serve as greeters for this event.

Souper Bowl of Caring raised \$401.63 for the Little Pantry. The Deacons will no longer provide personal care items at the pantry, but they will have personal care bags at the Free Community Dinners for those in need of such items. Heather Melendez provided hand-made scarves for members of the community at the dinner.

School donations of Kids Care Kits to Hackettstown and Great Meadows Middle Schools continue throughout the academic year. In January, we collected and distributed 185 hats, scarves, and gloves for our elementary schools in Hackettstown and Great Meadows.

Easter Flowers order forms are in the March newsletter and will also be available in church. Deadline for sponsorship is March 17th. In addition, Lorinda Ravo will be ordering carnations for the Easter Cross. Bill and Mary Cors will help with setup and distribution of the flowers.

The Deacons' date for the free market is September 21. Please mark your calendars and check your homes for items you are willing to donate for this cause.

Finally, the Deacon Board is exploring the possibility asking local businesses to support the Little Pantry through donations.

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.

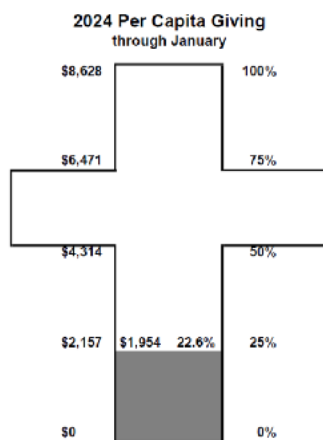
# JANUARY 2024 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

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.

|  | January      | Year to Date |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Income   | \$33,836.13  | \$33,836.13  |
| Expenses Paid  | \$23,706.30  | \$23,706.30  |
| Net Operating Income / (Deficit)                                   | \$410,129.83 | \$10,129.83  |
| Amount of Schwab/Edward Jones funds used to pay operating expenses | \$ 0.00      | \$ 0.00      |
| Amount Needed from Endowment                                       | \$ 0.00      | \$ 0.00      |

## Financial Comments / Observations:



1. The January operating income was the second largest monthly amount received at the church, **\$33,836.13**. This amount is \$396.31 less than December 2023 which was the largest monthly income. There are 3 primary reasons for the large January income.

- Several members of the congregation made their entire annual donations.
- The collection from December 31, 2023 was not deposited until January 2, 2024 and appears as January income (\$2,496.50).
- Most of the Per Capita donations are made in January (\$2,094.00)

2. The total operating surplus for January 2024 was

**\$10,129.83.**

3. The five largest operating expenses in January were:

- 1.) **\$8,178.77** – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).
- 2.) **\$4,755.00** – Snow removal and salting parking lot and walkways.
- 3.) **\$4,228.97** – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.
- 4.) **\$1,834.63** – Gas expenses (3 buildings).
- 5.) **\$903.00** – Mowing and fall clean up.

CONTINUED - SEE JANUARY 2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

# JANUARY 2024 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

CONTINUED

CONTINUED FROM JANUARY 2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

4. The January and Year To Date operating net income / (deficit) were the same at **\$10,129.83** and **\$10,129.83** respectively.

- The actual January operating expenses were **\$4,373** above the average monthly budgeted expenses.
- The actual January operating income was **\$17,003** above the average monthly budgeted income.
- The Year-To-Date operating incomes were **\$17,003** above the budgeted amount and expenses were **\$4,373** above the budgeted amounts.

5. In January, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts increased **\$1,233.48** to **\$325,954.23**.

6. The total endowment fund on January 31, 2024, was **\$340,757.17**. The total endowment fund was up **\$1,091.54** since January 1, 2024.

7. The community dinner expenses for January were \$199.31. The donations collected at the dinner were \$86.00.

8. The Men's breakfast expenses for January were \$54.53. The donations collected at the breakfast were \$56.00.

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

The 2024 Per Capita is \$42.50 for each of the 203 members of our Church. (The number is the membership of FPCH on December 31, 2022.) The total amount due in 2024 is \$8,627.50 or \$718.96 monthly. In January, **\$1,954.00** was received for Per Capita for the total received in 2024 at **\$1,954.00** or **22.6%** of the amount due. A Per Capita payment of **\$718.96** was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in January making the total sent **\$718.96** or **8.3%** 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.

## ATTENTION LOVERS OF FOOD

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

Did you know that each month our men and women get together for great food and fellowship? If you are interested in joining any one of these groups, please contact the people listed below:

Men's Breakfast, second Saturday of each month at the Chapel at 8 AM: Bruce Bergman - [bergiedeacon7@icloud.com](mailto:bergiedeacon7@icloud.com)

Ladies' Breakfast, third Saturday of each month at Riverside Diner at 9 AM: Donna Erickson - [donna\\_erickson@hotmail.com](mailto:donna_erickson@hotmail.com)

Ladies Who Lunch, fourth Tuesday of each month at 12 PM - location varies: Sharon Heil - [rsheil@verizon.net](mailto:rsheil@verizon.net)

PLEFF (Presbyterian Ladies who Enjoy Food and Fellowship), second Monday of each month at 6 PM - location varies: Jan Courtright - [snickers34@comcast.net](mailto:snickers34@comcast.net)

Once you contact the person associated with the group you wish to join, those individuals will include you on the mailing list to notify you of the activity of the month. Consider these fun endeavors.

## MUSIC NOTES

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In March, our anthems during worship services will include:

- March 3: Look to the Cross - Senior Choir  
Mungu Ni Mwema - Little Lights Sunday School Choir
- March 10: Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing  
Michelle Litwin - Clarinet soloist
- March 17: O Love of God Most Full - Senior Choir  
Whisper a Prayer - Joyful Noise Bell Choir
- March 24: Sing Hosanna - Senior Choir with chimes  
Why Does He Seem to Be So Sad? - Senior Choir
- March 28: (Maundy Thursday)  
King With a Crown of Thorns - Senior Choir  
Were You There? - FPCH Ringers
- March 31: (Easter)  
Because He Is Risen - Senior Choir  
My Lord Arose - Sr. Choir  
Crown Him with Many Crowns - FPCH Ringers

## REQUESTS FOR PANTRY ITEMS

BY: JUSTIN SIMMONS

Thank you, congregation, for your generous donations to the pantry each week. We are grateful for your continued support to those members of our community who are food insecure. The next time you are at the grocery store or at Walmart or even at the Dollar Tree, please consider purchasing the following items: non-refrigerated boxed milk, jelly, hot chocolate, tea bags, coffee, bottled juice, pancake mix and syrup, friendly snacks for kids, canned fruit, canned tuna, canned pasta sauce, and canned pasta meals.

Once again, the Deacons thank you for your generosity. You warm our hearts and help many in need!



## MARCH GREETERS

- MARCH 3:** Millie Creager and Sharon Stymacks
- MARCH 10:** Roguso Family
- MARCH 11:** Sunday School Middle School and Confirmation Students
- MARCH 17:** Grace and Richard Clegg
- MARCH 24:** Ginny and Brielle Plumbo
- MARCH 28:** Jen and Al Aquino
- MARCH 31:** Bev Saunders and Ryan VanOrden



## THANK YOU FROM THE LUQUES FAMILY

Dear Friends,

We want to thank everyone for the prayers, cards, and calls that we received during Don's illness and his passing on January 29th. It means so much to us to know that you were thinking of him and our family during a very difficult time.

We will continue to grieve as a family, but please know that we appreciate everyone's love, thoughtfulness, and concern.

Sincerely,

**Cynthia, Michelle, Meredith**

## SCOUTS HONORED ON FEBRUARY 11th

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

As you know, the Chapel is the home to many groups our church sponsors. Two very active groups are Scout Troops 143 and 158, who recently encouraged members to work on their Eagle Scout Projects to beautify our building.

Autumn Hoover (143) built new cabinets for our little pantry and Ryan Due (158) rebuilt a larger sign for the front of our building. Both are Senior Patrol Leaders for their troops and currently attend Hackettstown High School.

Both Autumn and Ryan met with the Session back in 2023 to introduce their projects and provide details of the structures they were creating. Autumn completed her project by the end of July and Ryan worked diligently to complete his sign by the end of the summer.

They both joined us at worship on February 11th, Scout Sunday, to speak to the congregation. As part of his project, Ryan also painted the facade of the building up to the top of the sign and painted yellow lines at the foot of the Chapel so that people will not trip when arriving to see the message board and to use the pantry. He stated, "I am very happy that I was able to work with Ms. Hull and Mr. Gohlich to complete this project, and I am very honored to work with FPCH to earn my Eagle Scout award."

Autumn then addressed the church describing how she created the pantry's little compartments for different food groups. She indicated, "I am so grateful to be a part of something so impactful for our community." In addition to building the pantry cabinets, she conducted a food drive which raised over 1000 pounds of food for the community.

Pastor Erin was equally grateful. She stated, "I am so proud that Ryan and Amber and our Scouts are an integral part of our community. The Scouts have given them a very important life skill. We are so thankful that Ryan and Autumn have offered to work with First Presbyterian Church to complete their projects."

Scout Troops 143 & 158 and their leaders joined in this celebration. As part of Scout Sunday, many of our scouts served as greeters and read scripture as part of the service. Thank you, scouts, for your dedication to making this community a better place in which to live.





# FEBRUARY SECOND SUNDAY CANDLE MAKING VERY FUN MARCH WILL FEATURE MOVIE TIME

BY: LORINDA RAVO

Many thanks to all who helped make our February Second Sunday a wonderful experience for kids and adults alike. We learned the Bible verse: “You are the light of the world” and the quote from St. Francis: “All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle”. Then to help us remember these verses, we made both sand wax candles and rolled beeswax candles.

In March, we’ll enjoy a movie matinee as we watch the PG rated movie *Lion of Judah*, an inspirational story for the whole family. IMDb states: “Follow the adventures of a bold lamb (Judah) and his stable friends as they try to avoid the sacrificial altar the week preceding the crucifixion of Christ.” Kids, if you’d like, bring your own blanket and pillow: we’ll provide the popcorn!



PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
LORINDA RAVO



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM FEBRUARY 2024

We are so pleased to share the following highlights of the Installation of Deacons and Elders, our church worship during the month of February, dinner out with PLEFF, and the confirmation class session on Feb 11. Photos courtesy of MaryAnn Simmons and Lorinda Ravo.



# Sharing God's Bounty

## Freedom Isn't Free

Salvation is free – a gift to us from our father in Heaven. Paul makes that point so clearly in Ephesians 2:8-9: *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”* We neither earned it nor deserved it. *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

Free to us, yes, but salvation came at a cost, didn't it? The apostle Peter tells us, *“It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect”* (1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus paid the price for our salvation. *“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:5).

Especially during the Lenten season we ponder these words of Isaiah, prophesied so many, many years before our Lord fulfilled them. Humility, awe, and gratitude fill our hearts as we remember our *“oppressed and afflicted Savior,”* who carried all our sins in his body on the cross. How do we say thanks for such a great gift as Christ has given us? How can we express our love for him and his great sacrifice? The same way he expressed his love for us – through his acts of teaching, preaching, healing, forgiving, restoring. We love others as he loves us. We give freely as he gave so freely. We teach what he has taught us. We preach his Word in its truth and purity. We serve in his name and forgive as we have been forgiven – all by his power and through his grace.

Ss

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE OF 2024

BY: LORINDA RAVO

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, the Public Relations committee is still looking for someone to lead 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 ensure that FPCH has a presence in this year's parade! Please contact Michele Cameron, Jan Courtright, Al or Lorinda Ravo if you're interested. After all, Memorial Day will be here before we know it!

## BUILDING ON GENEROSITY (BOG) CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Donations received during January, **\$204.13**.
- Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from September 2019 (BOG Kickoff dinner) through January 31, 2024, **\$643,898.02**.
- No expenses were paid using the BOG funds in January.
- Total BOG funds are **\$13,822.38**. The breakdown is **\$10,322.38** 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% - \$33,699.76 from nonmembers**
  - **86.1% - \$554,332.05 from members**
  - **8.7% - \$55,866.21 from anonymous & dinners**
  - **100.0% - \$643,898.02 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.

## GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

We are saddened to hear of the passing of Donald L. Luques Jr., age 79, who died peacefully on January 29, 2024 surrounded by his family.

He is survived by his loving wife, Cynthia, of 54 years. They have two daughters, Meredith Luques; Michelle Stroem and her husband Joseph.



Donald was born on May 6, 1944 in Paterson, NJ to the late Helen and Donald L Luques Sr. He graduated from Clifton High School in 1962. He is a United States Navy Veteran.

Donald was a Tank Farm Supervisor at Newark International Airport before retiring in 2008.

A longtime resident of Clifton, NJ, he moved to Budd Lake, NJ in 2011. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown where he was a past member of the Session, head of the Men's Breakfast, and volunteered at many church events.

He was an avid reader and history buff. He also enjoyed bowling, vacationing in Newport, RI and spending time with his family.

At the family's request, all services were private. For those who wish, a donation can be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown Building Fund.

Arrangements were completed under the direction of the Cochran Funeral Home, Hackettstown, NJ. [www.cochranfuneral.com](http://www.cochranfuneral.com)

**We give thanks to the God of the Resurrection whose love brings us hope everyday.**



## GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

Joseph (Joe) Shih Hao Tang, age 98, of Flushing, Queens passed away Friday, February 16, 2024 in Hackettstown, NJ. He was father of Alpha Tang, father-in-law of Sarah Tang, and grandfather of Kaz and Zeek Tang, members of our church family.



Joseph was born on June 7, 1925 in a small farming village near Baoding, China. He is the son of the late Paul and Anna (Fung) Tang. Joseph is preceded in death by his parents, his beloved wife, Lai Yin (Lee) Tang, his two brothers, and three sisters who resided in China.

Joe was raised with a strong sense of religious faith and at an early age was forced to flee from China to escape oppression and war. He later attended seminary and became a Roman Catholic Jesuit priest, living and teaching in the Philippines and Taiwan before finally settling in the United States. Here in the U.S. he found a new calling and after leaving the Order he married and started his family.



For 28 years, Joe was a NYC employee, where he worked as a staff psychologist at Gouverneur Hospital, NY and as an evaluator for the NYC Board of Education. In addition, he has been published in theology and psychology throughout his careers. He was known for his healthy lifestyle and his love of physical fitness and was often found practicing falun gong and tai chi in the pursuit of health.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday, February 23, 2024 at Our Lady of the Mountain Church. Burial of cremains will be in Pinelawn Memorial Park and Arboretum, 2030 Wellwood Ave, Farmingdale, NY on Friday, March 8, 2024 at 1:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital ([https://www.stjude.org/give/memorials-and-dedications.html?sc\\_icid=wtg-mm-memorial-giving](https://www.stjude.org/give/memorials-and-dedications.html?sc_icid=wtg-mm-memorial-giving)) in memory of Joseph Tang.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Cochran Funeral Home, 905 High Street, Hackettstown, NJ 07840. Online condolences may be left at [www.cochranfuneral.com](http://www.cochranfuneral.com).

**We give thanks to the God of the Resurrection whose love brings us hope everyday.**

# DID YOU KNOW...

BY: LORINDA RAVO

To help as many of our congregants to become aware of the unsung happenings of our church family, a new weekly feature in our Sunday bulletins is our "Did You Know?" entry. A wrap up of February's excerpts include:

## DID YOU KNOW...

....that members of our Board of Deacons keep in touch with our homebound members with monthly cards, letters, phone calls and visits?

....that our Yarn Girls Group meets monthly to create beautiful handmade blankets, lap robes, prayer shawls, baptism blankets, and pocket crosses? In 2023, the Yarn Girls distributed 77 creations to members and friends of our church who were experiencing health issues, to those in mourning, and to those who were experiencing life's difficulties.

.... that our Chapel is "home" to many groups and organizations, including several Scout Troops, a number of 12 Step Self-Help Groups, the Stone Soup Symphony, the Swing Time Jazz Band, the Colonial Musketeers Fife and Drum Corps, Vitalant (blood drive organization), Second Sundays, Deacons' pantry storage, free community dinners, Mens' Breakfast group, and of course, our Little Pantry. Be sure to ask one of our church Deacons or Elders if you would like to learn more about any of these activities.

Stay tuned next month for a recap of our March "Did You Know?" Feature from the bulletins each Sunday.

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 2: Myles DeCaro
- 3: Donna Erickson
- 5: Whitney Dartnell
- 6: Jason O'Brien  
Peggy Russack
- 7: Maddox Fucetola
- 10: Chris Kshatri  
John Trimmer
- 14: Mike McDonagh  
Al Aquino
- 16: Joan Beddow  
Pam Venturini
- 18: Samantha Gardner
- 19: Richard Clegg
- 20: Liz Risko
- 22: MaryAnn Simmons
- 23: Alisa Dartnell  
Mark Slachetka
- 24: Sean Gilmore
- 25: Morgan Dartnell
- 27: Heather Stone
- 29: Alice Phoebus
- 31: Tom Dartnell

## CONGRATS TO ALL!

## MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 9: Bob & Jackie Hammel
- 15: Chris & Sara Kshatri

## PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Gwenn and Louis

Bartku and the  
George family

Joan Beddow

The Budd Family

Eris Bunnel

Eugenie Chetangie

Churches throughout  
the U.S.

FPCH

Friends of FPCH

Dan Gardner

Terry Gretchen

Joan Grover

Barbara Hall

Maikuu congregation,  
Kibwezi Kenya

The Luques Family

Members of the Armed Forces

Edna Ort

Barbara Pace, niece of the  
Prestopines

Pastor Erin Hayes-Cook

Shirley Pennington

Alice Phoebus

Carol Spitzer

Muriel Stellingwerf

Students on holiday break

The Tang Family

The food insecure

The homeless

Those struggling with  
addictions and mental health

Those recovering from surgery

Those suffering from acts of  
terrorism by the Hamas/Islamic

Resistance Movement

