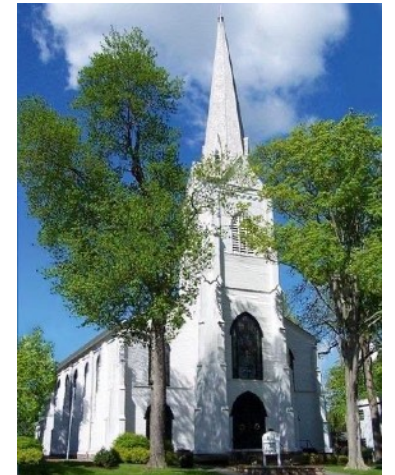


**First Presbyterian  
Church  
298 Main Street**

**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)**

**SEPTEMBER  
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**

<b>Class of 2025</b>	<b>Class of 2026</b>	<b>Class of 2027</b>
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**

<b>Class of 2025</b>	<b>Class of 2026</b>	<b>Class of 2027</b>
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.**

As you may or may not know, the Liturgical season is currently Ordinary Time. Therefore, we will not witness any special activities associated with the church during this month; however, we look forward to Pastor Erin's energizing sermons nonetheless.

We have a host of activities that will occur in September, including Bible study. Participants will be working through the book *A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in Its World for Our World* by the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Walton. Dates to be announced soon. For more details, see Pastor Erin.

Music returns to FPCH with our various music ensembles this month. We look forward to Lorinda's musical selections. Thank you to all of our guest musicians. See the article provided which mentions all who participated this summer.

Parents of our confirmation class, please read the Sunday School News article regarding an opportunity to attend a retreat at Camp Johnsonburg during the first weekend in December. Be prepared to meet with Jan Courtright and me after worship on September 7th for assistance with registering your child.

This month we will begin our Sunday School sessions so please be sure to read the Sunday School News to learn about our teachers and our plans for the children. Kids, since Sept 21st is Back to Church Sunday, I ask you to invite a friend to church that day.

We are still seeking videographers to help with the live-streaming of worship each week, so if you are able to assist in this area, we appreciate your efforts.

As always, thank you for your readership. If you have suggestions for stories for future editions, please email me or see me after service one Sunday. Until next month...

Yours in Christ,  
**MaryAnn Simmons**

## DATES TO REMEMBER - SEPTEMBER 2025

- 01: Happy Labor Day!
- 02: PLEFF Dinner - 6 PM at Pasta Grill by Enzos, Rte 57, Hackettstown
- 03: Yarn Girls - 1 PM in the Conference Room
- 04: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 07: Confirmation Class - 9:00 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 07: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Blessing of the Backpacks; Sunday School begins; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; new members class after worship; Confirmation class parents meet after worship for assistance with Camp Johnsonburg registration
- 07: Grandparents' Day
- 09: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 11: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 13: Men's Breakfast - 8:15 AM - location to be determined
- 14: Confirmation Class - 9:00 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 14: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 14: Second Sunday - 11:30 at the church
- 16: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM, in the Conference Room
- 18: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 20: Ladies' Breakfast - 9 AM - River Star Diner
- 21: Confirmation Class - 9:00 - 9:50 AM in the Conference Room
- 21: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 23: Ladies who Lunch - TapHouse Grille Route 57, Hackettstown, NJ
- 25: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 28: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 30: Clothing Drive early drop off - 5:30-7 PM church parking lot

## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

"It takes a village to raise a child."

I can't help but think about children and youth this time of year. I am still in the inescapable rhythms of the school year with our family. For some of you the pattern of summer vacations and school rotations are not even on your radar. Yet even so, something changes in the energy of our community when the Fall hits. Many of us can remember how nervous and excited we felt when it came to a new school year. Now our children and youth have many things competing for their attention. And as we are getting ready to send them off into a new school year, I ask that you pray weekly for our children, youth, teachers, administrators, support staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, and parents. As we pray we are able to see with fresh eyes the ways that God moves in the lives of community. We can then see how it isn't just the parents' responsibility to help nurture and raise the children of our community but it is ours to hold, too.

I heard a story on a Christian radio station about children who could ask Jesus anything. Someone said to them, "If Jesus showed up at your door today and you could ask him anything, what would it be?" Most of the children asked, "Can you stay for dinner? Would you stay and play with me?" Their responses remind us that our children and youth ask for our presence in their lives. If they can ask Jesus to stay and play, can we do the same? May we find ways during the Fall season to open our eyes to the wonderful ways that Jesus has blessed us through the eyes of a child. Let us be that village.

**Pastor Erin**

# CONFIRMATION CLASS CREATES BANNER FOR WORLD COMMUNION DAY

BY: JAN COURTRIGHT AND MARYANN SIMMONS

The Confirmation class students have been busy in August creating a banner for World Communion Sunday which will take place on October 5th.

The girls worked on two Sundays, August 3rd and 17th, with the assistance of Gwenn Bartku and their teacher, Jan Courtright, to sketch and color a variety of designs that depict the importance of the annual Christian observance which celebrates the unity and diversity of the global Christian community. It is a day when churches worldwide, of all denominations, partake in Holy Communion to symbolize their shared faith and connection in Jesus Christ.

This observance originated in a Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh in 1933 and was adopted in 1940 by the Federal Council of Churches. Since then, it has been a global event celebrated by all denominations of churches.

A special thank you is extended to Sharon Heil for assistance in hemming the banner and to Gwenn Bartku for her artistic expertise.

Thank you, ladies, for this beautiful creation. We look forward to seeing it on display on October 5th.

Below are a few of the images the students created.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

It is that time again for our children to continue their faith journey with the commencement of Sunday School and Confirmation class on September 7th.

We would like to welcome back our teachers for this upcoming year. Gwenn Bartku and Emily Tischler will once again work with our preschool through first grade students. New this year are Betsy and Nadia Hanson who will work with our newly created class of second through fourth graders. John Mark Wojcicki will work with our new level of fifth and sixth graders, and Jan Courtright will continue working with our confirmation students. All grade school classes (preK through 6th grade) will take place after the children's sermon. The confirmation class will meet each Sunday from 9 to 9:50 AM in the Conference Room before worship.

Students, we have plans for great learning opportunities based on new curriculum purchased for this year. Your teachers will provide you with a variety of activities and stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. We are excited to bring this curriculum to life for you each week. Parents, you should have received an email from the church regarding handouts that need to be completed by September 7th.

Confirmation students will begin meeting with their mentors each month beginning in September. Mentors, you will need to connect with your students and their parent(s) to set up plans for where and when these monthly meetings will occur.

Finally, we are planning an overnight retreat to Camp Johnsonburg on December 5-7 for the confirmation class. Please make plans now for your daughter to attend. Parents, you should have received a letter from the church which provides more information (cost, necessary items to bring, theme for the weekend, etc.). We plan to meet with you after worship on Sept 7th for a brief time to explain how to register your daughter for the camp. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask MaryAnn Simmons or Jan Courtright.

# G.R.O.W. TEAM NEWS

BY: BILL CORS

This month, we wish to highlight information regarding donations to our building fund and the opportunity to join our various choirs.

### Did You Know...?

**You can donate specifically to the church building fund!**

The church has a specific fund dedicated to buildings and grounds?

- Occasionally, building emergencies happen and there is not always time to wait and collect the funds for repairs
- Donations made to the building fund are used to maintain all our facilities and help with any unexpected building emergencies
- These funds also help cover the cost of snow removal, heating of our buildings, and other various building needs

**Consider donating today!**

Visit [FCHackettstown.org](http://FCHackettstown.org) for more information.



### Did You Know...?

**Anyone can join the adult senior choir!**

The adult senior choir leads music during worship. They sing multiple Sundays each month (except in the summer), during special services (Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, etc) and on special occasions. They rehearse on Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm, in the music room, September through May. Rehearsals begin Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>

**Consider donating your talents today!**

Contact Lorinda Ravo for more information



If you have any questions or if you have any ideas, contact Bill Cors or any member of his G.R.O.W. Team Committee.

# NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

By PAT BUTTS

The Deacons would like to thank everyone who contributed to our summer collection of specific items for the Little Pantry. It helps to keep the pantry stocked to assist those in our community who are food insecure. We plan to keep the Pantry open 24 hours a day and donations are accepted throughout the year.

Our next clothing drive is fast approaching. A drop off date is set for September 30th from 5:30 to 7 PM and our truck pickup is Saturday October 4th at 9AM. Please remember that the company is no longer accepting blankets, quilts, and bedspreads.

If you have any questions, please speak to a Deacon. As always, the Deacons thank all of you for your continued support of our compassionate ministry.

# WE NEED VIDEOGRAPHERS

The worship committee would like to solicit your help on alternating Sundays as a videographer for our worship services.

If you have a talent for capturing events on video, then this is the job for you. We are currently in need of people who are willing to take on this role. We will teach you how to work the equipment. Then, give us one or two Sundays a month so our homebound members can watch our services each week.

See Geof Gohlich or Pastor Erin for details. Thank you.

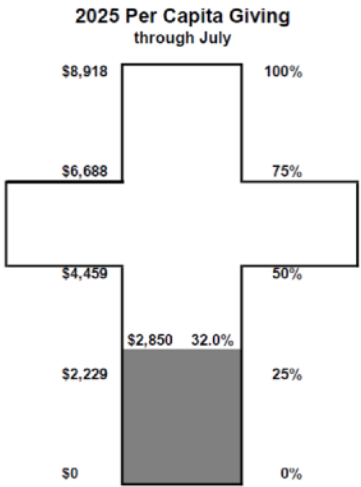


# JULY 2025 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

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.

	JULY	Year to Date
Income	\$14,077.06	\$132,598.18
Expenses Paid	\$16,358.81	\$149,277.42
Net Operating Income /(Deficit)	(\$ 2,281.75)	(\$16,679.24)
Amount of Schwab/Edward Jones funds used to pay operating expenses	\$ 0.00	\$ 6,000.00
Amount Needed from Endowment	\$ 0.00	\$ 29,000.00
Total amount of Endowment, Schwab & Edward Jones funds used to pay Operating expenses in 2024	\$ 0.00	\$ 35,000.00



## Financial Comments / Observations:

- The five largest operating expenses in July were:
  - 1.) **\$7,774.62** – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).
  - 2.) **\$3,880.54** – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.
  - 3.) **\$870.00** – Fire alarm monitoring (quarterly bill).
  - 4.) **\$800.00** – Cleaning (Church & Chapel).
  - 5.) **\$715.00** – Grounds care (Church).
- The operating net income / (deficits) were **(\$2,281.75)** in July and **(\$16,679.24)** Year To Date.
  - The actual July operating expenses were **\$3,974.52** below the average monthly budgeted expenses.
  - The actual July operating incomes were **(\$2,589.61)** below the average monthly budgeted incomes.
  - The Year-To-Date operating expenses were **(\$6,944.09)** above the average YTD budgeted amounts.

- The Year-To-Date operating incomes were **\$15,931.51** above the average YTD budgeted amount.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE - JULY, 2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

# JULY 2025 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

CONTINUED FROM JULY 2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

- In July, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts increased **\$2,093.97** to **\$355,136.15**.
- In July, the value of the total Endowment Fund increased **\$2,067.87** to **\$361,891.91**.
- The July Second Saturday Free Community Dinner was not held. The total cost to the church of all community dinners since September 2021 remains at **\$693.02**.
- The July Men's breakfast was not held because it is suspended in the summer.

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 July, **\$50.00** was received for Per Capita bringing the total received in 2025 to **\$2,849.12** or **32.0%** of the amount due. A payment of **\$50.00** was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in July bring the total sent in 2025 to **\$2,849.62** or **32.0%** of the total amount due.

## BUILDING ON GENEROSITY (BOG) CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Donations received during July, **\$300.00**.
- Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from September 2019 (the BOG Kickoff dinner) through the last day of July 2025, **\$651,901.02**.
- Expenses paid using the BOG funds in July, **\$700.00**. This expense was paid to Crestview Tree Service to remove the stump in front of the Church.
- The total available BOG funds are **\$6,194.28**. The breakdown is **\$1,944.28** for the next BOG project with an additional **\$1,500.00** designated for repairs to the two center front doors of the Church and **\$2,750.00** designated for the Chapel range hood replacement.
- Donations breakdown by source:
  - 5.4%** - **\$35,048.76** from nonmembers
  - 86.0%** - **\$560,527.05** from members
  - 8.6%** - **\$56,325.21** from anonymous & dinners
  - 100.0%** - **\$651,901.02** 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 JULY & AUGUST

During the summer, we experienced great music at worship, heard from James Engle about the Musconetcong Watershed, and from Harper Schneider about Camp Johnsonburg (see related article for Harper's picture). Below are snapshots from those events. Photos courtesy of MaryAnn Simmons.



## HARPER SCHNEIDER TALKS ABOUT CAMP JOHNSONBURG EXPERIENCE

Hello, I am Harper. This summer I had the opportunity to go to Camp Johnsonburg for two weeks and I was lucky enough to get a FPCH scholarship. Johnsonburg is an overnight camp, open to almost anyone. Kids as young as first grade can attend. It is a religious based camp but you can do so much more than church each day. During my two weeks at camp, I experienced a lot of fun and I made some amazing friends.

Worship happened every day but we also had fun activities. Camp Johnsonburg has a lake with inflatables and boating and also a pool. One of my favorite activities was the Leap of Faith which is a long zipline.



The camp provides many food options with three meals a day. Workers are aware of allergies and dietary restrictions, so they make food for those with restrictions. Because of how many people are allergic to nuts, camp is a nut-free facility. They also have a few sandwich options, like Sun butter and Jelly, and cheese sandwiches for kids if they don't like the meal provided.

My first week was called "Rides and Slides." During this week we experienced camp, and at the end of the week we went to Dorney Park and Wild Water Kingdom. I made a good friend that week who had never gone on a big roller coaster. In the end he and I went on almost every ride. During that day I challenged myself to go on rides that I never thought I would go on. I had so much fun that I went home and begged to go to other amusement parks.

My second week of camp was called "Middle School Mayhem." This is a hard core week of camp. I was very lucky to have two amazing counselors that week. I learned a lot from them, especially one who is from the UK. We would hear stories every night about her home town. I was very lucky to room with 3 other kids in my cabin. I had a total of 6 people in my group that entire week and we established a special bond and hope to meet up again. My favorite part of that week was getting matching bracelets which our counselor decided to make.

Camp Johnsonburg is an amazing camp and my favorite part of the summer. I hang out with my friends during marching band camp, but I would pick 6 weeks of Johnsonburg first. At camp you can meet new people and spend an entire week with them. I am definitely going next year. Thank you again, FPCH, for giving me these opportunities, thanks to the scholarship.

## DID YOU KNOW...

...September 1 is the beginning of Christ's public ministry. It is known as the Feast of Indiction/Creation and it runs through October 4th.

...According to the liturgical calendar we are currently in Ordinary Time. This time of year in the Church is marked by the color green.

... September 21st is considered Back to Church Sunday. Kids and adults, I challenge you to invite a friend to attend church with you this Sunday.

Stay tuned next month for more fun facts about the Presbyterian Church.

## SAVE THE DATE: CLOTHING DRIVE IS OCTOBER 4TH

This Fall, our clothing drive will be held on Saturday, October 4th. Therefore, if you are in need of cleaning out those closets to make room for your new Fall and Winter wardrobes, be sure to start the process now.

The Deacons appreciate any donations you can provide for this worthy cause. We are looking for all clothing, including sweaters, tops, pants, skirts, socks, and coats that can be worn by those less fortunate. In addition, we will accept accessories such as belts, hats, scarves, neckties, handbags. We will also take toys and stuffed animals, and shoes must be in their own bags. Please note the company no longer accepts comforters, blankets, or quilts.

As always, thank you for your generosity in supporting this event. All money received for this activity will go toward the Deacons' missions. If you have any questions, contact Ellen Bergman.

## THANK YOU, FROM DONNA ERICKSON

Thank you to all for your expressions of sympathy and support at the passing of my mother on July 16, 2025. We were blessed to have her longer than many people have their mother. She died two weeks before her 99th birthday. My family is grateful for the support we received. With sincere gratitude, Donna.

## MUSIC NOTES

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In September, our music during the service will be:

**Sept. 7:** Father, I Adore You Senior Choir

**Sept. 14:** Our Father FPCH Ringers

**Sept. 21:** Spirit Song Senior Choir

**Sept. 28:** The Lord Bless You and Keep You -

Little Lights Sunday School Choir

Joyful, Joyful

Unity Chimes



## THANKS TO OUR SUMMER SOLOISTS AND OUR CONGREGATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT

BY: LORINDA RAVO

This summer, we were blessed with many musicians providing our anthems during Sunday worship. Three of our performers, Violet Tischler, Kaz Tang, and Harper Ravo made their solo debuts in church. Violet and Kaz both played piano solos, and Harper played a trumpet solo. The support of our congregation means the world to me and provides a wonderful start for these young musicians as they begin to perform. It takes a lot of courage to do what these kids did for us this summer, and I am so grateful that all in the congregation who heard them responded so positively to their performances.

We were also fortunate enough to have Mrs. Deb Shepherd, Mrs. Michelle Littwin, Mrs. Jess Pomeroy, Mrs. Ved Fernandez and Mrs. Joan Keides, and the Ravo trio of Lorinda, Torey, and Harper all share their talents with us. In addition, Blessing Anyangwe was a substitute pianist for Lorinda while she and Al were away at a family function.

My thanks to all of these musicians for filling our Summer Sundays with beautiful music! See photos of these performances in our Summer Highlights section of this newsletter.



# Sharing God's Bounty

## Money and the Great Commission

Jesus' parting command was: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus was very direct and explicit with his mandate. There is no question as to where or with whom we are to share the Gospel. The love that God gives to us is to be shared by us with all people everywhere. He has given us our marching orders, and, in his strength, we can give ourselves fully to his work.

Because God has chosen to use us as his tools to bring salvation to all people, we must use our lives and gifts to spread the Good News. Paul wrote, *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us"* (2 Corinthians 5:20). One of the tools that God gives us to use in our mission of reaching out to others with the Gospel is our money. According to an old stewardship phrase, "Stewardship without mission is unnecessary and mission without stewardship is impossible." Stewardship and mission are inseparable. The funding of the Great Commission needs to come from believers. The money which God entrusts to us has many purposes, and the funding of mission work is of first importance. Through the giving of our money, we demonstrate our obedience to Jesus' command to reach out to all people. Paul wrote that, through our giving, we *"test the sincerity of [our] love by comparing it with the earnestness of others"* (2 Corinthians 8:8).

For nonbelievers and those who lack spiritual maturity, the giving of money is done begrudgingly out of a sense of obligation. By the grace of God, our attitude toward giving is a "want to" rather than a "got to" give. We view giving as a privilege and an opportunity to spread the Gospel through our money. Our giving expresses our gratitude for who God is and all that he has done for through his Son. Through faith, we hold onto our money loosely and then are privileged to experience the joy of giving as we give God our first and best. As Christians we understand that God has a claim on all that we have, so we willingly and cheerfully give our money to help all people hear of God's love. Money is an important tool for God's mission. Through our faithful giving, we are able to leverage our witnessing to all people.

## MUSIC ENSEMBLES ARE RETURNING

BY: LORINDA RAVO

After the summer "hiatus," our music ensembles are returning to rehearsals and performances. Our Senior Choir began their rehearsals on Thursday, August 28, and will sing for the first time in church on September 7.

NO auditions are required for the choir - all are welcome to be part of the group. We completely understand busy schedules: if you cannot make a rehearsal or even a Sunday when the choir sings in church, that's fine. The choir will sing, on average, two Sundays a month. This year, as often as possible, the Senior Choir will be singing on the first and third Sunday of each month. We have a robe for you. We have music for you. We even have a seat for you. If you have any questions, just check with Lorinda!

Our FPCH Ringers still have a couple of spaces to fill this year. We are happy to welcome anyone who wants to try ringing (hint: it's lots of fun!). No experience necessary - we are happy to teach you, so if you think you might be interested, come to the music room at 6:30 on August 28 (or any Thursday after that!) and we will get you started. As often as possible, the FPCH Ringers will be ringing on the Second Sunday of each month for the 2025-26 season.

FPCH has two children's ensembles. Joyful Noise Bells and Unity Chimes will begin their rehearsals following Sunday School on September 14. Joyful Noise kids who are in kindergarten and up are welcome to join the group. Unity Chimes are for grades 3 and up. See Lorinda for more details!

## NEW CHILDREN'S MUSIC THIS YEAR

For the past three years, the children of our church have traveled around the world, visiting 26 different countries and learning 24 different languages as they sang worship songs from each country. It has been a wonderful journey for all.

This year will begin a new adventure. All songs our Sunday School students will be learning will be taken directly from Scripture. I learned so many Bible verses from singing them, and now our children will be learning them the same way. We will still have questions about the book of the Bible our song of the month to help the kids learn about using their Bibles. Our first song for the month of September will be "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" by Michael Card.

## SUMMER SECOND SUNDAYS

July 13 we had a new lesson about Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dream coat. Betsy and Nadia Hanson led the session of 10 students who heard the three part story of Joseph and his brothers and completed various crafts and colorings regarding sibling rivalry, Joseph's departure, and then the celebration of Joseph's return home. Students were engaged and learned some new facts to this tale.



On August 10, we held our FOURTH ANNUAL SUPER SOAKER SUNDAY, and we were indeed, soaking! (Thanks, Mr. Larry!) It was so much fun.



## MORE SECOND SUNDAY NEWS

BY: LORINDA RAVO

We have two of our Fall months planned out for our upcoming Second Sundays, so be sure to reserve the dates because you won't want to miss either of these programs.

**September 14:** The Hackettstown First Aid and Rescue Squad will be coming to show us the ambulance and teach us about First Aid. Be sure to bring along a "stuffedie" to use as your patient.

**October 12:** We'll be enjoying pumpkin and gourd painting as we get ready for Halloween.

Please know, if anyone would like to plan and lead a Second Sunday program, we would love to have your participation. See Lorinda or Pastor Erin if you care to share your ideas.

## SEPTEMBER GREETERS

**SEPT 7:** Della and Jose Irby

**SEPT 14:** Winnie and Mark Slachetka

**SEPT 21:** Pat and Geof Gohlich

**SEPT 28:** Ellen and Bruce Bergman

† GREETER

# TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO PRAY

## First Day of School: New Beginnings

Heading off to school on the first day can be daunting for parent and child alike, as there are so many questions in one's mind. What will the new year be like? Will I like my teacher? Will my child be happy? This is a yearly tradition involving making a copy of your child's footprints on the first day of school and saying a simple prayer for the year to come.

### Designed for Ages Preschool to Senior in High School

**Materials:** Construction paper, washable tempera paint, wide paintbrush, shallow pan of soapy water, washcloths and towels.

**Time Investment:** 15-30 minutes

#### How To:

1. On the night before or the morning of the first day of school, paint the bottom of your child's feet with a wide paintbrush and ask him or her to step on a piece of construction paper. As the child does, say, "Your feet remind us of the journey you will take this year at school. I know that you will learn so many new things and go so many new places. I hope that you will go with courage and strength and know that God goes with you too."
2. Before the child steps off the construction paper, say this short prayer: "God, please be with [child's name] as [he/she] heads off on [his/her] first day of school. May the year be full of new experiences and knowledge, and may [he/she] was I night and truth every day. Amen."
3. Wash paint off from the child's feet and head off to a new year!

#### NOTE:

- Those who are coming to this tradition with older children might be tempted to skip it, thinking, "Well, we haven't done this in the past so we should skip it." It is never too late to start a new tradition, and this is an easy one to start at any time. Go ahead and start it, no matter how old your children are.

#### VARIATIONS:

- Use handprints instead of footprints.
- Show the footprints from previous years and notice the growth in the child.
- Trace around the hand or foot and make handprints or footprints that way.
- Do this every year on the LAST DAY of school instead of the first, and talk about the places the child has gone in the past year.

"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.

## BACKPACK PROGRAM - IT'S A WRAP

BY: DONNA ERICKSON

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, we were able to donate 52 backpacks filled with school supplies to the Department of Children and Families. The backpacks will be distributed to needy children in Warren County.

A special thanks to Ellen Bergman and Geof Gohlich for helping to load the backpacks into the car so they could be delivered. Thank you for supporting this ministry of the Church.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO CREATE MONTHLY BULLETIN BOARDS

BY: LORINDA RAVO

Do you enjoy creating displays? Then we have a job for you! Three bulletin boards can be seen in the church: one in the narthex, one at the top of the ramp entrance to the sanctuary, and one opposite the conference room (currently displaying clever cartoons). These need to be changed each month, and we would love to welcome the creative talents of anyone who would like to take on the fun of making eye-catching and engaging displays.

We welcome individuals or a team of people who can work together. You can use a thematic approach, or a monthly scheme based on a holiday that matches the time of year or the church calendar, or you can put together a display of what is happening in our congregation. We will leave it totally up to you. Whatever you choose, we are sure it will entice the congregation.

Please see Lorinda if you are interested in taking on any or all 3 bulletin boards.

# GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

It is with a heavy heart that we acknowledge the passing of **Blanche Henshaw Lampp**, mother of Donna Erickson, on July 16, 2025. She was 98 years old. Blanche passed away peacefully at the Genesis Lopatcong Care Center. The family is grateful to the staff at the Center who cared for her so lovingly since last September.



Blanche lived a full life, working for a number of companies in the Phillipsburg/Alpha area and then retiring to Florida after her first husband passed away.

She was married to Harry Henshaw from 1946 until his death in 1974. She later married Lester Lampp and lived in Florida until after his death. She was predeceased by her parents and her two husbands as well as a daughter-in-law Jean Henshaw. Her brothers Julius, Donald, Arnold, Alex and Charlie also predeceased her.

She is survived by her brother Frank of Michigan and her children, Charles (Suzanne), Donna Erickson (Carl), James and Jamie. She has two step-daughters: Sandra Carroll (Ronald) and Gail Webb (Joe) of Florida and their families. She has six grandchildren (Christine Baldwin, Anne Feeney, Julie Marino, Kelly Henshaw, Carl Erickson and Matthew Erickson) and nine great grandchildren (Andrew, Isabella, Liliana, Josie, Eliza, Connor, Keira, Charlie and Harry). She was a wonderful daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. Her family will miss her.

A service was held at the Finegan Funeral Home in Alpha, NJ on Monday, July 21st. Funeral service was at the funeral home on Tuesday, July 22nd. She is interred in the Alpha Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

We would also like to extend our sincere condolences to Nellie Creager on the death of her sister, **Laurel Ogurkis**, on August 14, 2025 at Hospice House in Bethlehem, PA. Laurel was 84 years old.

A Service of Witness to the Resurrection and Celebration of Life was held at the United Presbyterian Church of Belvidere. Laurel's good friend and pastor, the Rev. Dr. Pamela Szurek, officiated the service. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to Cochran Funeral Home of Hackettstown, NJ.

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

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3: Della Irby
- 5: Katy Groover  
Skylar Jones
- 7: Janette Hendershot  
Ryan Chetangie
- 9: Annette Knauer  
Anthony Venturini
- 10: Alexia Dughi
- 12: Ellen Bergman
- 14: Annalee Smith
- 15: Jen Aquino
- 16: Kim Ligarzewski  
Anabeth Fernandez
- 18: Teresa Collina
- 23: Cassie Ravo
- 24: Paul Sobolewski  
Barbara Yankiv
- 26: Lila Roguso
- 28: Torey Ravo
- 29: Daniel Wallace  
Sandy Lindstedt

## WE CELEBRATE YOUR DAY WITH YOU!

## SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 17: John & Pam Covert
- 26: Chris & Erin Roguso

## PRAYER LIST

**Please keep the following  
in your prayers:**

Eugenie Chetangie  
Churches throughout the U.S.  
Nellie Creager and family  
Shirley DeLoia, sister of Phyllis  
Prestopine  
FPCH and Friends of FPCH  
Dan Gardner  
Terry Gretchen  
Joan Grover  
Barbara Hall  
Maikuu congregation,  
Kibwezi Kenya  
Members of the Armed Forces  
Barbara Pace, niece of the  
Prestopines  
Alice Phoebus  
Katy Ratti and family  
Jim Simmons  
Carol Spitzer  
Students returning to school  
Students moving onto the next  
level of education  
School workers  
The food insecure  
The homeless  
Those struggling with  
addictions and mental health  
Those recovering  
from surgery  
Those traveling

