



First Presbyterian Church
of Metuchen

Where God's Love Welcomes All



January 2023
PARISH NEWS

PASTOR'S PEACE by Rev. Ashley Bair

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When the clock strikes midnight for January 1 in Spain, people waiting in earnest hold twelve grapes in their hand. At each tolling of the hour, they pop a grape into their mouth and if they successfully eat all twelve grapes by the twelfth toll, they are promised twelve months of good luck.

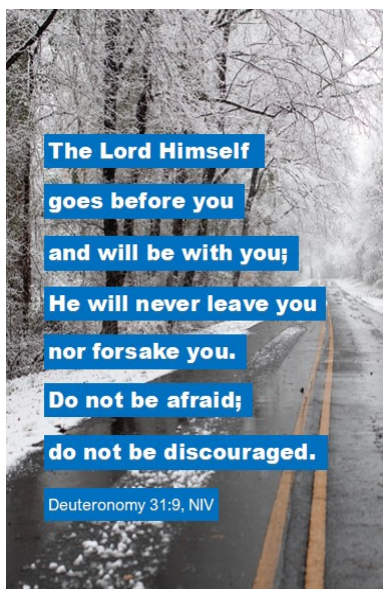
Nochevieja, literally "Old Night", has held this tradition for at least a hundred years in Spain. The origins aren't easy to pinpoint, but in 2012 an NPR journalist named Jeff Koehler was living in Spain and found newspaper articles from the 1880's. The article described grape sales around New Year's increasing as middle-lower class Spaniards found their own way to join the French champagne toast. Whenever it started, it caught on. Grapes are now a national tradition, a clinging to fortune and luck for at least a year's time.

I often find myself, too, seeking ways at New Year's to claim good luck. There's something beautiful about traditions that hold meaning, and there's something even more special about that meaning itself. What is it about good luck?

Whenever we or someone we know embarks on a new journey, the wish is for good luck. In its simplicity, that wish holds us in our embarkation. It's a wish of encouragement that leads us to feeling more empowered and braver to take on whatever journey is ahead of us. It sets our mind to be more positive and open to whatever will be in our favor. Whether or not luck has anything to do with it, for these reasons it is good.

As we journey into a moment of new, new year, new time, new season, new life, may we hold each other in this wish. Let it be our prayer. Good luck. Good luck to you as you embark. Good luck to you as you brave what is before you. Good luck to you as you open yourself to what is in your favor. May the journey be blessed and may you feel empowered by our wish for you.

Grab twelve grapes for strength along the way.



**The Lord Himself
goes before you
and will be with you;
He will never leave you
nor forsake you.
Do not be afraid;
do not be discouraged.**

Deuteronomy 31:9, NIV



WE NEED YOU!

The 2023 Stewardship theme has been:

**"WE ARE ALL PIECES OF GOD'S
PLAN. WHERE DO YOU FIT IN AT
OUR CHURCH"**

Many of you have answered our call and made your pledge, several for the first time. **THANK YOU!**

However, we are still short of our goal for 2023.

Our pastors, staff and volunteers are working hard to maintain and expand our programs and services to you, our fellow members, and to continue our support for the community.

We have a healthy and robust church, with many blessings and resources. To remain healthy, we need to keep our fiscal house in order and receive pledges and gifts from our membership to support these activities.

To pledge, you can either complete a pledge card, go to the website and check the Stewardship Section, fpcweb.org/give Credit cards accepted!

We are hoping you will consider making a pledge soon; we need to see that your puzzle piece fits in at our church!

STEWARDSHIP 2023

Niall Corbalis, Maggie and Russ Dickow,
Doris Gulotta and Gary Ostermueller

**We have room
FOR YOU
on the
Mission
Commission!**



The Presbyterian Mission of the Presbyterian Church USA) invites us to live the Matthew 25 mission. When we welcome others, we welcome Christ; when we bring together people who are divided, we are doing God's reconciling work. We are called to serve Jesus by contributing to the well-being of the most vulnerable in all societies – rural and urban, small and large, young and not-so-young.

As the world begins to open up again, and as we return to some kind of normal, we want to be there where we are needed. On that note, we are in the process of reviving this commission to introduce and bring to the congregation the various mission opportunities that are available locally, nationally, and globally.

Come and be part of the Mission Commission! Please let Russ Dickow know of your interest by person or email: rdickow377@gmail.com

HADASSAH
the power
of women
who **DO**



Join MENCH Hadassah, First Presbyterian Church of
Metuchen, and Congregation Neve Shalom
Tikkun Olam at the annual

MITZVAH DAY/DAY OF SERVICE

In loving memory of Judy Tabak

**WHEN: Monday, Jan. 16th
10:30 am - 12:00 noon**

**WHERE: First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen
Social Center**

270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen, NJ

**SIGN UP: by January 13th using this link -
<https://tinyurl.com/r6j4cvj>**

This event fills up quickly—don't wait! We may not be able to accommodate walk-ins.

Mitzvah Day is an opportunity to give back to our community through a variety of projects. Choose from one of the following:

- Help prepare meals for residents of the Ozanam Family Shelter.
- Deliver cards and crafts to JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Center, Edison.
- Create cards for kids in the hospital and design valentines for veterans.
- Assemble platters of baked goods to deliver to local first responders.
- Donate hygiene products and travel sized toiletries for local shelters.
- Donate ingredients or money to offset the cost of food preparation.

PLEASE BRING CANNED GOODS AND INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED BAKED GOODS TO DONATE.

Questions? Contact Wendy Hurwitz Kushner at: whkushner@gmail.com

Negative Covid test and masks suggested as per local guidelines.

MUSIC Ministry

By Jordan Klotz, Director of Music Ministries

Why do we sing in worship?

Many of us accept that music in worship is just “what we do.” Surely, there must be more...

Scripture tells us many times to sing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” One translation of Ephesians 5 says to “make melody with your heart to the Lord.” What a beautiful image!

Knowing that the Bible admonishes us to sing, the primary function of doing so in worship is to add a deeper dimension of participation. To quote St. Augustine, “whoever sings once prays twice,” as music is more expressive than ordinary speech. Music allows us to access our faith and to connect with the Christian community, spanning back generations.

Our corporate song binds us together in a way that is felt very deeply, a social glue like no other. An example of this can be found in an extraordinary scientific fact: when a choir sings together, it can reach a point where all of its members’ heartbeats synchronize. This is due to the singers inhaling and expelling air at the same time and rate. It’s an incredible symbol of the power of song.

The singing of hymns is something that follows us all our lives. As children, we hear our parents and grandparents singing hymns, and these hymns walk with us on our faith

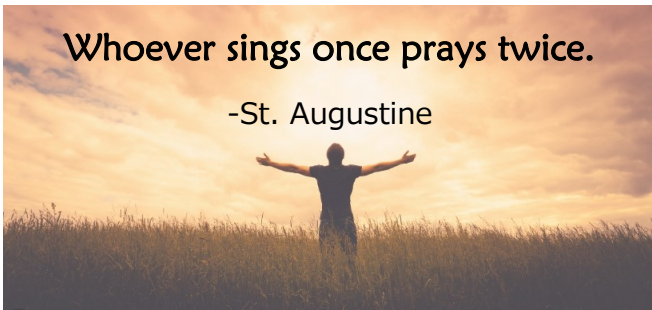
journey. They speak to us in different ways during different times of our lives: following the birth of a child, after the loss of a parent, during the holiday season, as we reach periods of great change or great joy or great sorrow, the melodies and poetry of our congregational song accompany our living, both as individuals and as a community of faith.

The way that music follows us for our entire life—whether you’re a professional musician, an amateur member of a volunteer choir, or just someone that likes to sing in the shower—is why children singing is of paramount importance. Of all the things our children do, singing is something that cannot be lost with age. Anyone can sing, and singing will remain with our children, informing their lives and faith—lending comfort and energy and solace and encouragement—for years to come. Learning to sing is learning to express, to connect, to listen, to empathize, to love.

As our community walks together during this new year, it is my prayer that we will each consider what music means to us. If you’ve never thought of such a thing, take the first step by opening the hymnal on a Sunday morning and really pondering the words of one of our hymns. What stands out to you? What does this teach you? Is there a special memory attached to the specific hymn, or to any particular words and phrases?

Whoever sings once prays twice.

-St. Augustine



On Sunday, December 11th we had our first multi-generational led worship which was aptly titled “One Church Together.” Many voices shared in praising our God through song, Scripture reading and participating in every aspect of worship. It was very refreshing to see various generations coming together in a true act of worship. We know this is not the last.

If you would like to raise your voice for our next “One Church Together” worship service, please let us know.

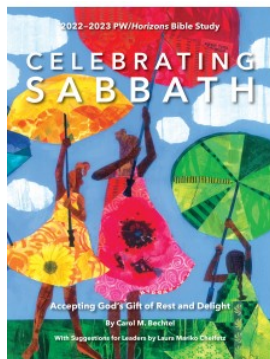
We will begin planning our list of readers in the coming weeks.

You may contact Nancy Leardi (Nleardi@fpcweb.org) or Jordan Klotz (jklotz@fpcweb.org)



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

ADULT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



HORIZON BIBLE STUDY *It's for everyone!*

January 2nd
7:00 p.m.
PW Lounge with
Zoom option
Led by Mary Kay

Lesson Four of this study is "Sabbath and Surrender," based on scripture text from Exodus 16. Can we say "enough" to riches and wealth and "surrender" our responsibilities? Can we learn to trust in God to provide our needs and heal ourselves in the circle of Sabbath? Mary Kay will be sure to have challenging questions to help us find the answers. For the study materials and Zoom link, visit the PW page at <https://fpcweb.org/ministries/presbyterian-women/>
Join by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81327982944>

Use meeting ID: 813 2798 2944

If interested in a hard copy of the study or if you have any questions, email Deb Teall debteall@optonline.net

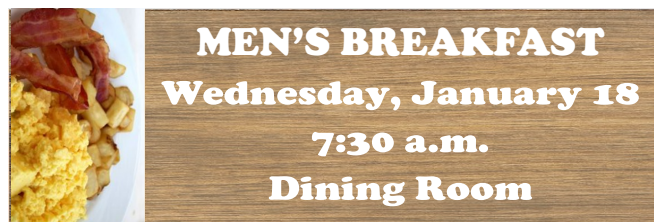


THE GOSPEL STORIES A Weekly Bible Study Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. in the PW Lounge & Zoom

Join Rev. Garry in this continuing study on the teachings of Jesus. Come in person or join virtually by Zoom. The lessons are available from our website, go to Resources. To join by Zoom, use:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84711673419>

Use Meeting ID: 847 1167 3419



MEN'S BREAKFAST Wednesday, January 18 7:30 a.m. Dining Room

Don't miss out on the breakfast especially prepared by Rev. Garry. Join in the great conversation and laughter that happens around the table. The meal may not be "heart" healthy but it is surely a time well spent. Call us in the Church office if you have any questions.



January 22
11:00 am
PW Lounge

SUNDAY
BOOK
CLUB

The Sunday Book Club kicks off the new year with the book "The Twisted Tea Christmas" by Laura Childs. Contact Mary Kay Dangremond for more information—mk.vatrout@gmail.com

FROM YOUR: *DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION*

1st Tuesday (4 years - 2nd Grade)

January 3rd from 4:30 to 5:00 pm
Room 109 of the Education Building
Come listen to a story from Mr. Jordan.

Junior Club (3rd to 6th Grade)

January 5th and 19th from 5:30 to 6:15 pm
We meet every 1st and 3rd Thursdays and 3rd to 6th graders are welcome to join the group.

Presbyterian Young Women (PYW)

JANUARY 8th Lunch and Fun

College freshmen are welcome to come and join in this event. Contact Mrs. Leardi if you can make it.
Email nleardi@fpcweb.org

PUPPETEERS!

The puppeteers will meet on January 9th from 4:00– 4:45 pm in the Chapel for skit rehearsals.

If your child is in 7th grade or above and is interested in the puppeteer ministry, please contact Kat Davis or Nancy Leardi .
Email: katddavis@gmail.com or nleardi@fpcweb.org

January 8th is LEGO SUNDAY

Join Mrs. Palmetter in Room 109

Learn about how the wise men followed the star, and bring the story to life using Lego bricks.



January 15th

Our Sunday School kids in K-2nd grade are in for a treat with a story time with Mr. Blake in the library.



One of our Food Pantry volunteers has Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD), a dominant genetic disorder that runs in her family. Her kidney function has been dropping for years and despite taking meticulous care of her health, she is now in need of a kidney transplant. The wait for a cadaver donor is years long leading to health deterioration and sometimes death. A living donor transplant greatly increases the chance of survival.

Donating a kidney may not be right for everyone, or it simply might not be the right time. But there could be someone within your circle of family and friends who may be able to help. Our food pantry volunteer needs an "O" blood type donor.

Transplant will be performed at St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston, NJ. To learn more about kidney donation, you can visit rwjbh.org and look for "The Living Donor Institute - New Jersey Health System" or call (973) 322-5346.

Living organ donors are angels on earth. While not everyone is a candidate for kidney donation, the Living Kidney Donor team at St. Barnabas can answer any and all questions. All inquiries are confidential and the care and advice they provide to any potential donor is exceptional.

The need is urgent. Please get the word out and share this appeal to your circle of family and friends. If you or someone you know is interested to pursue becoming a kidney donor, please call or text Wendy Kukowski at (732) 983-2457, or send an email to KidneyDonorNL@gmail.com. Thank you!

Our very own FPC member, Caitlin Mollison shares her experience and we hope her story inspires you to act now. In 2017, I donated a kidney to my husband (Dave Kozo's) cousin. I began by getting medical testing done to make sure I was a match. After we learned that I was a match, I received tests to ensure I was healthy enough to be a donor and some counseling to make sure that I had enough support to go through with the surgery. The kidney transplant surgery was done at St. Barnabas. All the tests, surgery, hospital costs, and follow-up visits were done free of charge for me. I recovered quickly, and so did Dave's cousin, who is a school teacher and has two kids. She is living a great life now! Kidney donation had zero impact on my health, and if I were to need a kidney donation down the road (not anticipated, as I am in good health), I would go to the head of the line for a transplant because of my donor status. Please consider getting tested to see if you are a match for our volunteer in need. Kidney donation is both life-changing and potentially life-saving! Feel free to call me if you have any questions or would like to discuss kidney donation with me at (973) 868-9480 or email me (mollisoncaitlin@gmail.com).

Thank you, Caitlin, for inspiring us and encouraging us with your testimony being an organ donor.



YOUTH GROUP EVERY WEDNESDAY **Now meeting in the Senior High Room**

- 6:00 pm - 6:45 pm Junior High
- 6:45 pm - 7:15 pm Westminster Choir (Gr. 7 to 12)
- 7:15 pm - 7:45 pm Chapel and Good News Ringers (Grades 7 to 12)
- 7:45 pm - 8:45 pm Senior High

Plans are underway for a Youth Day of Service on February 4th. This event will be an extension of the traditional Famine event. Stay tuned for the details and more information.



Ongoing Coat Collection

Until January 9th 2023

Drop off: Social Center Foyer

Please continue to support New Jersey Cares Coat Drive. New and gently used winter coats for infants, children and adults may be dropped off in the collection bin inside the Social Center Foyer. We want to see the donations top last year's of 1,142 coats.

Jersey Cares also need volunteers on January 15th here in the Social Center auditorium from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm to help sort coats. Email lauren@jerseycares.org if you would like more information.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN: In the Church Community



PW thanks all who were a part of our Holly Fair held on December 3rd. Being a part of this endeavor includes Presbyterian members donating their treasures so that we may pass them on to new families and the community. Our talented bakers who filled our tables was a highlight for our Coffee Bar and treats where all enjoyed a little break and fellowship. Thank you! Well done to our awesome congregation for all your support!

The piece of our puzzle involves our awesome volunteers (men and women) who made this Holly Fair a success. We all hold special memories of this Fair from our parents and grandparents. Thank you for keeping the tradition alive and well! What is better is the new generation that has added to the magic of PW and it's missions. Well done to our awesome congregation for all your support!

PW POSITIONS OPEN :

Come Join the Fun – Not a Lot of Meetings!

The PW Coordinating Team would love your company! We meet monthly through June, and we have a number of positions open that just might interest YOU:

Corresponding Secretary A perfect way to stay in touch with church members! Send cards and notes to congregants to let them know they're in our thoughts. All stationery and postage are paid for by PW.

Local Service Coordinator All about the food! Because sharing meals brings us together, as we celebrate the lives of those we've lost and create fellowship among the various groups of the church. We have templates for different occasions. The Coordinator orders the food and directs the setup, with the rest of the Coordinating Team as supporting cast.

Dessert Volunteers The best food of all! We'll call you if we need desserts for church gatherings. You can bake or buy – we are NOT PICKY!!! Just let us know your phone and email.

Interested? Contact Co-Moderators:

Deb Teall debteall@optonline.net

June Young june18@optonline.net



Created by Cathy Ostermueller, this beautiful bulletin board announces the **joint PW/Deacon Brunch on Sunday, February 5** following worship. All are invited to enjoy brunch selections prepared by Special Guest Chef Rev. Fred Garry. Check out the 3D glory of the board in Room 109 at Coffee Hour!

CHURCH STAFF**First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen
(July 1, 2022)****CLERGY**

Rev. Dr. Fred Garry 732-491-2330
Senior Pastor/Head of Staff fgarry@fpcweb.org
Rev. Ashley Bair 732-491-2260
Interim Associate Pastor abair@fpcweb.org
Rev. Robert A. Beringer, Pastor Emeritus

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Nancy Leardi 732-491-2264
Director Christian Education nleardi@fpcweb.org
Kat Davis katddavis@gmail.com
Christian Education Production Leader

MUSIC MINISTRY

Jordan Klotz 732-491-2266
Director of Music Ministries jklotz@fpcweb.org
Elaine Hansen ehansen@fpcweb.org
Assistant Bell Director and Accompanist
Brenda A. Day, Minister of Music Emeritus

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Bob O'Connell 732-491-2270
Facilities Assistant boconnell@fpcweb.org
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Coordinator vlacson@fpcweb.org
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Office Assistant cwalker@fpcweb.org
Sarah Teti 732-491-2325
Food Pantry Coordinator
foodpantry@fpcweb.org

COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

Colleen Smith 732-491-2242
Head Teacher csmith@fpcweb.org
Josephine Czochanski 732-491-2242
Office Manager cnsadmin@fpcweb.org

**CLERK'S CORNER**

- Session approved the 2023 Operating Budget of the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen as presented by the Finance Commission.

**FRIENDLY REMINDERS FROM
THE CHURCH OFFICE**

The 2023 offering envelopes may be picked up from the Narthex. Should you wish to have a box of your own, please contact Sue Harmon in the office.

The church office will be closed on January 16th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Snow Day Policy

In case of a snow storm and the roads are not safe to travel, our church office will post all weather-related closings on our church website (www.fpcweb.org), Facebook (FPC Metuchen) and phone answering system (732)491-2300. It is always our priority to ensure the safety of our congregation and staff.

In the event of a serious weather condition falling on a Sunday, we encourage you to exercise your judgment but always check for details of a possible cancellation or modification of our Sunday morning service and programs.

INDONESIAN FELLOWSHIP

Meets Noon most Sundays for a worship service in Bahasa, except the first Sunday when they join the 9:30 am service for communion. If you have any questions, contact Norma by email at norma.tambingon@yahoo.com

Bersukacitalah senantiasa dalam Tuhan! Sekali lagi kukatakan:
Bersukacitalah! Hendaklah kebaikan hatimu diketahui semua orang.
Tuhan sudah dekat!

Janganlah hendaknya kamu kuatir tentang apa pun juga,
tetapi nyatakanlah dalam segala hal keinginanmu kepada Allah
dalam doa dan permohonan dengan ucapan syukur.

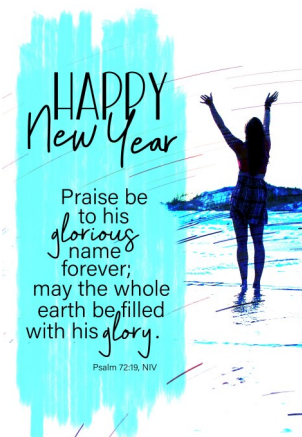
- Filipi 4:4-6

JANUARY 2023 PARISH NEWS
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF METUCHEN
270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840

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TO:



The information contained herein is for Church use only. Individuals using this information must receive permission of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen, NJ.

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!



First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

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