

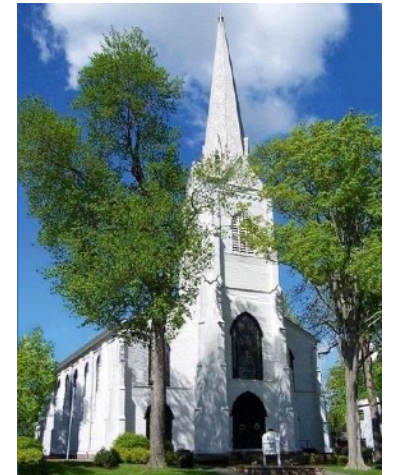
**First Presbyterian
Church
298 Main Street**

**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
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**FEBRUARY
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

2025 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	Rayman Sookhoo

Clerk of Session: Donna Erickson

2025 BOARD OF DEACONS

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

Moderator: Carol Miller

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 Members!

Lent will soon be here so we are now preparing for a very special season in the life of the church.

Although this winter has hit us hard and we were unable to be together celebrating the life of Christ in the sanctuary on a number of Sundays, we were able to enjoy worship online through the lifestream service when the snow prevented us from attending in person. As a result, I have no real highlights to share for the month of January. Let's hope this snow calms down so we can have our congregational meeting on February 1st.

This month, we have much to look forward to: the changing of the guard is taking place once we have our congregational meeting. To that end, Pastor Erin will install and ordain our new members of the Session and the Board of Deacons on February 8th (provided we have church in person on February 1st). Lenten Bible Study will begin on February 25th and end on March 15th. Listen to announcements for additional details for this enlightening opportunity. In addition, we will once again engage in the Souper Bowl of Caring which will help raise funds and food items for our Little Pantry.

Our Session members met with Rose Niles, a member of the Presbytery who assists congregations with financial planning for the future well-being of the church. The Elders believe she provided many worthwhile strategies to put into action that will help us become more financially stable in 2026.

Finally, I would like to offer special thanks to Lorinda and Al Ravo, Chip Cochran, and other members of FPCH for the information about Rev. Keith Barkley. Please be sure to read the tribute about him (penned by Lorinda Ravo), as he was an integral part of our church and in caring for the lives of so many people, not only in the Hackettstown area, but in Kenya as well.

Yours in Christ,

MaryAnn Simmons

DATES TO REMEMBER - FEBRUARY 2026

- 01: Worship and communion - 10 AM; livestream through Face book; Sunday School & Confirmation class; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Congregational Meeting after worship
- 02: Worship Committee Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 02: PLEFF Dinner - 6:30 PM at Tap House, Rte 57, Mansfield
- 04: Yarn Girls - 1 PM in the Conference Room
- 05: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 08: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School & Confirmation Class; Ordain and Install Deacons & Elders; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship; Souper Bowl of Caring collection during worship
- 08: Second Sunday - 11:30 at the church - celebrate Valentine's Day with Mrs. Ratti
- 10: Deacon's Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 12: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 15: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School & Confirmation class; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 17: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM, in the Conference Room
- 18: Ash Wednesday - 6:00 PM at the Chapel
- 19: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room
- 21: Men's Breakfast - 8:15 AM - at the Chapel; Ladies' Breakfast - 9 AM - River Star Diner
- 21: Training with Session and Deacons - 10AM - 1 PM at the Chapel
- 22: Worship - 10 AM; livestream through Facebook; Sunday School & Confirmation Class; Joyful Noise/Unity Chimes Rehearsal after worship
- 24: Ladies Who Lunch - 12 PM at Pasta Grill by Enzo, Rte 57, Mansfield
- 25: Bible Study - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 26: Music Rehearsal - FPCH Ringers at 6:30 PM and Senior Choir at 7:30 PM, both in the Music Room

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Tell Me Something Good
Grounding Ourselves in Good News this Lent



When was the last time you made sure to say thank you for something good? Perhaps it was this morning, or maybe when you took that first sip of coffee, or felt the love of someone else, or even felt that bit of joy deep down in your body. The gospel of Jesus Christ translates to the word “good news.” This season of Lent we will explore the teachings of Jesus and what good news it can offer us. So many of us have used the season of Lent, as we have been taught, for deep confession and well, guilt. But the 6 weeks leading up to Easter are meant to draw us closer to the Jesus who walked this earth with and for us, and I believe we all need good news to share and look for in our world. Help us this Lent turn from the notion that this season is dreadful by replacing it with the life altering story of Jesus.

If you wondered what Lent is really about - or what you can do in your own life to make it more meaningful, then we invite you to come to our Ash Wednesday experience on Wednesday, February 18 at 6 pm in our Chapel, because the good news is here and all are invited to the table of God. Bring a pot of your favorite soup, some bread, a salad or a dessert. We will hear about the season of Lent, create something wonderful together, share stories with each other, sing, and share in the ashes or a prayer if you so choose. Bring a friend, bring your family, bring yourself to start out this season as we ground ourselves in the good news!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Erin

GET READY FOR THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

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



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

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

That was 1990. Since then, Tackle Hunger, with its signature Souper Bowl of Caring event, has become a national, grass-roots, youth-inspired movement where ordinary people are doing extraordinary good. Over \$198 MILLION in dollars and food has been generated while benefitting thousands of soup kitchens, food banks, meal programs and other hunger-relief charities in local communities.

We at FPCH began our participation in 1995, and in the years since, we have collected \$7,823 which has been donated to various charitable causes, and lately of course, that cause has been our Free Little Pantry. As we participate for what will be our 31st year, we encourage those attending church to wear apparel from your favorite team: high school, college, or professional. And then, resolve to bring at least one canned food item to church and/or donate at least \$1 as you leave worship on February 8. All proceeds will benefit our Little Pantry. As always, thank you!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church continues to thrive.

Grades PreK-1: Emily Tischler is currently working on her own teaching the class each week since Gwenn Bartku stepped down to take care of family matters. We will be seeking suggestions for a person to teach every other week so that Emily can continue with the schedule she agreed to last year when she took on the position. I have reached out to Sophie Russell (a high school senior who is interested in working with children) who has agreed to go downstairs when she attends church to work with Emily. It is my hope that she can work with another adult and lead the class activities when Emily cannot be present at church to teach.

Grades 2-4: Betsy and Nadia Hanson continue to work with our students who enjoy the lessons which focus on crafts and games to learn about the people and places in the Bible.

Grades 5-6: John Mark Wojcicki continues to meet with great success informing his students about the places and people in the Bible. The students enjoy their time with him.

Confirmation: Jan Courtright now teaches her students during worship after the Children's Sermon. The girls will be scheduled to attend one Deacon's meeting and one Session meeting during February and March so that they understand how each Board works to serve the church in mission outreach and in making decisions regarding the finances of the church. They will all meet with the session on April 21st. The girls continue to meet with their mentors each month.

Second Sunday: Kids of all ages have been participating in this monthly activity under the direction of Lorinda Ravo. In December, they decorated Christmas cookies with Ms. Winnie and made a Christmas craft with Mrs. Shepherd. In January, Mrs. Diann Carrajat led a lesson in painting on canvas. Second Sunday continues to be highly successful. More news about Christian Education will follow next month.



G.R.O.W. TEAM NEWS

BY: BILL CORS

This month, we wish to highlight additional information regarding our SCRIPS program.

Did You Know...?

You are now able to purchase gift cards from the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown?

The First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown is offering ways you can purchase gift cards for different retail stores and restaurants with a portion of the sale going to the church.

- No extra cost to you.
- No link to your Bank account required.

Questions?
Please see a member of the GROW Team:
Bill Cors, Ray Sookhoo, Ryan VanOrden, or Geoff Gohlich



Did You Know...?

You can purchase QuickChek gift cards thru the church at no extra cost to you while the church earn 2%? Use the cards to purchase gas and earn 3 points per gallon. Redeem the points for free food at QuickChek.

How it Works

- Download the QuickChek App and sign up for the rewards program
- Purchase your QuickChek gift cards from the church Co-Ordinator (Geoff Gohlich)
- Provide your telephone number at the pump or get a code from the App then use the gift card to buy gas and earn the points
- Use the App to view your earned points to determine what is available at that time for free from your available points
- Go Shop in the store and redeem your points at the register
- The church will earn 2% from your gift card purchase
- There is no additional cost to you.

Questions?
Please see a member of the GROW Team:
Bill Cors, Ray Sookhoo, Ryan VanOrden, or Geoff Gohlich (Co-Ordinator)



If there are any questions, please feel free to contact any member of the GROW Team (William Cors, Rayman Sookhoo, Ryan VanOrden, and Geoff Gohlich).

The GROW Team

NEWS FROM THE DEACONS

By PAT BUTTS

The Deacons would like to thank all those who contributed to our hats, gloves, mittens and scarves drive. With all the cold weather we've had, many children will now have something warm to wear.

We'd also like to thank all those who stayed after church on Dec. 28th to help fill the personal care bags that are distributed at the community dinners and are available in Pastor Erin's office for those in need. This project is an extension of the Little Pantry ministry. That ministry continues to fill a need in our community and we appreciate all the donations we receive.

Looking ahead, a reminder that the next clothing drive will be on Saturday, May 2nd. More information will follow.

Blessings to all in the new year from the Deacons.

STUFFED ANIMAL “SLEEPOVER” AT CHURCH WAS A SUCCESS

In January, we invited the kids of our congregation to bring a stuffed animal friend to church with them. The “stuffedies” were left, and enjoyed all sorts of adventures in and around the church during their “Sleepover.” Many thanks go to Angel, Lila, and Harper who spent a lot



of time helping to think of, and set up, the adventures that our animal friends enjoyed. The photographs of the stuffie sleepover were made into a book for each of our participants to take home with them.

DECEMBER 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.

	December	Year to Date
Income	\$19,406.64	\$218,487.26
Expenses Paid	\$28,903.97	\$251,896.49
Net Operating Income /(Deficit)	(\$ 9,497.33)	(\$33,409.23)
Amount of Schwab/Edward Jones funds used to pay operating expenses	\$ 0.00	\$ 6,000.00
Amount Needed from Endowment	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 33,000.00
Total amount of Endowment, Schwab & Edward Jones funds used to pay Operating expenses in 2025	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 39,000.00

Financial Comments / Observations:

1. The five largest operating expenses in December were:

2025 Per Capita Giving
through December

Amount	Percentage
\$8,918	100%
\$6,688	75%
\$4,459	50%
\$3,050	34.3%
\$2,229	25%

- 1.) \$7,842.62 – Pastoral expenses (payroll, Board of Pensions, etc.).
 - 2.) \$5,160.00 – Snow removal & salting (Church, Chapel & Manse).
 - 3.) \$3,916.42 – Staff payroll & payroll processing expenses.
 - 4.) \$3,332.34 – Gas (Church, Chapel & Manse).
 - 5.) \$2,745.00 – Worker Comp Insurance (annual bill).

2. The operating net income / (deficits) were \$9,497.33 in December and (\$33,409.23) Year To Date.

 - The actual December operating expenses were \$8,570.64 above the average monthly budgeted expenses.
 - The actual December operating incomes were (\$2,739.97) above the average monthly budgeted incomes.
 - The Year-To-Date operating expenses were (\$7,896.49) above the average YTD budgeted amounts.
 - The Year-To-Date operating incomes were \$18,487.26 above the average YTD budgeted amount.
3. In December, the value of the MassMutual Investment accounts increased \$1,017.11 to \$380,474.11.

DECEMBER 2025 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

CONTINUED FROM DECEMBER 2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

4. In December, the value of the entire Endowment Fund decreased \$5,040.96 to \$383,423.87 because of the \$6,000.00 taken from the Endowment to pay operating expenses.

5. Fundraising proceeds received from Raiseright in December were \$25.80.

6. The Christmas Joy Offering received and sent to Presbytery was \$729.00.

7. The December Second Saturday Free Community Dinner was held with donations of \$50.00 and expenses of \$234.92. The total cost to the church of all community dinners since September 2021 is \$1,174.34.

8. The December Men’s breakfast was held in the Chapel with \$56.00 collected in donations.

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 December, \$209.50 was received for Per Capita increasing the total received in 2025 to \$3,059.12 or 34.3% of the amount due. A payment of \$209.50 was sent to the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ in December, increasing the total sent in 2025 to \$3,059.12 or 34.3% of the total amount due.

BUILDING ON GENEROSITY (BOG) CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

- Please note the following points regarding our BOG receipts and spending:

 - Donations received during December, \$4,304.00.
 - Total donations received from church members, non-members and anonymous from September 2019 (the BOG Kickoff dinner) through the last day of December 2025, \$660,996.02.
 - Expenses paid using the BOG funds in December, \$1,500.00. This expense was paid to Voda for mold remediation in the church basement kitchen stairwell.
 - The total available BOG funds are \$10,839.28. The breakdown is \$4,589.28 for the next BOG project/expense with an additional \$2,750.00 designated for the Chapel range hood replacement and \$3,500.00 for the Church parking lot.
 - Donations breakdown by source:
 - 5.3% - \$35,188.76 from nonmembers
 - 86.1% - \$569,417.05 from members
 - 8.6% - \$56,390.21 from anonymous & dinners
 - 100.0% - \$660,996.02 Total

SUNDAY SCHOOL SPECIAL EVENTS

Did you know that each month, we have special things happening for our Sunday School students? From photo stations, to holiday themed goodie bags, to our “wall questions” each month, to our Christmas play in December, there is always something to look forward to at FPCH’s Sunday School. One of the things that helps us get to know our kids is the “wall questions” on the ramp. Each month, we ask our kids to answer a question or complete a prompt, and their answers appear on a decorated wall by the entrance ramp. Take some time to stop by and read their charming and insightful answers.



KIDS AND THE BIBLE

Each month, during the music portion of our children’s message in church, the kids of our congregation have been “traveling” through the Bible, learning verses through song. So far this year, we’ve learned a bit about the book of Numbers, Ephesians, and Psalms as we’ve sung “The Lord Bless You and Keep You”, “In Everything Give Thanks”, “This is the Day”, “I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord Forever, and this month, from John 15: 12 “This is my Commandment”. Be sure to listen carefully to these songs, as we are sure the adults may remember them from their youthful days at church.



**To help you prepare for Lent,
here is a brief list of dates.**

LENT 2026



Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent. It is a season of penance, reflection, and fasting which prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday, through which we attain redemption.



1st Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2026



Palm Sunday

March 29, 2026



2nd Sunday of Lent

March 01, 2026



Maundy Thursday

April 02, 2026



3rd Sunday of Lent

March 08, 2026



Good Friday

April 03, 2026



Laetere Sunday

March 15, 2026



Holy Saturday

April 04, 2026



5th Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2026




Easter Sunday


April 05, 2026


GET READY FOR ADULT BIBLE STUDY

During Advent season, Pastor Erin met with a varied audience of 6 or so congregation members to study the book *Calling All Angels*. The next Bible study session will be during Lent from February 25th to March 15th at 6:30 PM in the Conference Room. More information will follow once Pastor Erin determines the book of study.



40 DAYS OF LENT



Read about kindness to others <i>Luke 10:25-37</i>	Help with chores around the house	Have a family prayer night	Tell someone "Thank you!"	Bake a treat to share with someone	Read about repentance <i>Luke 18:9-14</i>	Share with someone
Pick up your stuff without being asked	Read about Jesus entering Jerusalem <i>Mark 11:1-10</i>	Give someone a compliment	Sing church worship songs	Read the Great Commandment <i>Matthew 22:34-40</i>	Hold the door for someone	Set the table
Surprise someone with your artwork	Pick up litter on the ground	Read about helping others <i>Matthew 25:31-40</i>	Donate toys or clothes to help others	Pray for those who need help	Help make dinner	Read sacrifice for Jesus <i>Matthew 16:24-28</i>
Give up tv or video games today	Read about forgiveness <i>Matthew 18:21-35</i>	Ask God for forgiveness	Say hello to someone who looks lonely	Read about serving others <i>John 13:1-17</i>	Make a card for someone	Give someone special a hug
No complaining today!	Play a game with family or friends	Read about prayer <i>Mark 14:32-42</i>	Pray for someone to know Jesus	Give up sweets and treats today	Read about committing to God <i>Psalms 51:10</i>	Smile at people you see today
Tell someone why they're special to you	Forgive someone who hurt your feelings	Write a list of things you're grateful for	Thank God for sending Jesus!	Read about God's Love for us <i>John 3:16</i>		

MUSIC NOTES

BY: LORINDA RAVO

Our anthems during the month of February will be:

- Feb. 1: You Raise Me Up

Emmanuel

Senior Choir

Unity Chime Choir
- Feb. 8: When Morning Gilds the Skies.

FPCH Ringers
- Feb. 15: My Savior and My God

Senior Choir
- Feb. 22: Tallis Canon

Joyful Noise Bell Choir
- Feb. 22: This is My Commandment

Little Lights Sunday School Choir



IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

As we head into the winter weather season, we want to let everyone know that should we need to cancel church services, there are many ways that you can find out. Cancellations will be posted on the church Facebook page and on the church website. In addition, Pattie Huff will send out an email via Constant Contact. You can also call the church office at 908-852-4011 where the answering machine will have a message about the status of church services. Let's hope we have a mild winter so we don't need to cancel.

Sharing God's Bounty

Love Makes Us Do It

A young girl was dying. Her only hope lay in a complete blood transfusion, but she had a very rare blood type. Only her brother, even younger than she, had the same type blood. His parents and doctors explained the situation to him, giving him time to ask questions. He agreed and, without delay, he was laid on a bed, the needle was pushed into his tiny vein, and slowly his blood seeped from his small body into the bag hanging from his bed. He lay quietly as the nurse stood next to him, ready to attend to any need he might have. "How do you feel?" she asked. "Ok," he answered, "but, Nurse, when do I die?"

What love this little boy had for his sister. What must he have thought when his own parents seemingly agreed, even asked him to sacrifice his life to save his sister's?

The boys' love for his sister can help us see how much Jesus loves us. Jesus suffered abuse, torture, persecution, and death for all of us. "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). He demonstrated his tremendous love not because of our worthiness, but because he is a God of tremendous love. Jesus' love for his heavenly Father and for us changed the world. Through his death and resurrection from that death, we through faith have received the forgiveness of our sins and life eternal. God's love to us in Christ is that power that enables us to love him. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The love of Jesus empowers us to be his stewards. Because of Jesus' love, we change from people giving to a need to people responding out of love. Certainly, we give to needs such as our church budget, Christian causes, and people, but our primary reason for giving is out of love and commitment to Jesus. When needs arise, Jesus opens our eyes and hearts so we can respond to those needs. However, our primary reason for giving is a desire to express our gratitude and thanksgiving for our Lord and the love that he shows us every day. Because our love for Jesus is our motivation for giving, our giving becomes joyful. Love changes our giving from an obligation to a privilege.

PER CAPITA INFORMATION FOR 2026

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

Each year beginning in January, the Presbytery of the Highlands requires congregation members to provide their per capita donation. This year, the total 2026 Per Capita for the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey is \$44.00 per active member. This apportionment covers shared mission and ministry across three levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

2026 Per Capita Breakdown (per active member):

- Presbytery of the Highlands: \$28.49
- Synod of the Northeast: \$4.25
- General Assembly (PCUSA): \$11.26
- Total: \$44.00



Per capita is a mandatory shared cost, allowing congregations to participate in the larger mission and governance of the denomination. Please consider giving your donation this month.

FEBRUARY GREETERS

Feb 1: Kathy Maier and Kathy Slater

Feb 8: Bruce and Ellen Bergman

Feb 15: Geof and Pat Gohlich

Feb 22: Dennis and Pattie Huff

† GREETER

JANUARY SECOND SUNDAY

PAINTING WINTER THEMED SCENES

In January, we welcomed back Mrs. Diann Carrajat who teaches art at Willow Grove and Hatchery Hills Schools for a painting class. Mrs. Carrajat helped all of the children create a beautiful winter landscape scene using acrylics paints. If you check out the church facebook page, you'll see pictures from the day.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
LORINDA RAVO

On February 8, our Second Sunday program will be “Valentine’s Day with Mrs. Ratti”. She will be helping us create a handmade Valentine’s Day decoration, and we’ll also be making homemade Valentine cards for others in our community. Be sure to sign up so that we have enough supplies for all.

If you have a hobby, talent, or interest that you’d like to share with some very fun and cooperative kids, please see Lorinda Ravo. And if you’d like some help to plan an event, we can do that too!

DENOMINATIONAL OFFERINGS IN 2026

BY: MARYANN SIMMONS

In 2026, the Presbytery of the Highlands will hold three special offerings. These include One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion, and the Christmas Joy offerings.

We encourage all members of the congregation to prayerfully consider these special collections during the year. The Special Offerings are the single, largest way Presbyterians join together to make a lasting impact in the world. Let’s be the Church, together.

The One Great Hour of Sharing focuses on assisting others worldwide with sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity and serves individuals and communities in need. It typically occurs during the season of Lent.

Part of the atonement that happens around the Communion Table is reconciliation, which is the focus of the **World Communion Offering**. This offering cultivates reconciliation by supporting racial and gender justice, peacemaking efforts, global witness, and nurturing ecumenical and interfaith activities. FPCH usually collects this contribution on World Communion Sunday, which is October 4th.

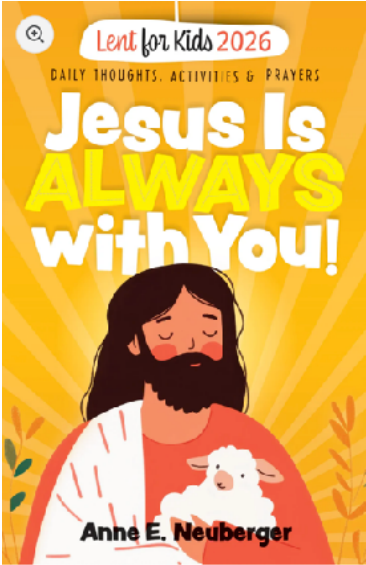
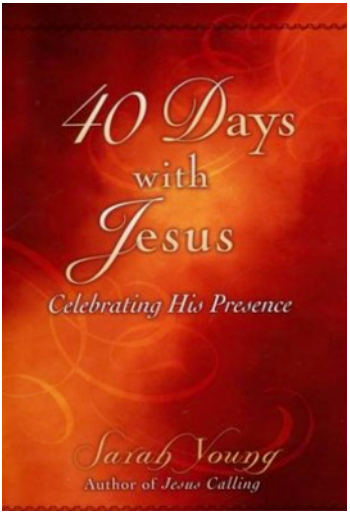
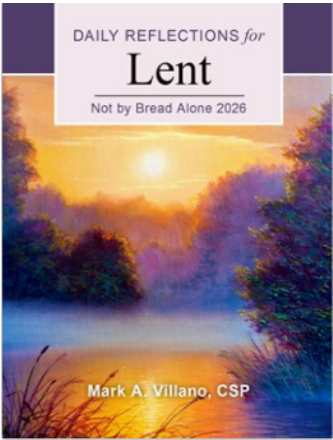
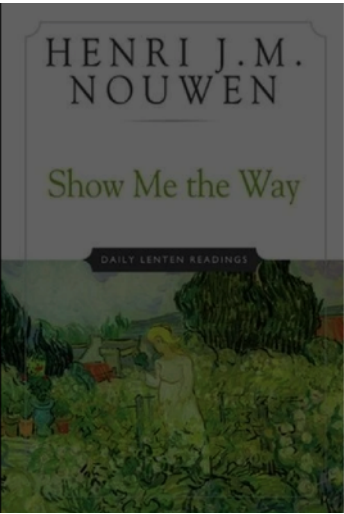
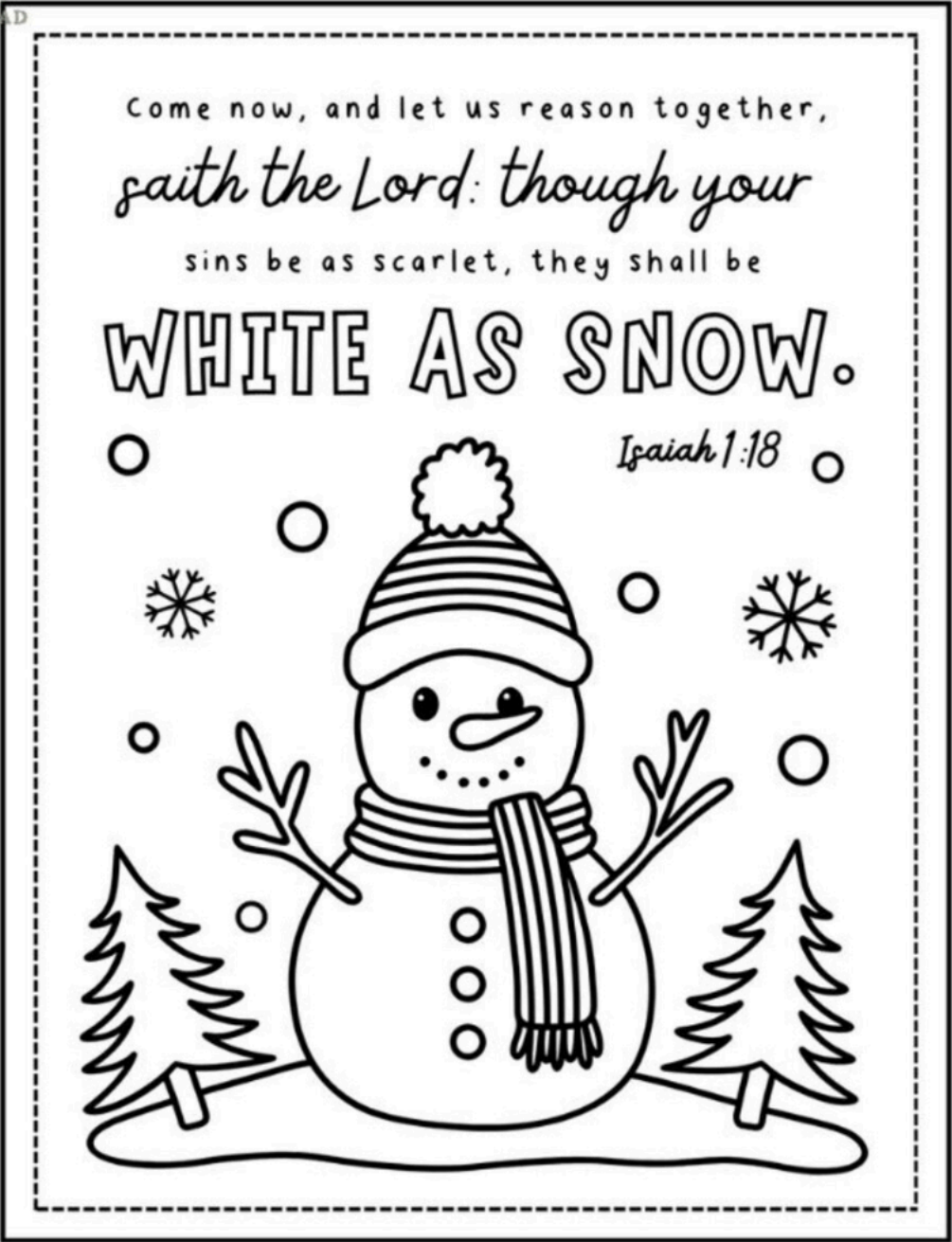
Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up past, present, and future leaders of the church through the **Christmas Joy Offering**. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This gift offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

I will provide more information during the time when FPCH will request these donations. Be on the lookout for future articles during Spring, Fall, and Winter seasons. As always, thank you for considering these opportunities to help the less fortunate worldwide.

Material for this article came from Presbytery USA website.

BOOKS TO CONSIDER DURING LENT

Kids' Coloring Corner



Please consider these titles for reading opportunities during the Lenten Season which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18th.

GOD’S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

A TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND KEITH BARKLEY

BY: LORINDA RAVO

In November of 2025, Reverend Keith Barkley passed away in Florida. In 1982, Keith came into our church, at a very difficult time after a split in the congregation had occurred. Those of us who were part of First Presbyterian, Hackettstown at that time will remember Keith as a gentle, compassionate man who had been a missionary to Kenya. Keith helped to heal the congregation, and set about restoring harmony and peace in our beloved church. Many of us will remember Keith pedaling around town on his bicycle, visiting every remaining member of the congregation. When he lived in the manse, we tried to offer him a bed, and he told us that after his work in Kenya, he wasn’t very comfortable sleeping in a bed, so a sleeping bag on the bedroom floor it was. Keith remained as our stated supply pastor until 1986. On the back wall of the sanctuary are pictures of those who have served our church as pastor, and the picture of Keith shows him baptizing a baby, John Mark Wojcicki. You can also find a map in the Narthex that is about the pipeline project.

Keith’s experience in Kenya was the inspiration for his vision and dream of building a water pipeline to provide safe drinking water to remote villages in Kenya. With help from members of this congregation and community, seed money for the pipeline project was raised with the “Pennies for Pipeline” campaign, and the Barkley Pipeline Project was born. The project continued to grow through the generosity and efforts of a large group of folks in Hackettstown and continued to provide support and critical resources to the region. The Barkley Pipeline Project was adopted by our Presbytery, then called the Newton Presbytery, and grew from a water pipeline into so much more, and the name was changed to the Nairobi Partnership.

Presbytery of the Highlands congregations and friends have donated an astonishing \$1,700,000 over these years and through these funds, have provided a safe water pipeline to many villages in the bush, funded hundreds of school scholarships in primary, secondary school and vocational schools, along with many smaller projects. But the largest project is the Kasasule Health Center that was opened in 2000 in an area with limited healthcare.

A report from Presbytery about the Kasasule Health Center noted that in 2024, 10 adults and one 4 year old child blind from birth were identified as needing cataract surgery. Our donations were able to fund their surgeries in December 2024 and all of them can now see, including the little 4 year old girl who had congenital cataracts. The Presbytery hoped to provide hearing aids for 15 identified patients. This health center treated 19,800 cases in 2024 for issues like malaria, tuberculosis, dental services, vaccinations, diabetes, hypertension, family planning, pre and post natal care, as well as new born deliveries. In July of 2025, the annual free, 3-day medical clinic that Presbytery of the Highlands helped provide found just under 1,000 people attending.

All of this started because Keith Barkley, a man of abiding faith, compassion, and vision, came to First Presbyterian, and while healing a church, brought healing and hope to so many more.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1: Anaelle Djongang
- 5: Blair Gulick
- 9: Kyle Gulick
- 13: Jose Irby
- 14: Brenda Zellars
- 18: Dan Gardner
- 19: Joan Grover
- 20: Alexis Bravakis
- 21: Jim Simmons
- 23: Christian Cochran
- 26: Lorinda Ravo



WE CELEBRATE YOUR DAY WITH YOU!

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 17: John & Sharon Wojcicki

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following
in your prayers:

Centenary University Staff
and Students
Eugenie Chetangie
Churches throughout the U.S.
Our Confirmation Class
Pam Covert
Shirley DeLoia, sister of Phyllis
Prestopine
FPCH and Friends of
FPCH
FPCH Sunday School Teachers
Dan Gardner
Terry Gretchen
Joan Grover
The Hackettstown
Community
Barbara Hall
Maikuu congregation,
Kibwezi Kenya
Members of the Armed Forces
Barbara Pace, niece of the
Prestopines
Alice Phoebus
Jim Simmons
Carol Spitzer
The food insecure
The homeless
Those struggling with
addictions and mental health
Those recovering from surgery
Those traveling

