

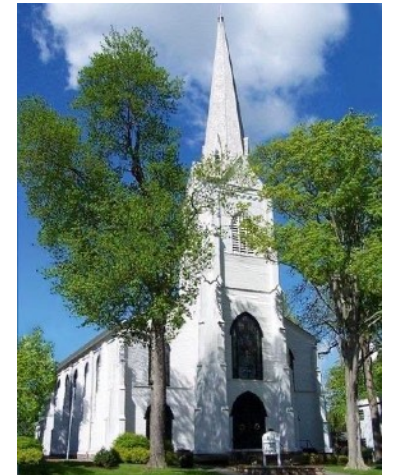
**First Presbyterian
Church
298 Main Street**

**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**

**JULY/AUGUST
2026**



*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: Jackie Hammel
Financial Secretary: Deborah Gulick-Shepherd
Head Usher: Kim Newton
Church Secretary: Pattie Huff

2026 SESSION

Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Bill Cors	Michele Cameron	Gilbert Anyangwe
Geof Gohlich	Pete Miller	Della Irby
Sharon Heil	MaryAnn Simmons	

Clerk of Session: Donna Erickson

2026 BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Jackie Hammel	Dennis Huff	Patricia Butts
Kathy Maier	Jose Irby	Karen Cramer
Lorinda Ravo	Jean Zetterberg	James Tischler

Moderator: Lorinda Ravo

2026 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

Happy Summer, FPCH.

As witnessed last year, I have again combined July and August to make a Summer publication. Therefore, the set up of this issue may seem a bit different, but I have provided a recap of the news as I have done in all previous issues.

June has been a month of many activities that kept us all busy with plenty of opportunities, revealing how truly blessed this congregation is.

Most of our monthly gourmet groups will not meet during the summer; however, the Ladies' breakfast at the River Star Diner will continue. Pastor Erin will be away most of July due to her attendance at Montreat Conference in North Carolina, however, the church office will be able to take calls regarding any concerns and Pastor Erin has provided a number to call if a pastor is needed in case of an emergency. I have included a number of national days of celebration in our calendar as fun days to enjoy.

In the month of June we had many celebrations within our congregation. See the separate articles regarding Teacher and Student recognition Sunday and our Deacons providing Carter Bags to the Police Department and the First Aid and Rescue Squad.

In addition, we have many activities planned for the upcoming Summer and Fall, including opportunities to purchase a FPCH polo shirt or access a prayer shawl or blanket made with love by our Yarn Girls.

The Christian Education Committee is glad to welcome back to our teaching staff the following people: Emily Tischler (grades PreK -1), Betsy and Nadia Hanson (grades 2-4) John Mark Wojcicki (grades 5, 6 and 7). As indicated in a separate small article, we are looking for a second teacher for grades PreK-1 and a Second Sunday Coordinator. Our children are blessed to have such dedicated teachers.

Also included in this newsletter is information regarding our Capital Campaign Project 2026 and our Security Grant projects under way. Be sure to see the articles located in the pages that follow.

As always, I look forward to seeing you all in church at worship.

Until next time...

Yours in Christ,
MaryAnn Simmons

DATES TO REMEMBER-JULY/AUG 2026

JULY:

- 01: Yarn Girls - 1 PM - Conference Room
- 04: Happy Independence Day!
- 05: Worship and Communion - 10 AM, livestream through Facebook; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market
- 06: Heaven Sent Summer Program beings - ends July 18
- 11: Community Dinner - at the Chapel from 5:30-7 PM
- 12: Worship -10 AM, livestream through Facebook; begin collecting items for the Backpack Program; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market; Second Sunday 11:30-1:30 PM
- 18: Men's Breakfast - 8:30 AM at the Chapel and Ladies breakfast - 9 AM at the River Star Diner, Hackettstown
- 19: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; continue school supplies collection for Backpack Program; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market
- 26: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; last day for collecting Backpack Program supplies; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market; Parents' Day

AUGUST

- 01: Paving of Parking Lot begins
- 02: Worship and Communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market; National Sisters Day AND International Day of Friendship
- 05: Yarn Girls - 1 PM - Conference Room
- 08: Community Dinner - at the Chapel from 5:30-7 PM
- 09: Complete Background Checks on Elders and Deacons and any person working with our Sunday School youth and children; National Book Lover's Day
- 09: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market; Second Sunday - 11:30 - 1:30 PM
- 11: National Sons' and Daughters' Day
- 12: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 12: International Youth Day
- 15: Men's Breakfast - 8:30 AM at the Chapel and Ladies breakfast - 9 AM at the River Star Diner, Hackettstown
- 16: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market
- 18: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 19: World Humanitarian Day and Public Education Sunday
- 19: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 23: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market
- 30: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; collecting diapers and wipes for Free Market



A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Freedom, what does it mean to you? This past Sunday I preached a sermon that mentioned the celebration of Juneteenth which commemorates the day that the last group of African slaves found out that they were free because of the Emancipation Proclamation. It took two years for the news to get to that community in Texas. Can you imagine walking about your life and not knowing that you are free? Can you imagine working on the land, doing the chores thinking that the war is still going on and that you cannot and will not have rights in the eyes of the people of the United States? What I would like to imagine is that it may have made the news even sweeter.

As we approach the 250th celebration of our country we all have different relationships with freedom and what it might mean to us. Our country is ripe with history of times we got it right and times we got it wrong. We know of the deep foundation of resilience and strength that runs deep within the fabric of who we are. We also know how fragile that is when we believe that it is only available to a certain kind of person.

Throughout the New Testament we hear stories of the apostles' struggle of who is in and who is out of God's grace. They believed that Jesus came to save and redeem the children of Israel first. Yet the Holy Spirit spoke to Paul and Phillip about making sure that the message of Jesus' death and resurrection is shared with everyone. No one is to be excluded.

Our freedom in Christ is one that no longer binds us to sin and gives us the chance to be loved unconditionally. This freedom is one that liberates our souls and gives us the foundation for hope. Yet we are not to hold onto it ourselves. We are to be more like those folks who first heard of their freedom on a warm night in June filled with awe and excitement.

So this July when the festivities arise and we hear about the story of our country let us not forget the beauty of our freedom in Christ that reminds us that God welcomes all.

Pastor Erin

JUNE 2026 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

BY: JACKIE HAMMEL

Treasurer's Report for January to May 2026

	Jan-Feb	March	April	May
Operating Income	\$31,139.63	\$29,821.48	\$18,594.69	\$14,647.18
Operating Expense	-\$19,094.68	-\$12,850.69	-\$14,130.45	-\$12,899.54
Building Fund Income	\$3,895.84	\$3,444.87	\$2,068.82	\$1,477.90
Building Fund Expense	-\$11,235.03	-\$8,638.01	-\$6,141.27	-\$5,602.57
Gain/Loss	+\$4,705.76	+\$11,787.65	+\$391.79	-\$2,377.03

Operating Income = General Donations and Pledges

Operating Expense = Bank Fees, Office Equipment, Office Supplies,

Community Dinners, Computer/Internet Expense, Payroll

Building Fund Income = Building Fund Donations, Heaven Sent donations, AA/GA/NA rent, Community Dinner donations.

Building Fund Expense = Pest Control, Gas, Electric, Garbage, HMUA, mowing, snow removal, Repairs and Maintenance on Church, Chapel, and Manse.

If you have any questions, suggestions or want clarification, please contact me at your convenience.

Jackie Hammel

Email treas.fpchnj@gmail.com

908.656.4225



MEET YOUR DEACONS AND ELDERS

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

This month, meet **Karen Cramer** (Board of Deacons) and **Gilbert Anyangwe** (Session Elder), members of the Class of 2028.

Karen Cramer has lived in Independence Township for 36 years with her husband, Mark. They have 2 grown daughters, Caitlin (NJ) and Lindsey (VA) and a ShihTzu named Oliver. In June 2023, Karen became a member of FPCH after being a member of the Catholic Church for over 40 years. In 2024, she retired from Verizon after 21 years in Marketing Communications. In her spare time, she plays the flute in the Hackettstown Community Band and is also a Board member. She enjoys taking exercise classes, reading, spending time with family and friends and traveling to the long list of places on her bucket list. She looks forward to serving in the church and her community over the next three years as a Deacon.



Gilbert Anyangwe was born in Cameroon to a Christian family with seven siblings. He is the eldest in the family, married to Martha Anyangwe and blessed with three children, Blessing, Angel, and Achaki.



Gilbert has been a Presbyterian all his life and a member of the Presbyterian Church USA since 2010. He previously served as a Deacon at Prospect Presbyterian Church in Maplewood before relocating to Budd Lake and joining the First Presbyterian Church in Hackettstown.

He loves reading, making friends, learning about other cultures, traveling, serving, spending time with family, and listening to music. He looks forward to serving God through the responsibilities assigned to him in his new role as an elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Hackettstown.

Thank you, **Karen and Gilbert**, for your dedication to our church.

DEACONS PROVIDE CARTER KITS TO HACKETTSTOWN FIRST RESPONDERS

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In June, members of our Board of Deacons delivered six Carter Kits to the Hackettstown Police Department, and one of the kits to the Hackettstown First Aid and Rescue Squad. Carter Kits are an invaluable resource that will help Hackettstown First Responders better assist children and individuals with sensory sensitivities during interactions with law enforcement or medical emergencies. The sensory bags contain tools designed to provide comfort, reduce anxiety, and improve communication during stressful situations. You can find more information about Carter Kits at carterkits.org



The Board of Deacons also purchased a Blackstone outdoor griddle that was first used at the Memorial Day parade where breakfast sandwiches were a big hit and a successful fundraiser for our church. The griddle will be housed in the church garage, and will be available for future use by the church.

WHAT ARE THE DEACONS DOING?

BY: PAT BUTTS

Summer Alert! Every Summer the Deacons choose a mission project to benefit our church or community. This year we will be collecting diapers, any size, and wipes and they will be distributed at the Free Market. We appreciate all who contribute to these projects each summer.

Many of you know about our Free Market, but for those who don't, this special mission takes place every other year in September. The Deacons collect items that church members and their friends no longer need or want. We display everything in our Chapel and then we invite those in our community to "take what they need." It is like a giant flea market with no price tags! It is such a blessing to see the faces of those who can use the items and hear their stories about how this mission helps them. This year, our Free Market will take place on Saturday, September 19th and drop off for all donated items will be on September 18th. Unfortunately, we cannot accept items in advance so continue to

gather your unwanted items and box them up to bring on September 18th.



This past month, we have been able to purchase several items that are benefiting our church and community. We successfully used the Blackstone Grill on Memorial Day for breakfast sandwiches. We purchased a lighted magnifier stand which can be used by our worship leaders, and we also purchased and donated Sensory Care Kits to the Hackettstown Police Department and the Hackettstown Rescue Squad. See the separate articles regarding each of these items.

Thank you for supporting the compassionate care missions of the Deacons. If you have any questions, be sure to see any of the members of this board.

PREPARE FOR OUR SEPTEMBER FREE MARKET

The Deacons will be holding their bi-annual Free Market in the Chapel on Saturday, September 19. For those who have never experienced the Free Market, it's often described as the most inspiring thing that we on the Board of Deacons do. It's essentially a yard sale, without prices. How can you help? Do you have things at your house that you are ready to let go of and watch someone else take it home to use and cherish? Donate them to the Free Market!

We can accept household goods, antiques, jewelry, clothing, purses, holiday decorations, kitchenware, baskets, paintings, pictures, toys and games, baby items, SMALL working household appliances, dishes, glassware, linens, sporting goods, bikes, tools, books (PLEASE NO TEXT BOOKS OR ENCYCLOPEDIAS).

We regret that we CANNOT accept large furniture, rugs, large appliances, non-working electronics, phones, computers, building supplies (paint, lumber, nails, doors, etc.)

If you are unsure about whether we can accept your items, please see a member of the Board of Deacons.

Do you have time on Friday, September 18 in the afternoon/evening from 12-6 pm to help set up? We'll welcome your assistance for any amount of time that you can give. Do you have time on Saturday morning/afternoon from 8:30-3:00 that you can help? We'll be doing our final set up between 8:30-9:45 am, and the doors will open at 10 am. We need people to assist with keeping items displayed. If you speak Spanish, we absolutely need your help with some of our non-English speaking customers.

We hope that you'll be able to assist in this cherished community outreach by our Deacons. It is a very rewarding event!



Sharing God's Bounty Giving a Cup of Cold Water

During Jesus' last three years on earth, he spent much time nourishing and teaching his disciples. Only when they were prepared to go out into the world to preach, teach, and heal did he send them. Leaving without provisions, the disciples were totally dependent upon those whom the Lord would send them for their support. The disciples relied upon the power of the Gospel to move the hearts of their listeners who would willingly provide for their needs. They were to travel light and trust in the Lord.

In Matthew 6:40-42 Jesus, referring to his disciples, said, *"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."* Jesus told his disciples that whoever gives to you is also giving to him. Although support today doesn't fund the work of the 12 original disciples, we assist the spreading of the Gospel by supporting today's disciples and missionaries around the world. As we provide for church workers locally and abroad in the name of Jesus, we are serving the Lord himself.

As we express our Christian faith through our giving and serving, God is pleased. God notices every act of compassion and kindness that we express. In the verse above, he refers to even the simple gesture of giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty person. Through our faith, we are empowered to do acts of service. When we act in response to the Lord and not for recognition, God will bless us. Having already been assured of salvation by God's grace through faith, blessings such as peace, contentment, patience, and hope are added rewards.

Only a small number of people make their living as full-time church workers, but we all are given the privilege and opportunity to be Christ's ambassadors. May God bless us all as we work to further his kingdom.

"You shall open your hands wide to your brother, and to your needy in the land." (Deut. 15:11) In addition to faith, add brotherly kindness, love, self-control, knowledge and goodness to create a recipe for stewardship.

"But just as you excel in everything ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us ... see that you also excel in this grace of giving." 2 Corinthians 8:7

JULY GREETERS

JULY 5: Erin and Chris Roguso
JULY 12: Jen and Al Aquino
JULY 19: Bev Saunders and Pam Venturini
JULY 26: Della and Jose Irby

GREETER

AUGUST GREETERS

AUG 2: Sharon Heil and Janette Hendershot
AUG 9: Pattie and Dennis Huff
AUG 16: Winnie and Mark Slachetka
AUG 23: Ellen and Bruce Bergman
AUG 30: Carol and Pete Miller

GREETER

VERSE OF THE MONTH

I have decided to include an inspirational Bible verse for all to consider as we journey into the summer. It is taken from Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all they ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

G.R.O.W. TEAM NEWS

BY: BILL CORS

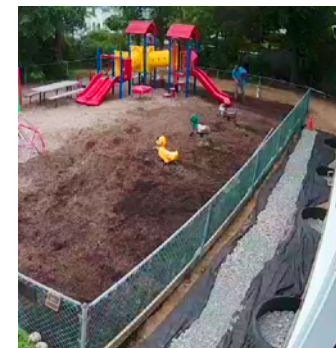
BUILDING ON GENEROSITY 2026 (BOG26) UPDATE

Truly, this is a time to be thankful and to celebrate the outstanding and overwhelming response to the Building on Generosity 2026 campaign. Your gifts have allowed us to finally and more definitively



address the drainage challenges and deteriorated condition of our parking lot. Because of your generosity, we are now able to insure safe and secure spaces for

multiple missions for congregation and community. The fact that it will also create a welcoming, warm, and aesthetically pleasing impression of our physical property is also an added bonus. You will see the much-needed drainage work already in progress and to be completed by early July 2026. The parking lot milling, paving, and re-striping will take place in early August 2026. All work will be completed by Labor Day weekend 2026.



PLEASE KNOW THAT YOUR GENEROSITY IS SINCERELY APPRECIATED, AS

WE REACHED OUR GOAL TO ALLOW THESE PRIORITY REPAIRS TO BE COMPLETED.

SUNSHINE BAGS AVAILABLE IN SUMMER

Did you know that each Sunday, a Sunshine Station Bag is available for kids to enjoy during worship? Filled with coloring pages, games, a craft project, crayons and a clip board, along with a special prize, they are located on the front pew for anyone to grab as they come into church. We ask that they be returned to the front pew after church so that they can be refilled for



SUMMER SECOND SUNDAYS ARE HERE

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

June 14th was a fun time using all sorts of beads and embroidery floss to make beaded art projects, bracelets, and braided bracelets. The kids had lots of fun and enjoyed taking home their home made treasures.

Second Sunday in July (the 12th) will explore opportunities to make something new out of something old as reflected in 2 Corinthians 5:17. Come and learn about mosaic art and be sure to pre-register on the sign up sheet on the information table.

Our final Second Sunday activity will be held on August 9th. Join us for our fifth annual Super Soaker Sunday, which will be a day filled with fun and laughter.

As you may recall, Lorinda Ravo is stepping down from her role as Director of Second Sunday after our August activity. If you are interested in seeing our children enjoy their lessons about the Bible through arts and crafts and various activities, please see the article on the following pages for more information about running this program. If you believe this is your calling, see MaryAnn Simmons or Pastor Erin or contact Pattie Huff at the Church Office.



BACKPACK PROGRAM 2026 SET TO COMMENCE

BY: DONNA ERICKSON

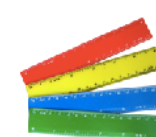


As we enter July, we need to get ready for September and the reopening of the school season. To that end, we will be collecting backpacks and school supplies from July 12th through July 26th.

We are in need of backpacks, note books (spiral-bound, 3-ring with filler paper, and composition books). Most of the children who receive the backpacks are in elementary and middle school, so we would appreciate that the notebooks and filler paper be wide-ruled. We will also be collecting rulers, glue sticks, pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, zippered pencil bags or cases, crayons, colored markers, colored pencils, children's scissors, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

The filled backpacks will be distributed to families involved with the NJ Department of Children and Families in Warren County.

As always, we thank you for your generous support of this program. Any questions, contact Donna Erickson.



CALLING ALL SUMMER MUSICIANS

We are in the process of determining our summer music schedule. During July and August, we welcome soloists or small ensembles to provide special music for our Sunday morning worship services.

If you would like to volunteer, please see Lorinda. She'll be very happy to help you out in any way that you need! A few dates are still available.

FPCH POLO SHIRTS AVAILABLE

BY: WINNIE SLACHETKA

It is that time again to spruce up your wardrobe and what better way than to purchase a shirt which sports the logo of our very own church? The shirts are available in all colors and can be purchased for \$20.00. For more information or to order your polo, see Winnie Slachetka by August 16th or contact her via email or phone:

wchetka@gmail.com or 908-391-0719. Thank you.



GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

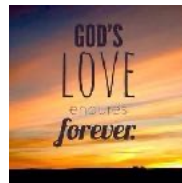
We regret to inform you of the passing of Charles Prestopine on June 2, 2026 at Morristown Memorial Hospital, surrounded by his loving wife and devoted family and friends. He was 89 years old.

Charlie was an active member of the community, specifically with the local preservation of the past. He was a Revolutionary and Civil War re-enactor and was instrumental in restoring the 249 year old colonial cemetery on Main Street in town and the neighboring historic Presbyterian Chapel and in replacing the Billy Yank Civil War Statue in town.

Charlie is survived by his wife Phyllis of 64 years and many siblings and nieces and nephews.

Please be sure to offer your condolences to Phyllis.

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



HIGHLIGHTS FROM JUNE 2026

We are so pleased to share the following highlights of our church worship during the month of June. Photos include celebration of students and teachers, musical events, and images from our children's message. Photos courtesy of Lorinda Ravo, Erin Roguso, and MaryAnn Simmons.



CALLING ALL EDUCATORS

What a blessing to know that our Children's program is growing! We are in need of another teacher for our PreK-1 grade class. We will provide the curriculum. You would spend one-two hours per week prepping for a 45 minute Sunday School lesson for grades PreK-1. We would love to have someone join current teacher Emily Tischler to teach two alternating weeks per month. If you are compassionate, flexible, understanding, creative and patient, then we hope to connect with you. Please respond to fpchnj@gmail.com or reach out to Pastor Erin or MaryAnn Simmons.

FPCH SEEKS SECOND SUNDAY COORDINATOR

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

As revealed in last month's issue of *Light from the Steeple*, Lorinda Ravo is regrettably stepping down from her position as Director of our Second Sunday Program. She held this position for the past four years since we did not have enough people to run our Vacation Bible School program in 2022. As a result, we are in search of a dedicated individual who can continue this highly successful program beginning in September, 2026.



The Second Sunday Coordinator designs, leads, oversees faith-based programs for the youth of the FPCH - typically ages 4-12. This individual will foster a Christ-centered or faith-focused community for children to be held on the Second Sunday of each month. He or she will recruit and/or solicit volunteers, develop age-appropriate curriculum for approximately a 1 to 2-hour time frame and ensure a safe and welcoming environment, while equipping parents to support their child's/children's spiritual growth at home. This role acts as a bridge between the church, the children, and their families, ensuring that religious education outside of the Sunday School sessions is engaging, spiritually enriching, and aligned with the missions of the congregation. This is a position designed for someone who is passionate about nurturing the spiritual growth of children and guiding them in their early faith journey.

This is a volunteer position. If interested, please see MaryAnn Simmons or Pastor Erin, or contact Pattie Huff in the church office by calling (908) 852-4011 or emailing at fpchnj@gmail.com. Thank you.

FPCH CELEBRATES ITS CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

Sunday school has been a blessing this year as the church has witnessed a growth in our program over the past few years. Currently, we have a total of 27 students ranging from grades PreK through 9 and the numbers will continue to grow as we have witnessed a number of families with young children requesting to join the church.



On June 14th, FPCH celebrated its children and teachers with a program that incorporated the words of the children themselves, explaining what they liked most about being in Sunday School. Our youngest ones loved coloring and fun activities, the 2-6th graders enjoyed the crafts, music, and friendships, and our confirmation class students liked learning about

the motif of the number 40 in the Bible, the importance of Lenten season, and the resurrection of Jesus. All students enjoyed Pastor Erin's messages during the children's sermons and learning new songs from Mrs. Ravo. Students received their pins and participation certificates. All posed for a group photo with their teachers.



Next it was time to acknowledge the 12 teachers and volunteers who were instrumental in helping these children grow spiritually. MaryAnn Simmons and Pastor Erin presented the adults with a gift bag filled with various teacher related items as a token of their appreciation for all of the hard work and dedication from September through May. See

all of the photos under the Highlights from June.



A special thank you goes out to Pattie Huff who was instrumental in ordering curriculum and other needed items throughout the school year. Without her patience and dedication, I would not have been able to complete all of the tasks required of this mission here at FPCH.



Congratulations, students and teachers, on another great year of learning about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. May the Trinity abide in your lives always.

THANK YOU, STONE SOUP SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND HACKETTSTOWN COMMUNITY BAND

BY: LORINDA RAVO

As many of you know, the Stone Soup Symphony calls FPCH their home. In addition to the two concerts a year that they present in our Sanctuary, they also use our Chapel on Wednesday evenings for their rehearsals.



We are also delighted to welcome the Hackettstown Community Band into our sanctuary for two concerts a year. Both of these organizations shared their gratitude

with donations to the church in the Spring. The Hackettstown Community Band donated half of the free will donations that they received, and the Stone Soup Symphony presented a generous check to the church at their May 31st concert.

We also have provided a concert venue and rehearsal space to the SwingTime Jazz Band, and we provide storage space in the Chapel for our own Hackettstown Colonial Musketeers Drum and Bugle Corps.

FPCH is grateful for the opportunity to provide these musical groups with the space to rehearse and offer free concerts to the community.



NJ HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT UPDATE

BY: PETE MILLER

In the Fall of 2025, the New Jersey Department of Homeland Security announced a Nonprofit Security Grant. Based upon a thorough site evaluation previously conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, we were able to identify the following major projects to submit. They include replacement windows for the church basement and all three floors of the annex (a total of 43), exterior lighting, 24/7 video surveillance, safety bollards to protect the playground and building, rear door locking system with intercom and an alarm system with central station monitoring. We submitted for the maximum amount of \$100,000. We are very happy to report that we received notification that we received the full \$100,000 and work has begun.

The alarm, camera, intercom and card access door lock systems have been installed. The intercom system will allow both the church office and preschool office to see who is at the door, speak with them, press a button to unlock the door and let them in without having to go down the stairs each time to allow entrance to the building. The door automatically locks after the person enters. If someone loses a keycard, we can quickly deactivate the card and issue a new one in house.

The safety bollards and exterior perimeter lighting projects will begin within the next few weeks. The laminated safety windows have been ordered and we expect the work to begin this summer.

Our overall goal is to keep our building, staff and congregation members safe. We are very grateful to the NJ Department of Homeland Security for this great opportunity.



SUMMER

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

JULY BIRTHDAYS

2: Kelsey Gulick Johnston
3: Stephen Carpenter
Al Ravo
4: Chris Bramley
6: Terry Gretchen
7: Jan Courtright
8: Linnea Pierson
9: Richard Gregory
14: Kaitlyn Cameron
Fred Sentner
17: Cynthia Luques
18: James Grover
Jay Grover
19: Chris Fleischman
20: Russ Reed
22: Judy Eckroth
25: Marsha Gulick
31: Jacqueline Fernandez

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

5: Ron & Deborah Shepherd
15: Al & Lorinda Ravo
18: Tim & Tracey Gelsinger
21: Roy & Cindy Pierson
31: Jim & MaryAnn Simmons

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

2: Jodie Grover
3: Emily Ligarzewski
5: Kim Newton
8: Daniel Gardner
Carl Erickson, Jr.
11: Garrett Kimble
12: Jane Petty
15: Shawn Gelsinger
Lawrence Cook
16: Barbara Hall
19: Zayden Chetangie
21: Lucas Spranger
22: Maria Koskulics
25: Aaron Bartku
Jim Pippas

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8: Tom & Alisa Dartnell
9: Brian & Kim
Ligarzewski
11: Tony & Pam Venturini
26: Paul & Kate
Sobolewski

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Brian, the neighbor of Lorinda and
Al Ravo
Eugenie Chetangie
Churches throughout the U.S.
Our Confirmands
Pam Covert
Shirley DeLoia, sister of Phyllis
Prestopine
FPCH and Friends of FPCH
Our Sunday School
Teachers and assistants
The Family of June Fredericks
Dan Gardner
Pat Gohlich
Our Graduates
Dick Gregory
Terry Gretchen
Joan Grover
The Hackettstown
Community



The Immigrant Community
Barbara Hall
Maikuu congregation,
Kibwezi Kenya
Members of the Armed Forces
Barbara Pace, niece of Phyllis
Prestopine
Alice Phoebus
Debbie Potter
Phyllis Prestopine
Jim Simmons
The Family of Sarah Smith
Rayman Sookhoo and the
Sookhoo Family
Carol Spitzer
The food insecure
The homeless
Those struggling with
addictions and mental health
Those traveling

PRAYER SHAWLS AVAILABLE

Beginning June 28th and then each month there is a fifth Sunday, the Yarn Girls are making available their creations to all who desire one.

Each Wednesday of the month, the Yarn Girls meet to create prayer shawls, blankets, and crosses, among other items, to be provided for all who need comfort during a time of illness or sadness in their lives. Now, anyone who would like one of these items will have the opportunity to choose one on the fifth Sunday of each month.

For more information, contact Deb Gulick-Shepherd.