

MARCH 2023 PARISH NEWS

PASTOR'S PEACE by Sarah Teti for the Food Pantry Expansion Task Force

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Turn unto the

Cord your God:

gracious and merciful slow to anger, and of great kindness. Joel 2:13, KJV

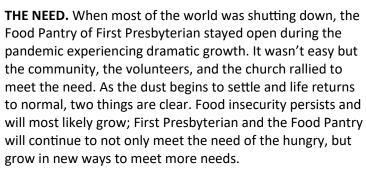












A HISTORY OF GROWTH. What began in a closet with bunch of cans, a few boxes and the desire of two members, Ed and Jane, has grown into a "client choice" program serving more than 6,000 people annually. Along the way the food pantry has taken up more and more space. Yet, we've reached a limit. In order to meet and to continue the growth we need more dedicated space to achieve programmatic flexibility as well as expanded services. We need a larger space to meet the growth in need and service. Right now, to meet the need and keep our commitment to "client choice" we need about 1,000 square feet.

THE GOOD NEWS. We have a place to grow. The current home of the Food Pantry, the Social Center of First Presbyterian, can expand to meet our growing needs. And we have 80% of the funds to meet the cost of the expansion. Through the generosity of our community and a county grant, we already have \$410,000 to meet the estimated cost of expansion (\$500,000).

OUR DREAM OF PARTNERSHIP. The Food Pantry of First Presbyterian wants to build an expansion solely by the generosity and leadership of the community and county. We see this as a partnership. What is given by the community goes to feed the community. Our congregation is the place for the community's generosity to meet the need of the hungry. Let's build the future of the FPC Food Pantry together.





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LOCAL MISSION REPORTS:

The Food Pantry year is off to a great start with a robust calendar full of monthly events for EVERYONE to attend! In January, we kicked off the year with a Mission Volunteer Night that was sponsored by a local family, the Bhasin Family, and their business, 1West. They paid for all of the supplies needed to make 100 Hygiene Kits for our local homeless outreach social workers!

February's Mission Volunteer Night was all about packaging "Busy Day" Soup Kits for 50 of our families and completely sponsored by the "Mommas Of Metuchen" Group. They raised over \$1,200! We are so grateful for such giving spirits! This month, Mission Volunteer night will be held again on Thursday, March 16, from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in the Auditorium of the Social Center when we will be putting together "Mugs of Love" for the Ronald McDonald House. Please check our Facebook page: FPC Food Pantry for more information.

Mission Volunteer Nights are held the third Thursday of each

Mission Volunteer Nights are held the third Thursday of each month from September to May. The exceptions are the three "Basket Holidays" (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter) when the dates may change due to the time of the month of the holiday. If you have any questions or you'd like to get involved or sponsor a Mission Volunteer Night, please call Sarah Teti at 732-491-2325.



THIS IS YOUR YEAR!



This could be YOUR year to serve our church.

Do you see yourself serving as an Elder, Deacon, Audit Committee, All Church Nominating Committee (ACNC), Community Nursery School Board, Youth Elder, Youth Deacon, or on any one of our many Commissions or Committees?

The ACNC is beginning the search to fill many positions within our church and we need your help. We need your voice, and we need your God-given gifts. How do you see YOUR year?

For more information or to volunteer, contact the church office or Carol Carr (908) 930-6748.

Therefore,
my beloved brothers and sisters,
be steadfast, immovable, always excelling
in the work of the Lord because you know
that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15: 58, NRSV

STEWARDSHIP 2023

Our church is coming off a couple of difficult years that were brought about by the devastation of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Finance Commission of the Session understood this and tried to adjust the budget accordingly. Please remember that the pledge amount is only one source of income used to fund our church, there are other sources like cash in the collection plate, parking and building use; all of which are below prepandemic levels.

For 2023, pledges were budgeted at \$450,000 based on past performance. Unfortunately, we came in considerably short in dollars pledged and number of members who pledged. As a result, we need to focus on a:

PATH TO RECOVERY

After 43% of the 379 giving units have pledged, these are the current results of the stewardship campaign.

\$450,000 goal to maintain programming and staff

\$393,366 currently pledged

Thank you to all who have pledged. This leaves opportunities to continue our recovery from changes due to the pandemic.

OUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU! www.fpcweb.org/give

2023 Artist in Residence Program

We are pleased to announce a new initiative in our Church to incorporate art as an avenue for spiritual and personal growth. We have commissioned a local artist to create an art piece related to the theme of "Forgiveness" which gives us the opportunity to explore both the theme and art as part of our congregational focus.

The goals of the program beyond commissioning of a piece of art are several fold:

- As a congregation we will explore ART as a new form of ministry, therapy and spiritual growth. Just like singing, puppetry and poetry, art can be a very engaging experience.
- Use the Artist in Residence Program to engage the local community as well as members of the congregation. The program will culminate in a Fall Art Exhibition in our Social Center where we will unveil our work of art and invite other artists to show their works related to forgiveness and spiritual growth.
- The artist will be setting up a working studio in Room 204 and this will give us opportunities for small group sessions where we can talk with him about the creative process and how that process can aid in spiritual growth. There will be three second-hour forums led by the Artist explaining his approach to the theme of Forgiveness and how he approaches his art.
- Finally as a congregation, we will explore ways to

discuss the concept of Forgiveness in Bible studies and Second Hour forums. We will also look for ways to add art into our committee-led activities.

The Artist in Residence is a program brought forward by Rev. Ashley Bair, approved by Personnel and functions under the guidance of Worship and Music led by Virginia Shaw. The committee members are: Moggie Davis, Mary Kay Dangremond, Robin Kellner, Lorraine LeSter, Kat Davis and Amy Bellisano. We will serve as the liaison and support for the artist during the contract period of March 1 through October 31.

Joseph Castronova is our 2023 Artist in Residence. He is an artist and educator and lives right here in Metuchen with his family. Please see his amazing profile below.

We chose to work with Joe for a variety of reasons: his ties to the local community and arts community, his interest in the theme that was selected and his desire to be present with us as we create this new ministry, explore the theme, and maximize our exposure within the Metuchen community. Joe's artistic process is central to the exploration of how to use art as therapy and art as an expression of spirituality.

Join us in making this an incredible experience for us all in 2023! Join in the Second-Hour forums, delve into the theme of Forgiveness with us and participate in/organize events and activities incorporating art. If you have any questions, please contact any of the committee members.

Meet the artist: JOSEPH CASTRONOVA



Joseph Castronova is an artist and educator. He is a faculty member at The Institute for Contemporary Art in Bedminster, New Jersey, and former Director of duCret School of Art in Plainfield, NJ.

Joseph has shown extensively in our area including: Transformations Gallery, Rotunda Gallery, Barron Arts Center, Westerhoff Gallery, Earth Studios, M Galleries, Above Art and Yendor Productions, with solo shows as well in M Galleries, Studio Montclair and Catherine Street Gallery to name a few. He is represented in collections of the School of Visual Arts, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, JP Morgan Chase and others.

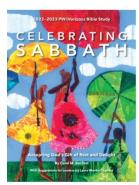
Second-Hour Forum March 12 in the Chapel After Worship

We invite you to MEET THE ARTIST, Joseph Castronova, on Sunday, March 12, in our Second Hour Forum where Joe will introduce himself and talk about his creative process and how he plans to incorporate the theme of Forgiveness into his work. Your presence would be greatly appreciated and welcomed.

Also, be on the lookout for the series of Second-Hour forums lined up in the coming months that centers around the theme of forgiveness.

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ADULT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM & OTHER EVENTS



HORIZON BIBLE STUDY IS FOR EVERYONE!

March 6 7:00 p.m. PW Lounge / Zoom Led by Mary Kay Dangremond

Join us on Monday, March 6, in the PW Lounge or by Zoom as study leader Mary Kay Dangremond helps us understand the commitment to hospitality in accepting the gift of the Sabbath, the subject of Lesson Six. The key idea? Recognizing "hospitality" goes way beyond serving a meal to encompassing "love of strangers."

Primary scriptures teach us how to interpret the Ten Commandments – including "extravagant hospitality," aka "love on the loose!" Check it out in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

Even if you missed any of the previous lessons, don't hesitate to walk in or jump on the Zoom. Every lesson stands alone; every gathering is full of interesting ideas and good discussion.

Visit the PW page for the zoom link and study materials.

https://fpcweb.org/ministries/presbyterian-women/
Use Zoom meeting ID: 813 2798 2944

Contact Deb Teall if have any questions:
debteall@optonline.net and (908) 917-3990



Wednesdays: 7:00 - 8:00 pm, March 1 - 29, PW Lounge Mondays: 7:00 - 8:00 pm, March 6 - April 3, By Zoom

We want to make this as accessible as possible to many of you. The choice is yours— come in person or participate by Zoom. Whatever your choice, come with an open mind, come to gain new perspective and come to celebrate those memories and memorials. Join Rev. Garry in these interesting discussions touching the matters of the heart. Click to join: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82607967624 Use Zoom Meeting ID: 826 0796 7624



THE GOSPEL STORIES

A Weekly Bible Study Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. in the PW Lounge & Zoom

Join Rev. Garry in this continuing study on the teachings of Jesus, exploring the Gospel books. Come in person or join virtually by Zoom. To join by Zoom, use: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84711673419
Use Meeting ID: 847 1167 3419



MEN'S BREAKFAST Wednesday, March 15 7:30 a.m. Dining Room

Don't miss out on the breakfast especially prepared by Rev. Garry. Best of all is the great conversation and time of fellowship that happens around the table. The meal may not be "heart" healthy but it is a time well spent.

SECOND-HOUR FORUM

A Reflection on "Preaching in a Global Context" March 26th at 10:30 am In the Chapel

Our Seminarian Intern Hanna Richard will share her experience and reflection as she leads this Second - Hour forum.

As a Princeton seminary student, Hanna is required to take a travel course. Her country of choice was India and there she attended a 3-week course on "Preaching in a Global Context."

Join her as she shares the highlights and insights that she gained from this trip, and engage with her in conversation as she reflects on her trip to India.

Save the date!

Cemetery Walking Tour Sunday, April 2nd, after worship

There's more to the cemetery than meets the eye. Learn more about it. Watch for more details in the Sonday Paper and April Parish News.



By Jordan Klotz, Director of Music Ministries

Postludes in the Season of Lent

The way preludes and postludes are treated differs greatly from congregation to congregation. For some, the prelude is pre-worship background music and the postlude is merely exit music. While we have no official "stance," it appears that FPC takes another approach.

Here, many folks view the prelude as a time to quiet their hearts for worship, a time for gathering ourselves as individuals and as a corporate body. The postlude sends us into our week, serving as a "musical charge" to follow the charge and benediction from the pastors. Of course, just like all music during worship, the prelude and postlude are primarily a musical offering to God.

During the season of Lent, the use of the organ varies widely, as well. The Roman Catholic Church instructs that "the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only in order to support the singing." That would mean no prelude, postlude, or any other solo organ music—the organ is used only for hymn-singing. Some churches go as far as strictly singing unaccompanied, or "acapella," during Lent. On the opposite end of the spectrum, other churches have year-round boisterous postludes, breaking only for services such as Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Due to the pensive and penitential nature of the Lenten season, we will not hear any postludes until Palm Sunday, at which time, the postlude will characterize the day's duality of somber celebration. Our Maundy Thursday worship

silence.

Organ postludes lead us to reflect on the worship service and propel you into the week ahead. I would encourage all to consider that the absence of a postlude may—although to a different effect— serve the same purpose. Silence, too, can make a powerful statement.

will be the peak of Lenten solemnity; there will be no postlude, and the congregation will be encouraged to depart in

The Lenten Concert Series has become a highlight of of our Lenten season here at our church. When you can carve out just half an hour out of a busy day, this is an opportunity to sit and enjoy some music that is sure to refresh your spirit.

We are thrilled to present the lineup of musicians who will grace the Wednesday Noon concert series. They are accomplished musicians who will bring beautiful performances for everyone's delight.

And those who cannot make it in person will have a chance to enjoy the concert as we will livestream the entire half hour from our website and Facebook. Spread the word around!

This year's Lenten Concert is dedicated to the victims and the recovery taking place in Turkey and Syria. We will be taking free will offering towards this and welcome your participation. We hope you can partner with us in this mission.

We look forward to seeing you in the concert!

Questions? Please feel free to contact Jordan Klotz, Director of Music Ministries: jklotz@fpcweb.org



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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

15+ Tuesday (Kindergarten - 2nd Grade)

March 7th, 4:30 to 5:00 pm Room 109 of the Education Building

Mrs. McCulley will lead our 1st Tuesday members in a fun afternoon of learning.



Junior Club

(3rd to 6th Grade)

5:30 to 6:15 pm in Room 109 or Social Center

March 2: Together with Mrs. Bedenek, the kids will explore the amazing world of Dr. Seuss.

March 16: Mr. Bellisano will share a story about St. Patrick's Day.

Family Faith at Home: This Lenten Season

Sunday School classes will explore the Gospels as we begin the season of Lent. Families may pick up a copy of this prayer prompt to teach their children how to pray this season. Copies will be in the Narthex or outside the CE office.



Questions? Contact our Director of Christian Education Nancy Leardi
(732) 491-2264 or nleardi@fpcweb.org



PUPPETEERS!

The puppeteers will rehearse on March 13 at 4:00 pm in Room 109 with Mrs. Kat Davis.

Coming soon: ONE CHURCH TOGETHER

We are preparing for our next "ONE Church Together" worship service planned on April 2nd, Palm Sunday. Would you like to read, usher or greet on this special multi-generational worship?

Contact Nancy Leardi.



YOUTH GROUP



The youth had a fun night out at Monster Mini Golf last month.



We want to thank those who have placed orders for Gertrude Hawk chocolates in support of our 2023 Youth Mission Trip this summer.

We expect the orders to be delivered the week of March 27th, just in time for Easter. We will let you know when they will be ready for pick up.



YOUTH GROUP EVERY WEDNESDAY Now meeting in the Senior High Room

6:45 pm - 7:15 pm Westminster Choir (Grades 7 to 12) 7:15 pm - 7:45 pm Chapel and Good News Ringers (Grades 7 to 12) 7:45 pm - 8:45 pm Combined Junior and Senior High Youth Group

February was a busy month for FPC Youth!

At the very end of January the Youth hosted a Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser after worship. Youth and members of the Youth Mission Trip committee whipped up a tremendous amount of pancakes and sausage which allowed them to raise over \$1,000 in donations going toward the Habitat for Humanity trip this summer. It was so wonderful to see so many people gather once again in the Social Center for a pancake breakfast.

Later that week the Youth Group enjoyed a few rounds of **mini golf together at Monster Golf.**

On Saturday, February 5th, the Youth participated in a **Youth Day of Service** that went from 9 am until 1 pm. The youth assembled 285 bag lunches for Elijah's Promise. A total of 1,013 pounds of food was collected during the one hour Flash Food Drive, where donors drove their cars up to the door with their food donations and were giving a chance to win a gift card to Pastry Lu if they guessed the total weight of food collected at the end of the hour.

The youth enjoyed learning from two guest speakers. Julian DuTemple, a High School senior from St. Joe's, shared details on how he started a successful neighborhood food drive. Olivia Forte-Gardner from REPLENISH explained what REPLENISH and Feeding Middlesex County does to help end hunger in our county. She discussed the difference between a food pantry and a food bank and how they are connected. She also shared ideas on running food drives, and many other enlightening information on food insecurity.

After the restocking the Food Pantry shelves with all the donations, they took part in a brainstorming session and came up with new ideas for Food Drives. The day ended with a closing ceremony where the youth and adult volunteers washed each other's hands and then shared a meal together.

Throughout February until February 27th, the Youth continue to sell **Gertrude Hawk Chocolates** with all proceeds going towards the 2023 Summer Mission Trip. If you would like to purchase online, visit:

<u>www.Fundraiser.GertrudeHawkChocolates.com</u>, and use Group Code 106221. Select a Youth that is selling candy or type in Colleen Walker as the seller name.

Sign ups for the Youth Mission Trip begin this March. The trip will return to Habitat for Humanity in Roanoke, VA the week of July 23 to 29. Be on the lookout for information on the Mother's Day and Father's Day Car Washes.





A busy and impactful Youth Day of Service was successfully held Saturday, February 5th learning about food insecurity and what they can do.









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PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN: In the Church Community









PW/DEACON BRUNCH: Delicious and Delightful!

A warm and happy THANKS to Rev. Garry, Director of Music Ministries Jordan Klotz and the FPC musicians, the kitchen crew, the dessert bakers, facilities team of Jonathan and Bob and all the volunteers from PW and Deacons who set tables and served food. Every table was filled in the Dining room at the Social Center following worship on February 5 – our second GATHERING in two weeks. Special thanks to Deacon Chair Cathy Ostermueller for graphically creating our GATHER theme and to PW Fundraising Co-Coordinator Cindy O'Neill for showcasing the work of PW in striking posters. In a true spirit of collaboration, Cindy has now been commissioned to design a poster showcasing the work of the Deacons!

CALLING ALL WOMEN:

2023 Triennial Gathering of Presbyterian Women

The Synod of the Northeast invites all women of the church to the Triennial Gathering in Stony Point Conference Center, Stony Point, NY on Friday, July 14, 3:00 pm to Saturday, June 15, 3:00 pm. The theme is: "I O U – Inward / Outward / Upward"

Inward: Bible Study Outward: Mission Upward: Worship There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$100 (Early bird fee of \$75 before July 1st) to help pay for worship and workshop leaders' transportation, room and board, materials.

Options for Room and Board (Covering Friday dinner and Saturday breakfast and lunch):

Lodge: Single Occupancy \$247 / Double \$184
Gilmore Slone (limited number: Single \$299 / Double \$237
Visit https://www.synodne.org/presbyterian-women to register and get more information. Interested parties should contact June Young (june18@optonline.net) or Deb Teall (debteall@optonline.net)

SAVE THE DATES: Upcoming PW Events

Join the fun at these events!

- Spring Rummage Sale—April 21 & 22
- PW Birthday Coffee Hour A Sunday in May, TBD
- Summer Coffee Hours One Sunday a Month in June, July and August (dates TBD)
- Fall Rummage Sale October 20 & 21
- Holly Fair December 2

Committees and Commissions COLLABORATE! We have more fun TOGETHER! Let us know if you would like PW to join in planning and producing your event!

Top O' the Morn to you! Presbyterian Women are gearing up for our Spring Rummage Sale and we are inviting you to share in our excitement by donating, volunteering or shopping!

Drop off begins April 17th thru April 20th from 9 am to 5 pm. Wednesday, April 19th, we will stay open till 7 pm. **Sale dates are Friday, April 21st from 4-8 pm and Saturday, April 22nd, 9 am to 3 pm.** We are fortunate enough to have the sale on Saturday April 22nd coinciding with the Metuchen Townwide Garage Sale, a festive time in the borough! Bring it on!





Community Nursery School is now registering for the 2023-2024 school year. Programs are for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years old, including a full-day kindergarten program and a K-Wrap program which extends and compliments a half-day kindergarten program. Early drop-off and extended day options are available for some programming.

Church members receive a \$25.00 discount off monthly tuition. To schedule an in-person or virtual tour, please call the office at (732) 491-2240 or email:

CNSAdmin@fpcweb.org.

Visit our website for more information about your programming and scheduling options:

https://www.communityns.org/



Goodbye, Grant, and thank you!

Grant is going off to the Seeing Eye to continue his education. Grant would like to thank everyone for all the love, support and prayers he received from our congregation especially when he was not feeling well.

Wish me luck on my challenges!

- Grant and Tom & Diane

(Thank you, Grant, for bringing joy to our congregants as you greeted and ushered on many Sundays!)



Share a Memory. Hold a Hand. Lend an Ear. Touch a Heart. Visiting Nurse Association Health Group will provide you with training and support to enhance your gifts of compassion, commitment and companionship to those nearing end of life.



Bring a supportive presence and companionship through home visitations.



Comfort and bereavement calls in our office



Provide administrative support on a variety of projects that enhance our patient's care



VNA Health Group 23 Main Street Suite D1 | Holmdel, NJ 07733

Interested in becoming a volunteer?

Contact: Pauline DePalma, BSW Director, Volunteer Services (732) 2246933 Email: Pauline.depalma@vnahg.org

We encourage volunteers to wait one year following the death of a loved one.

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EASTER PLANTORDER FORM



Celebrate the glory of Easter morning this April 9th by decorating our church with a choice of Easter Plants (white lilies, yellow tulips and pink tulips) to honor your loved ones. If you would like to contribute, plants are \$8.75 each and please bring this form to Church or mail to the Church Office by Sunday, March 26th.

Your Name:	Phone No.:
	For Easter Bulletin Listing of Donors
Given by:	
In Memory of:	
In Honor of :	
In Gratitude :	
Please	choose your plant choice by indicating the number of plants wanted:
Wh	ite Easter LiliesYellow TulipsPink Tulips
	Number of plants @ \$8.75 each
	Amount of check: \$
and c	Make checks payable to: <i>First Presbyterian Church</i> drop off or mail to the Church Office: PO Box 385, Metuchen, NJ 08840 ORDER DEADLINE: Sunday, March 26 th
	ORDER DEADLINE: Sunday, March 26"
Please s	elect and mark [x] one of the following:
[]	I will take my plant home after the 9:30 a.m. Easter service. I will leave my plant for the Deacons to deliver to someone in our Church family.

CHURCH STAFF

First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen (February 1, 2023)

CLERGY
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Senior Pastor/Head of Staff fgarry@fpcweb.org
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Interim Associate Pastor abair@fpcweb.org
Rev. Robert A. Beringer, Pastor Emeritus
Hanna Richards, Seminarian Intern
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Office Manager cnsadmin@fpcweb.org

FROM YOUR CHURCH OFFICE

AN URGENT AND SPECIAL MISSONS APPEAL

Share your financial blessings to help with the recovery in the disaster brought about by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Our church will match dollar for dollar, up to \$1000, through our Mission Commission. Please be generous in your giving as we do the little that we can supporting PCUSA's mission.



MORE FROM THE CHRISTIAN ED. DIRECTOR:

There are books for children that talks about the good news that Easter and the Lenten season brings. Check out these books found in the foyer of the Social Center just outside the Church office. Engage your children on the story of Easter.

Pick up a book anytime!



- The Story of Easter by Patricia Pingry
- Oh, Happy, Happy Day!
 by McKissack and Swisher
- Three Easter Journeys by Ro Willoughby
- The Easter Story by Carol Heyer
- Good News Travels Fast! by Lisa Flinn
- The First Easter by Catherine Storr

INDONESIAN FELLOWSHIP

A worship service in Bahasa is held every Sunday at Noon except the first Sunday of the month when the Indonesian Fellowship joins the 9:30 am service for communion. If you have any questions, contact Norma by email at norma.tambingon@yahoo.com

Tak berkesudahan kasih setia Tuhan, tak habis-habisnya rahmat-Nya, selalu baru tiap pagi; besar kesetiaan-Mu!

Ratapan 3:22-23

MARCH 2023 PARISH NEWS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF METUCHEN 270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840

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Stay up to date with just one click!

We are now using Mail Chimp to bring to you the latest church happenings. Sign up to make sure we have your correct email address.

Visit the church website, send an email to fpc@fpcweb.org or use your cell phone to go directly to the link using this QR code.

We promise not to spam you!



Parish News Submission

To submit an article for the Parish News, email vlacson@fpcweb.org or see us at the church office. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month.

Church Office

270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840 Office Hours: Monday– Friday 8:00 am to 4:30pm Telephone: (732) 491-2300 Email: fpc@fpcweb.org

Sunday Worship Service 9:30 am
Online Sunday Morning Worship 9:30 am
Livestream on FPC Metuchen Facebook

