

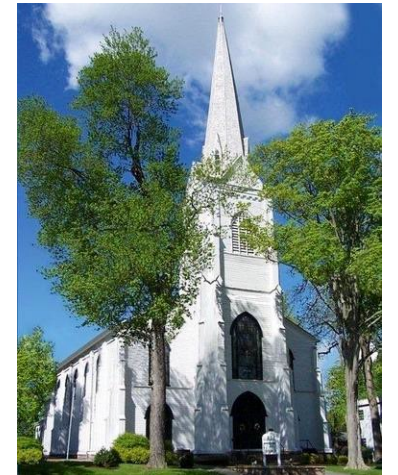
**First Presbyterian
Church
298 Main Street**

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

**APRIL
2025**



*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

2025 SESSION

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Donna Erickson	Bill Cors	Michele Cameron
Diane Hull	Geof Gohlich	Pete Miller
Ray Sookhoo	Sharon Heil	MaryAnn Simmons

Clerk of Session: Donna Erickson

2025 BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Ellen Bergman	Jackie Hammel	Dennis Huff
Patricia Butts	Kathy Maier	Jose Irby
Carol Miller	Lorinda Ravo	Jean Zetterberg

Moderator: Ellen Bergman

2025 HEAVEN SENT NURSERY SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICE: 852-2006

Director: Jen Bujno

Pat Butts	- 2026	Pam Venturini	- 2027
Meghan DeCree	- HS Parent	Toni Fryer	- HS Parent
Sharon Heil - Session Rep			
Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook - Ex-Officio			

A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

Hello, FPCH.

Welcome back to our fourth edition of *Light From the Steeple*. Lent is in full swing, so I made recommendations for books associated with Easter and renewal, provided our kids with a Lenten prayer activity, and offered a suggestion for a sunrise Easter family breakfast as a new tradition hoping to inspire an understanding of Christ's resurrection. I hope you enjoy these activities.

As we prepare for Easter and all that it means, I encourage you to find ways to serve others in need. Kids, introduce yourself to a new friend group at school, or think about ways to help others in your neighborhood. Adults, consider ways you can open your doors to others and offer a helping hand to a friend or relative, or volunteer at a charitable organization. Or, if it is easier, make a one time monetary donation to a charity. There are so many ways to live a Christ-like life. Just do whatever makes you feel satisfaction.

As you can see in our closing pages, a few family members of our congregation have moved on to heaven. Be sure to keep their families in your prayers.

Finally, I inadvertently left off the anniversary of Pattie and Dennis Huff last month - they celebrated their 51st on March 2nd. Please accept my sincerest apologies, Pattie and Dennis.

As always, thank you for your readership. If anyone has suggestions for stories in our future editions, please email me or chat with me after service one Sunday. Until next month...

Yours in Christ,
MaryAnn Simmons

DATES TO REMEMBER - APRIL 2025

- 01: PLEFF Dinner - 6 PM at The Smashed Olive, Rte 31, Washington, NJ
- 02: Yarn Girls - 1 PM in the Conference Room
- 03: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 06: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 06: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; fellowship after worship with Peace Islands Institute
- 08: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 10: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 12: Men's Breakfast - 8:15 AM - location to be determined
- 13: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 13: Worship - 10 AM - Palm Sunday; livestream through Facebook; One Great Hour of Sharing offering; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 13: Second Sunday -11:30-1:30 PM in the Church - Quilting with Sharon Heil
- 15: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM, in the Conference Room
- 17: Worship and communion - Maundy Thursday - 7:30 PM; livestream through Facebook
- 18: Good Friday: Church Office closed
- 19: Ladies' Breakfast - 9 AM - River Star Diner
- 20: Easter Sunday Worship - 10 AM - decoration of the Easter flower cross; livestream through Facebook; NO Sunday School
- 21: Easter Monday - Church Office closed
- 21: Ladies Who Lunch: 12 PM at The Main Street Cafe
- 22: Happy Earth Day!
- 24: Music Rehearsals - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 25: Drop off items for Town Wide Garage Sale (time to be determined)
- 26: Town Wide Garage Sale - Church Parking Lot - 8AM - 4 PM
- 27: Confirmation Class - 9 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 27: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 28: Christian Education Committee Meeting - 6:30 PM in the conference room

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

A holy Saturday poem
Written by Avery Arden, Binary breaking worship, binarybreakingworship.com

they wanted—no, they needed to touch you one last time.	let me shoulder my share of the burden and let me not rush to the first fingers of dawn, frail and trem- bling, reaching past a rolled-back stone to empty space where your corpse should be—	and the moment that comes after cannot ease this one.	with cold bodies in their graves.
so they trudged the tombward path with their perfumes and their spices their strips of cloth to cocoon your body in for its final transfor- mation back to dust	no. let me linger in the moment when your corpse still lies there and anguish fractures the air into splinters that cut the lungs.	it never has, and it never will, for there are still bodies broken, breathless, beaten down by Empire's brutality or else its apathy.	blessed be the hands that carry the spices and perfumes, water and cloth! blessed, blessed be the throats worn rough with sobs yet refusing to be silenced, broadcasting the crime lest some claim ignorance.
their shoulders al- most broken with grief, heavy as the cross that crushed the life from your flesh.	let me fall in step behind them. let me take my place in that line of broken hearts bearing a cross of grief together.	and you, with us to the last, still lie among them— you hold them close and share their final exhalation be it in a hospital bed, the street, a cell. so let me not sprint to sunrise when your body can still be found nestled	i'll not dishonor them by racing past to the future reunion of form to dust, breath to body, lover to loved before they're ready. keep watch! soak in! be present with them! this moment is holy.

I believe we rush too quickly to the resurrection. Now, stay with me here. I've been in the ministry for 20 years and by far more people attend worship on Easter than they do on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. I get the reason- we all want to know that God can redeem anything even the evil of the world. I do, too.

Yet I believe that in order for the resurrection to have deep meaning and to transform us, we should allow ourselves to move through the events of the Last Supper, Jesus's arrest and trial and the crucifixion. In between the lines of each event we find the battle of every human emotion as Jesus offers himself. He reflects back to us the ugliness of our capacity for sin and evil. But thanks be to God he doesn't let that be the last word.

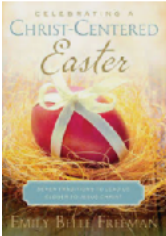
This last half of Lent as we move into Holy Week, I invite you to find a way to move through the holy moments of grief and despair so that the celebration of Resurrection Sunday may transform our grief from the inside out. Thank you to Avery Arden who wonderfully illustrated the "in between" we may feel while we wait for the resurrected Lord. I look forward to sharing with you in the journey to the cross and resurrection. May Jesus' presence be the transformation that we all need.

Pastor Erin

BOOKS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

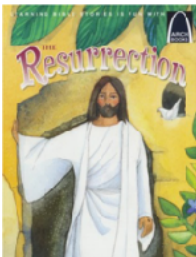
To prepare us for Easter and Jesus' resurrection, I am recommending some titles that will help understand the return of our Savior and why we celebrate Easter.



Emily Belle-Freeman has written *Celebrating a Christ-Centered Easter*. Told in first person narrative of seven disciples, it is the story of Jesus from the Crucifixion to the Resurrection. You will learn lessons and simple traditions to follow. This book will show you how to implement the teachings of the Easter holiday to enrich your lives.



The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe is a C.S. Lewis classic and is book two of *The Chronicles of Narnia* Series. It takes you on the adventures of four siblings who travel through a wardrobe to the land of Narnia. There, the kids see a land overtaken by the White Witch. When almost all hope is lost, Aslan, the Great Lion, returns to bring about change through his ultimate sacrifice. This is a great book for your teenagers to see the symbolic meaning of the life of Jesus and his disciples.



Cynda Strong has written and illustrated stories through poetry in her colorful book *The Resurrection*. It is part of the Arch Books Bible Series and is appropriate for kids ages 5-9. Rather inexpensive, it can be purchased online at many Christian bookstores. Give it a try to help your youngsters learn the story of Jesus' return after the crucifixion.

Enjoy these recommendations.

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Every day is a day to celebrate the beauty of God's creation of this universe. We enjoy the scenery around our neighborhoods, the parks and playgrounds, the rivers that flow, the animals that roam the earth, and the gardens that bloom each Spring.

This month, in honor of Earth Day on April 22nd, be sure to think about ways you can keep our earth pristine and clean. Join with others to preserve our Earth's beauty.

OUR KIDS NEED YOU: CAN YOU ASSIST?

Our Christian Education Program has been growing tremendously and that means we are in need of another volunteer or two.

If you are interested in sharing your gifts, we are looking for volunteers willing to help our children grow in their faith. Can you give up one hour a week of your time to give them a foundation for their faith journey? We have the curriculum, complete with lesson plans and ideas - but we need people to bring them to the children of FPCH. We would even welcome volunteers to be "co-teachers," so you would be in class two weeks a month instead of every week.

We have great kids. We just need another adult or two to help us continue to expand! Won't you consider joining FPCH in this mission to teach our children each Sunday from September through mid-June?

If interested, please email Pattie Huff at fpchnj@gamil.com or call 908-852-4011. Or you can see MaryAnn Simmons or Pastor Erin one Sunday after worship who will share the details about this program. If you would prefer, you could email either at maryann.simmons3@verizon.net or revehayes@gmail.com



EASTER FLOWERS

Sunday, April 20, 2025 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, April 6th.

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:

Plants Sponsored:

Amount Enclosed:

Have questions? Need more Information?
Please contact: Pat Butts – 908 391-2006
or Carol Miller – 908 763-2777

NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

By Pat Butts

The Deacons would like to thank all who participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring. We raised \$311.00 which will be used to help the Little Pantry. This is a wonderful way to support our compassionate care ministry for our community.

The last day to sponsor Easter Flowers is Sunday, April 6th. We look forward to decorating our sanctuary with spring flowers for Easter! You can access the flower form in this newsletter or at the church on Sunday when you are greeted in the Sanctuary.

The town wide garage sale is scheduled for Saturday, April 26th from 9-3 and we will be accepting donations on Friday, April 25th with times to be determined.

The Clothing Drive pickup is scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd. Items can be dropped off on Tuesday, April 29th from 5:30-7PM and Saturday, May 3rd from 8:30-9AM.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our missions. If you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out to a Deacon.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS UPDATE

BY: DIANE HULL

The church, Chapel, and Manse continue to receive repairs and improvements.

The church has undergone some electrical upgrades. The Chapel has had many repairs to exterior doors and the ceiling, and had new basement doors installed. Recently, FPCH received a matching grant from the Presbytery to replace new windows in the master bedroom of the Manse.

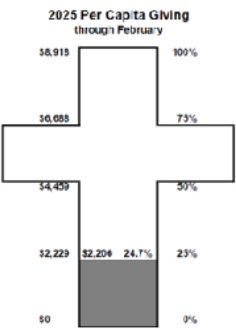
If you have any questions, please see Diane Hull who can provide you with more details.

FEBRUARY 2025 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.

	February	Year to Date
Income	\$12,029.94	\$35,693.01
Expenses Paid	\$31,247.35	\$54,147.28
Net Operating Income /(Deficit)	(\$19,217.41)	(\$18,454.27)
Amount of Schwab/Edward Jones funds used to pay operating expenses	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Amount Needed from Endowment	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00
Total amount of Endowment, Schwab & Edward Jones funds used to pay Operating expenses in 2024	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00



Financial Comments / Observations:

- There was an \$18,000.00 shortfall in February. \$12,000.00 came from the Endowment with \$6,000.00 ‘borrowed’ from Building On Generosity. The \$6,000.00 will be paid back to Building On Generosity from the Endowment in March.
- The five largest operating expenses in February were:
 - \$7,896.73 – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).
 - \$5,587.23 – Insurance (liability for quarter).
 - \$5,540.00 – Snow removal and salting (3 buildings).
 - \$4,279.01 – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.
 - \$3,372.90 – Gas (3 buildings).
- The operating net income / (deficits) were (\$19,217.41) in February and (\$18,454.27) Year To Date.
 - The actual February operating expenses were \$10,914.02 above the average monthly budgeted expenses.
 - The actual February operating incomes were \$4,636.73 below the average monthly budgeted incomes.
 - The Year-To-Date operating expenses were \$13,480.61 above the average YTD budgeted amounts.
 - The Year-To-Date operating incomes were \$2,359.68 above the average YTD budgeted amount.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE - FEBRUARY 2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

FEBRUARY 2025 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

- In February, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts decreased \$0.98 to \$354,099.07.
- In February, the value of the total Endowment Fund decreased \$12,112.81 to \$357,049.02. This includes the \$12,000.00 used to pay operating expenses.
- The February Second Saturday Free Community Dinner was not held. The total cost to the church for all community dinners since September 2021 is \$693.02.
- The February Men’s breakfast was held at River Star Diner.

The 2025 Per Capita is \$43.50 for each of the 205 members of our Church. (The number is the membership of FPCH on December 31, 2023.) The total amount due in 2025 is \$8,917.50 or \$743.13 monthly. In February, \$426.81 was received for Per Capita bringing the total received in 2025 to \$2,205.62 or 24.7% of the amount due. A payment of \$743.13 was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in February bringing the total sent in 2025 to \$1,486.26 or 16.7% of the total amount due.

The 2025 Per Capita amount is \$43.50 for each member of the congregation.

Building On Generosity (BOG) Capital Campaign

- Donations received during February, \$64.00.
- Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from September 2019 (the BOG Kickoff dinner) through the last day of February 2025, \$649,952.02.
- Expenses paid using the BOG funds in February, \$826.98. The payment was to everOn to complete the upgrade and inspection of the fire alarm system.
- The total available BOG funds are \$5,642.28 plus \$6,000.00 to be repaid for a total of \$11,642.28. The breakdown is \$6,392.28 for the next BOG project with an additional \$2,500.00 designated for parking lot pavement and \$2,750.00 designated for the Chapel range hood replacement.
- Donations breakdown by source:
 - 5.3% - \$34,389.76 from nonmembers
 - 86.0% - \$559,257.05 from members
 - 8.7% - \$56,305.21 from anonymous & dinners
 - 100.0% - \$649,952.02 Total

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.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARCH

During March, we experienced great music during worship, provided hot chocolate, tea, and coffee to the public at the St Patrick's Day Parade, and enjoyed a clarinet solo performed by Michelle Litwin. Below you can enjoy snapshots from those events. Photos courtesy of Lorinda Ravo and MaryAnn Simmons



CLOTHING DRIVE NEWS

Our next clothing drive will take place on May 3rd. We work with A&E Clothing Corp for our Clothing Collection Fundraisers:

Items they **ACCEPT**

- Clothing for men, women and children
- Shoes in separate bags
- Clothing accessories: belts, hats, scarves, handbags, gloves
- Small toys (2 ft. or less)
- Stuffed animals, towels, sheets & pillowcases
- Bikes & Strollers

Items they **DO NOT** accept:

- Quilts, comforters, pillows & blankets.
- Sports equipment (bikes are OK).
- No board games, books, puzzles, pots, CAR SEATS.
- No electrical devices or glass.
- No large toys, highchairs or baby cribs or scooters.
- VCR tapes, furniture and outdoor play sets.
- Bric and brac (picture frames, school supplies, phone cases, candles, cosmetics, greeting cards, plastic cups, food containers, baking accessories).
- Home and holiday decorations / pet accessories.

Please call or email Ellen Bergman or any Deacon with any questions you may have. Thank you.

APRIL GREETERS

APRIL 6: Pete and Carol Miller

APRIL 13: The Aquino family



APRIL 17: Geof and Pat Gohlich

APRIL 20: Justin and MaryAnn Simmons

APRIL 27: Bev Saunders and Janette Hendershot

FPCH TO PARTICIPATE IN TOWN-WIDE GARAGE SALE

The time for the Town-wide Garage Sale has arrived so mark your calendar for Saturday, April 26th. The Deacons will be sponsoring this activity and are looking for any household items, games, bikes, jewelry, candles, luggage, yard equipment, holiday items, or any other materials you want to offer for sale on this day.

All proceeds will go to the general coffers of the church. If you would like to donate items, please stop by the church parking lot on Friday, April 25th (times to be determined). On April 26th, we will be there at 8 am to set up our tables. If you would care to volunteer your time to assist, please see Ellen Bergman for details.

Thank you in advance for your generous donation of items for this cause and for your time if you join us on this day.

MUSIC NOTES

Music for the month of April will be:

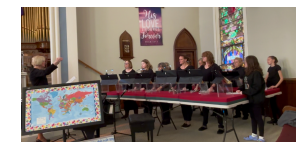
APRIL 6: The Old Rugged Cross, Angel Anyangwe soloist
Senior Choir with the Congregation

APRIL 13: (Palm Sunday)
Blessed Are They-Senior Choir
Oh, How I Love Jesus-Joyful Noise Bell Choir

APRIL 17: (Easter) (Maundy Thursday)
Jesus Died Alone-Sr. Choir
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross-FPCH Ringers
Were You There?-Angel and Blessing Anyangwe

APRIL 20: Rejoice the Lord is King-FPCH Ringers
Alleluia, Christ is Risen-Senior Choir and congregation
You Are My All in All with All Hail the Power of Jesus'
Name- Sr. Choir

APRIL 27: Soloist



Sharing God's Bounty

The Fields Are Ripe

Easter is the most joyous, the most victorious celebration of the church year. It is an opportune time for us as stewards to *"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples"* (Psalm 96:3)! What deed can be more marvelous than the resurrection of our Lord from the dead? Yes, *"Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (1 Corinthians 15:20), and we, too, shall be raised from the dead to live with him forever in Heaven.

As stewards of the Gospel, we have this good news to tell. Jesus reminded us of the urgency of the proclamation of his redemption. We read in John 4:35 that Jesus said, *"Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."* There is a need for us to tell this message effectively, passionately, clearly, and with perseverance so that all may be led by God's grace to respond to Christ's gift of salvation.

Along with pronouncing this good news with our own lips, we have a responsibility to give. We respond to the needs of others by taking groceries to our food banks, by contributing funds to be used for helping families with various financial difficulties, by sending money to areas hit by natural disasters, such as floods and hurricanes. What greater need is there than to provide financial support for those who minister to the greatest need of all ... the spiritual needs of Jesus' lost sheep? Our giving should be done willingly, cheerfully, generously, even as God in Christ has given to us.

Jesus promised that, as we carry out his commission to *"...make disciples of all nations ..."* he will be with us *"...to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:19, 20). Paul reminded us that *"God is able to make all grace abound to [us], so that in all things at all times, having all that [we] need, [we] will abound in every good work"* (2 Corinthians 9:8). Every day, the Holy Spirit provides opportunities for us as stewards to tell the good news and to give according to our abilities that the message of God's love in Christ may be spread throughout the world. Easter is our reason: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING TO OCCUR IN APRIL

Each year Presbyterian Church USA has four offerings that each congregation participates in. This April during the Lenten season, we will again have an opportunity to provide a special offering - **One Great Hour of Sharing**, which provides relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. This collection supports programs in over 100 countries.

Won't you consider joining with Presbyterians worldwide in sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world? Your support of this faith-based giving on shared concerns helps, regardless of your dollar amount. We will have this special collection on Palm Sunday, April 13th. Greeters will provide envelopes on April 6th.

PEACE ISLANDS INSTITUTE TO HOST COFFEE HOUR ON APRIL 6TH

Peace Islands Institute (PII) is an Islamic group that promotes peace, love, respect, humanity, integrity, welfare, and understanding in a diverse world. Because every culture, race, religion, tradition, and nation are neighbors, PII envisions a world becoming an island of peace in the ocean of our universe; a community in which people from all walks of life interact with each other and cooperate to serve their communities, thereby strengthening civil society and promoting the development of human values (<https://peaceislands.org/about-us>).



On April 6th, PII will join us during worship and offer some tasty snacks during fellowship as they share their important word about building interfaith relationships among all. Won't you join us in the narthex to hear what they have to say?

SECOND SUNDAY RECAP

In March, we welcomed Mr. Rob Zetterberg, Jean's brother (and Maddox's uncle) of Advanced Tree Care. Mr. Zetterberg, an arborist who has been caring for trees for 25 years, taught us all about the trees that surround us, how he cares for them, and the many, many products that we get from trees. All participants then made their own art projects using tree cookies and leaves for leaf prints.



This month, Mrs. Sharon Heil, who has made quilts for years, will show us her quilts, explain how they are made, and share the history of quilts. All participants will then combine to make a Kindness Quilt that we'll display for all to see! Please join us on April 13! Sign ups are on the sheet in front of the church.

SUNDAY SCHOOL WALL WORDS ON DISPLAY

In the month of March we asked our Sunday school kids to tell us about how they show kindness in their lives. We then created "Kindness Kites" with their statements. If you have't noticed the wall as you entered the back of the church, here is a snapshot of their thoughts.



In April, we will use the John Denver song "Sunshine on my shoulders makes me happy" as a prompt to ask our Sunday School students what makes them happy. Be sure to take a look at their answers on the display by the ramp entrance. A photo will appear next month in the newsletter.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE STILL SEEKING ANOTHER MEMBER

Do you have the gift of public writing? Of public speaking? Of letting people know the news about important events and activities? If you do, then the Public Relations Committee needs your talents.

Help us to creatively reach beyond our church walls and reach out to the community around us about the great things that are happening at First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown. We are looking for a congregation member who is not an elected member of the session or the Deacon board. For more information, please contact Michele Cameron at 908-813-0293 or by email at ML.Cameron@comcast.net

FPCH has a lot to offer, so don't forget to spread the word about the good things we do here in Hackettstown!

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE IS SOON

Everybody loves parades: infants, kids, teens, adults. Lots of people are marching and lots of vendors are on the streets.

This May FPCH will be outside the church providing refreshments for the public and we would love your assistance. Members, we encourage you to join us in this effort as we provide some tasty treats and delicious cold drinks to passers-by. We'd like a strong presence to show Hackettstown what this congregation is all about. Please say yes!

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO PRAY

Have a Family Sunrise Easter Breakfast

Getting up before dawn to watch the sunrise is a special treasure that is not easily forgotten. This Easter morning tradition of a sunrise breakfast creates a sacred space in which memories are cultivated for life. Some families already have this tradition and gather together in community for a sunrise service. For those who don't, however, why not do it at home? Breakfast can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. The most important element is simply gathering together as a family and enjoying the time together.

DESIGNED FOR ALL AGES.

MATERIALS: Breakfast foods and a printout of John chapter 20:1-18.

TIME INVESTMENT: One hour

HOW TO:

1. The night before, set the table, inside or outside or near a window to see the sunrise.
2. Plan to wake everyone in time to be ready at the table about 10-15 minutes before sunrise.
3. Serve breakfast and have everyone seated. Begin with a prayer of your own or use this one: *"God of darkness and light, we give you thanks for this Easter morning. As we sit here in the dark, we are excited to experience resurrection in a new way as the sun rises and light fills the sky. Help us to have a meaningful breakfast together as a family. Amen."*
4. As you eat breakfast together, have someone read the John passage slowly.
5. Notice the first line: "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark..." (20:1a) Notice if it is still dark outside and notice that this show it was outside when Mary went to the tomb. Ask, *"How do you think Mary felt when she went to the tomb in the dark?"* If you are able to eat outside, listen to the sounds.
6. Enjoy breakfast together and as it gets brighter share thoughts and experiences that come to mind. Ask questions that occur to you or use one or more of the following:
 - What part of the story is most interesting to you?
 - Does the light happen all at once, or does it seem to occur gradually? What does this tell you about the resurrection?
 - In the story, Mary calls Jesus a teacher. How is Jesus a teacher to you?
 - How do you think people felt when they realized that Jesus was alive?
 - Resurrection means coming back to life. What are some things that remind you of resurrection in the world?
7. Close your time together with a prayer: "Thank you, God, for this resurrection breakfast, a time to focus on you and the mystery of resurrection. Help us to celebrate Easter and to share its message of hope and promise. Amen."

NOTE: The beauty of this tradition is that it starts the morning with a spiritual focus and centers the day in family and faith. It also serves as a great foundation on which to build other traditions as the years go on. Add your own special recipes and surprises at breakfast.

"This practice is excerpted from the book **Faithful Families: Simple Practices for Daily Family Life** by Traci Smith, published by Chalice Press, 2017, All rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

My Lenten Prayer

Dear Jesus

Thank you for giving Your life
for me and for everyone in the world.
You fasted 40 days in the desert, and
I want to remember Your sacrifice during Lent,
by doing the following:

Please help me to do this out of love for You,
and help me in my hour of need.

Amen.

Name : _____

Date : _____

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GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

It is with a sad heart that we learned of the passing of Doris Ghetti on Friday, February 28th. She was 94.

Born on June 16, 1931 in Hackettstown, NJ, Doris was the daughter of the late Louis & Anna Ray Stangle. Doris retired from Heath Village, Hackettstown, NJ as a head chef for many decades. After her retirement, Doris enjoyed observing nature at her home. In her younger years, Doris acted as a foster mother in Warren County helping children in need. She loved her family and took great pride in spoiling her children, grandchildren & great grandchildren.

Doris is survived by three sons, Louis Ghetti of Allamuchy, NJ, Danny (Kathy) Ghetti of Harmony Twp., NJ, & Howard (Donna) Ghetti of Hackettstown, NJ, and her beloved grandchildren, Lou, Greg, Jami, Renee, Ryan and Brie Ann. She had many Great Grandchildren. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Nelson Ghetti and sons Nelson and Ricky Ghetti.

Funeral arrangements were held at Cochran Funeral Home.

Please keep the Irby and Clegg families in your prayers this month. Jose's son and Grace's brother both passed away in March. We are so sorry to hear of your loss and offer you our sincerest condolences at this time of of need and healing. Know that your church family has you in their thoughts and prayers.

We give thanks to the God of the resurrection whose love brings hope every day.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 3: Sharon Heil
- 6: Harper Schneider
- 7: Brenda Neice
- 8: Kate Sobolewski
- 10: Sean Wallace
Matthew Zellars
Bruce Bergman
- 11: Heather Fleischman
Ryan Gelsinger
Brendan Pierson
- 12: Ron Shepherd
- 13: Ashley Kimble
- 20: Chip Cochran
Michele Cameron
Brian Ligarzewski
- 21: Ryan Pierson
- 24: Shane Stone
- 26: Brynn McDonagh
- 28: Isabelle Fernandez
Erin Roguso



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 6: Diane Hull & Jan Courtright
Mike & Jessica McDonagh
- 15: Harry & Annette Knauer
- 16: Les & Dana Carpenter
- 29: Lawrence Cook and Pastor
Erin Hayes-Cook

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following in your prayers:

- Eugenie Chetangie
Churches throughout
the U.S.
- Grace and Richard
Clegg and family
FPCH and Friends of
FPCH
- Dan Gardner
- Lou Ghetti and family
- Terry Gretchen
- Joan Grover
- Barbara Hall
- Pattie and Dennis
Huff
- Diane Hull
- Jose and Della Irby and family
- Maikuu congregation,
Kibwezi Kenya
- Members of the Armed Forces
- Barbara Pace, niece of the
Prestopines
- Alice Phoebus
- Jim Simmons
- Carol Spitzer
- Muriel Stellingwerf
- The food insecure
- The homeless
- Those struggling with
addictions and mental health
- Those recovering from surgery
- Richard Westby
- Barbara Yankiv

