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PASTOR'S PEACE by Rev. Dr. Fred Garry

Just as Advent was unique last year so Lent will be unique this year.

Last year for Lent we were in the midst of the beginning of the pandemic. New York and New Jersey were in full-blown crisis mode and the church was completely virtual. Each part of Lent felt like it was a storm with no end in sight.

Lent begins on February 17th, a month away as I write this. This is the time I am usually finishing the preparations for the season and I have a clear vision of what the seven weeks will entail. At this point last year I was finishing the final edits for a book to be shared with the congregation. The book was the culmination of months and years of thought, many Lenten seasons.

Right now I am not as prepared. My lack of preparation is not a lack of interest or diligence. It is a recognition that everything is ever changing. I feel ridiculous even thinking about Easter on April 4th. The rhythm of the year has been replaced by the routine of the pandemic.

COVID is a daily routine. Protocols, tests, CALI scores, distancing. I will say the wearing of a mask has helped me navigate the year without a cold "so far." Yet, as I prepare for Lent, I am mindful this is the second one we've lived in uncertainty of the virus. It is a routine of uncertainty.

And then, just when I thought we could breathe a bit and focus our attention to the possibility of a vaccine, our democracy came off the rails. 220 years of peaceful transference of power were put aside for a horn wearing shirtless man ranting conspiracies. The events in the Capitol on January 6th, I pray, were an anomaly and will not become a pattern. But that is uncertain.

A week later the president was impeached a second time. Again, I pray this remains a rare course of action, but that too is uncertain. I gave this article to Vicky Lacson to put into our newsletter with the caveat: be prepared to pull it. For what I am about to write next is a hope that could be easily dashed.

I feel hopeful about the vaccine and the potential of recovery and I feel hopeful that truth and decency and civility will prevail and restore a sense of calm. I believe the gaslighting and the delusion of "stop the steal" will fade. At some point, America will want to move on, get back to business, and the juvenile acts of violence as well as the clear acts of sedition will be dealt with by our Justice system. We will move on.

Yet, what I am most hopeful about is that we, as a church, will persist in the path of finding our voice. Recently I had the pleasure to describe how we as a church have gone farther down the path of lifting the fallen, speaking up to injustice, and being honest about our brokenness. America will move on, but I hope and trust we will keep on the path of healing and reconciliation. I live in the hope of the church.

Ash Wednesday will soon be upon us and then Easter will arrive before we know it. Will it be like any other Lenten season before? Not a chance. Will we endure and grow and even gain strength? Of this there is near certainty; this is our path.





- Session discussed possible Food Pantry space expansion scenarios. Session approved a motion to seek for information purposes, three (3) construction bids for a 400 square foot addition to the Social Center.
- Session adopted the FPC-M Coronavirus General Office Protocols for the Church Staff as proposed by the Personnel Commission.
- Finance Commission noted an application for a second Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan/grant is underway.
- Finance Commission noted the preliminary 2020 Year-to-date FPC-M financials indicate the Pledge Offering budget for 2020 was not only met, but slightly exceeded. This accomplishment by the congregation is EXTRAORDINARY, given all of the COVID-19 pandemic protocols in place restricting in-person worship and gatherings in 2020.

MEET OUR CURRENTLY SERVING SESSION MEMBERS



Ever wonder how our Session gets their job done? Here's a snippet of previous month's Session meeting - a hybrid of Zoom and in-person meeting. We are grateful for these voices of reason. Our spiritual leaders continue to meet virtually. They discuss and make important decisions for our church family. Thank you session members!

Moderator: Rev. Dr. Fred Garry Clerk of Session: Paul Gunnser
Pres. Board of Trustees: Roland Staal Vice President: Jim Krauszer

Class 2021

Zoltan Bedenek (1 yr.)
Ethan Draper (1 yr.)
Jennifer Fong
Mark Haulenbeek
Jim Krauszer
Danni Newbury
Virginia Shaw
Roland Staal

Class 2022

Ron Davie (2 yrs.)
Michael Draper
John Keithler (2 yrs.)
Jennifer Thompson
Colleen Walker
Doris Younken

Class 2023

JoAnne Bedenek
Nancy Blomn-Kipnis
Niall Corbalis
Gary Ostermueller
Brian Smith



“Per Capita is crucial to the overall health of the PC(USA), because it binds presbyteries, synods, and congregations together in one church.”

– J. Herbert Nelson, II

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)

You may remit your per capita contribution in various ways, paying the full amount for the year for each adult or confirmed youth (\$45 per member) in your household/family. You can send your check, using the special envelope you received by either mailing or dropping off at the church.

If you prefer to give electronically, you may:

- Text an amount to **732-479-8245** or
- Use this link <https://tinyurl.com/y8ffksu4>. Vanco is our 3rd party vendor for online giving.

A big thank you to those who have already submitted their per capita.

WORDS OF THANKSGIVING

You will be enriched in every way
for your great generosity
Which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.
For the rendering of this ministry not only supplies
the needs of the Lord's people, but also overflows
with many expressions of thanksgiving to the Lord.
- 2 Corinthians 9: 11-12 NRSV

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Our church family entered this year's Stewardship Campaign during a period of great uncertainty due to COVID-19 yet knowing we needed to care for our Old Church. What we did not know was what response we would receive. Well, you came through with your financial pledges so we can maintain our Mission, our Programs, and our Facilities. Our goal was ambitious, we came up a little short but well within 8% of last pre-COVID year.

However, we did have several positive results:

- ♦ **185 members pledged \$441,595**
- ♦ **12 new pledges**
- ♦ **71 members increased their pledge!**

The Stewardship Commission wants to thank everyone who made a financial pledge to Our Old Church.

2021 STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Gary Ostermueller, Jen Fong, Lori Kellner, Chris O'Neill



FROM REV. FRED GARRY

A PERSONAL NOTE

When our son Josh married his wife Jordan in 2009, I had been a pastor for fifteen years. The next year, our daughter Laura married her husband Andrew. As a slow learner it was not until then that I saw the wedding ceremony from the vantage of a family. The event came into focus when I could see from both sides of the aisle. Only then did I truly begin to appreciate the dynamics of a wedding. My focus as a pastor was always on the couple, "this is their big day." And it is! But once I saw my own children in the midst, I could see so much more.

The wedding is a moment of family dynamics, both positive and negative. There is pageantry but also a hefty dose of chaos. Mostly, though, as Shakespeare said, there is a "joining of two houses." Other than the comedic potential of non-dancers dancing, the joining of houses is the real drama. This is the deep end of the pool.

As I flew to Seattle just after Christmas I knew I was in for such an experience. I know hospice, hospitals, and grief; I know what it means to be with families facing sudden loss. And I have faced loss before of family and friends many times, but this was different. To lose your parent is a moment where life shifts.

Helping my mother through this sudden loss was a great challenge. My father went from stomach pains to passing away in two weeks. And, with pandemic restrictions, he did so without his wife beside him or his sons able to gather with him.

We are still less than a month from his passing but already I can see so much change, so much has "shifted." Fate doesn't seem to ask for your permission nor offer any fair warning; life changes. In the midst of this I found myself drawing so much strength from our life together, this church, and the challenges we've faced during the last year. There was no fair warning, but your graciousness and compassion and courage helped me take each step.

I thank you and especially thank the staff and elders who accommodated my absence. I felt cared for and guarded by your prayers. This let me be in "one" place. I could see this loss from both sides of the aisle. Thank you for the grace to step away. It made coming home a great relief.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVOTION

When you consider your faith from the vantage of history, the amount of information, the history, and the theology of the church, this can be quite overwhelming. Even just the Bible alone can feel like a sea of images and a jumble of people and places. How can you grow in faith when there seems to be so many ways to go?

I have heard many people say, "I am going to read the Bible this year." And this is great. There are many devotionals that will allow you to do this. Usually there are three to four portions of scripture to read each day. This is to avoid the doldrums of Leviticus or the long list of wicked nations of Isaiah. One can only enjoy so many laws about grain and leprosy before the Bible becomes a drag.

Reading the Bible in a year is an "encyclopedic" approach. You get to encounter the book as a whole, from Genesis to Revelation; and the encounter is in a brief, digestible format. But let's be honest, no one is ever seen as sane who says, "I really want to read my encyclopedia set." The Bible, as a place of sacred contemplation, is a misfit when it comes to a quick read. To attend to the Bible and find the voice of the Holy Spirit is more of a deep dive than a skimming of the surface.

That was my thought when I wrote a small book called *The Mean Estate*. This is a daily devotional for Lent where all of the parables of Jesus are considered. The hope is that by the end of Lent a reader can say, "I know the parables of Jesus." And this is a great thing to know.

The parables are a place to go deep into the call to follow Jesus. There are the heart of his teachings. And, most importantly, there are around forty of them. In a few weeks this short book will be available to any who would like one. There is a suggested donation of \$5 to cover the cost of printing.

There are many ways to find a place of devotion during Lent. This is one I have found helpful to me.



**THE MEAN
ESTATE**
FRED GARRY



The mean estate is where we find the blessing of meekness and the glory of humility.

Consider a parable a day and find their power.

Be ready to ask, "how can I live this?"

Be ready for the answer, "you must be born anew as one who abides in the mean estate."

To get your copy, contact the church office anytime during office hours: (732) 491-2300.

2020 CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT

We share here some images of our dedicated children and youth who participated to re-live the story of Christ's birth. Although small and brief the Christmas Pageant held on the front lawn was well orchestrated with narrators telling the story and the children and teens doing a pantomime or tableau in different stations and spaced out. There was a captive audience who watched from a distance. Our thanks to the following who had the vision and creatively put this together in keeping with our Christmas tradition:

PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR Jennifer Edge

COSTUMES Maggy and Samantha Cook

COORDINATORCarolynn Parisi

STAGE CREW Nate Brown
Brenda Day
Rev. Dr. Fred Garry
Jonathan Hollenbeck
Nancy Leardi



And they came. In a Covid-safe manner, the Christmas story was shared as the angels, shepherds with their sheep and magi came to greet the Baby Jesus. There was also a good gathering in the church front lawn that came to see the Christmas Pageant.





We are God's children, fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14)

TUESDAY SONGS & GAMES (4 yrs thru 2nd Grade) **February 9, Tuesday at 4:00 pm**

Songs and Games will continue to meet on Zoom this month! Here's the Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86501008617>

Meeting ID: 865 0100 8617

JUNIOR CLUB (For 3rd to 6th Grade) **Thursday, February 11** **5:00 - 5:30 pm Fun and Games**

Junior Club will still be meeting on Zoom. Join us for some fun games and conversation using the link below. Mrs. Leardi will be hosting this Zoom meeting.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83736594506?pwd=eE45VTB6MmJYZ1ZwdnZuM2hNa2ZWQT09>

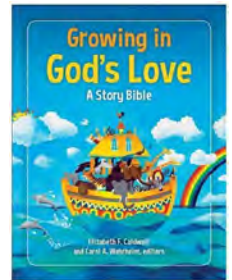
Meeting ID: 837 3659 4506 Passcode: 595784

VIRTUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL



On February 28th our virtual Sunday School classes will be graced by a guest speaker. We welcome Carol Wehrheim, co-editor of Growing in God's Love Story Bible, who will be zooming with us. We are excited to have this chance to meet Carol and share God's word together. Parents are invited to attend!

Growing in God's Love Story Bible may be delivered to your home or ready for pick up from the Church Office. Please call to order. Donations are appreciated but not necessary.



Children's Ministry Library Lending

Check out some books we have put out by the Church office. Please sign out any book and return when done.

The Souper Bowl of Caring utilizes Super Bowl weekend in America to mobilize young people to fight hunger and poverty in their communities. On February 7th the Sunday school will be collecting soup for the food pantry. Each virtual Sunday School Class will color labels for their soup cans sending positive messages to the FPC food pantry clients. Please join us in donating soup this month!



The Faith Kits for February and March virtual Sunday School may be picked up at the Social Center Foyer. If your child is signed up for Sunday School please take one for each child. The Kit has lessons for each week and packed with activities and treats! We ask that you sign out your child's name when picking up a kit(s).

Zoom links will be posted on the FPC Facebook Sunday School Group page. We welcome new students; there's always room in our classes.

Join by signing up on the Facebook group : FPC Metuchen Sunday School OR register your children today at fpcweb.org/forms.

Find your class by entering the meeting ID to join:

Preschool Zoom - 2 to 4 Year Old

Teacher: Kat Davis, Holly Distefano & Angie Brown
Meeting ID: 893 4778 3182

Kindergarten & First Grade Sunday School Zoom

Teacher: Fred Blake, Emily Almeida & Veronica Lijeron
Meeting ID: 886 0815 1258

Second, Third & Fourth Grades Sunday School

Teacher: Marni Yannaccone, Bridget Sanger & Kelsee Young

Meeting ID: 898 6038 8579

Fifth & Sixth Grades Sunday School

Teacher: Nancy Kipnis & Charles Hedrick
Meeting ID: 822 6624 7240

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



270 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE  WEDNESDAY'S @ 5&7PM

WEDNESDAY YOUTH GROUP

5:00 pm-6:00 pm Jr. High

7:00 pm-8:15 pm Sr. High

For the month of February, Youth Group will continue in the Social Center Dining Room where we are able to spread out at a safe distance. Conversations will include mental health and further preparation for our 2021 Famine. We are hopeful that the NJ Covid Activity Level Indicator (CALI) will move us into yellow and then green in the coming weeks to allow us to do more things together. In the meantime, we are maintaining our no meal or high-exertion activity policy in order to be as safe as we can possibly be.

We are hard at work preparing for the upcoming Famine as well as our 2021 Youth Mission trip. We encourage our Youth to consider attending both major events this year. For further information, please reach out to Rev. Karmann.

GERTRUDE HAWK FUNDRAISER

If you or someone you know would like to purchase Gertrude Hawk candy in anticipation of the Easter holiday, our Youth are selling chocolate from January 13th through February 18th with all proceeds going towards the 2021 Youth Mission Trip. Please contact Rev. Karmann at jkarmann@fpcweb.org for more info.



THE 2021 FAMINE



In so many ways, this year's Famine is the same as every other year, but also very different. We will be hosting our Famine on **Saturday, February 27th, ONLY!** Certain activities will not take place out of an abundance of caution.

This year's all-too relevant theme is food insecurity in regard to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our goal is to package 20,000 meals and raise money for our ongoing Food Pantry efforts and expansion. Please consider donating financially as we combat food insecurity in our area.

Our 2021 Famine is just a few weeks away. The committee is busy planning, and we are excited to see how God once again works through our Youth this year. This year's Famine is different in many ways. For one, we are not offering an overnight or grocery shopping. Famine, this year, is a one day only event. But for as disappointing as the first change is, our second is truly exciting. We are partnering with the Youth Group at Temple Emanu-El this year. Their Senior High Youth will be joining us throughout the day and participating in our Famine together. We are excited to make this more of an interfaith event focusing on food insecurity as the need is so present.

This year Famine event will focus on how this pandemic has created more and more food insecurity throughout our country and what we can do to change that. All fundraising efforts will go to feeding those in our local communities as well as our FPC Food Pantry expansion.

WHAT: For up to 30 hours, we are going hungry to raise funds which will be used to empower local communities in their strive to eliminate poverty and hunger.

WHEN: February 27th, 2021 at 9:00 am

WHY: 45 million Americans or 14.5% of our population including many Youth were already food insecure prior to this pandemic.

Continued on page 8

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

In the meantime, we are asking for your help. Firstly, we ask you to pray for this event and that God moves through our Youth and all who volunteer their time. Secondly, we ask you to consider giving of your time and financial resources to support our Youth who are participating in this year's event.

- **PRAY** for this event, our participating Youth and volunteers
- **GIVE.** Sponsor one of our youth. Use donation forms in the Narthex after our service on January 31st or get one from the foyer of the Social Center. These forms will be available right through February 21st. Please make your check out to **First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen** with **Famine** in the memo, insert it in the envelope provided, then place in the Offering Box or send to the church office
- **DONATE USING EITHER :** <https://www.classy.org/campaign/2021-famine/c319432> or <https://tinyurl.com/y8ffksu4> This link takes you to the Church website where Famine 2021 has been added to the list of funds you can donate to. If you are supporting a youth, there is a box for their name.
- **VOLUNTEER** Join us Saturday for our Famine event; many hands make light work. We also need volunteers for "pre-famine" activities.

OUR GOAL: We are trying to raise \$15,000 which will assist local communities in their food recovery movements, and it will feed over 20,000 people. After event expenses, funds will go directly to Kids Against Hunger, the FPC Food Pantry, and World Vision.

Questions on the Youth Program, please contact Rev. Justin Karmann by email: jkarmann@fpcweb.org or call: (732) 491-2260



Music Ministry

Hymn texts have a way of speaking to what is on our hearts, especially when things are stressful and uncertain. The following text was written by Horatius Bonar in 1846. Each stanza pairs an invitation from Jesus with a response from the narrator. The three invitations recall how Jesus welcomed those who were heavy laden, offered living water, and identified himself as the light of the world.

I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one; stoop down and drink and live."

I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's
light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk till traveling days are done.



Are you a mom of a little one that would appreciate some adult conversation?

Mother's Together will be meeting once a month for a brief devotion, monthly topic, and upbeat conversation. Join us on Zoom ! Meeting ID #: 82311528459

Contact Nancy Leardi nleardi@fpcweb.org

LENTEN RESOURCES



Our Church Library offers a variety of selections for Lent. Make an appointment to visit the church library by calling Nancy (732) 491 2264 or the main church line. You may also call our librarian, Marie Hoffsommer at (732) 549-0044. Let us know if you would like to have a book prepared for pick up in the Social Center foyer.

The Season of Lent

is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter....in dying we live, that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death. To be raised with Christ means one must also die with Christ.

*In order to embrace the resurrection, we must experience the passion of Jesus. The way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death of the "old self."
In dying, we live.*

(Excerpt from *The Season of Lent* from the website of the Presbyterian Mission—pcusa.org)



6:30 - 7:20 pm Drive up Ashes
7:30 pm Worship Service*

* In-person by reservation and livestreamed

We invite you to begin your Lenten journey with a covid safe Ash Wednesday Service.

Anyone wishing to get ashes may drive up to church where Rev. Karmann will give ashes by the Handicap parking leading to the exit. Just roll down your windows to receive ashes.

The Worship Service will be livestreamed on Facebook. There will be ashes and Communion in the Service. Due to limited seating please call or use this link to reserve: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ash-wednesday-worship-service-730-pm-tickets-137795920307> We will take seat reservations until noon of February 16.

Enter the 40 days of Lent in fellowship.

AN INVITATION
First Presbyterian Church
of Metuchen

Lenten Concert Series

A 30-minute concert of beautiful music

Wednesdays at Noon

First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary
270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840

February 24	Jenny Cline on Flute and Brenda Day on Piano
March 3	Andrew Monath and Brenda Day
March 10	Baritone Matthew LaPine and Brenda Day on Piano
March 17	An Irish music concert by Soprano Joyce Campana and Tenor Patrick Rogers
March 24	John Yakubik on Cello and Brenda Day on Piano
March 31	Elaine Hanse on Piano and Brenda Day on Organ

Join us for some
peace and calm in your day.
ADMISSION IS FREE.

The Lenten Concert Series has become a highlight of the season of Lent here at our church - a chance to take 30 minutes out of a busy day and sit and enjoy some beautiful music. This year's series might look a bit different - at the time of this writing, it is unknown whether the concerts will be in person or livestreamed. If the COVID cases have gotten better by late February, we will have the concerts in the sanctuary (and still live stream them for anyone who isn't comfortable venturing out). The audience will sit socially distanced with masks on throughout the concert. If the cases remain about what they are now, all of the concerts will be livestreamed only. We invite you to check our website and our Facebook page for definite plans.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

On October 26th, members of session, deacon leaders and members who were part of past strategic planning met to envision the church's near future. The question asked:

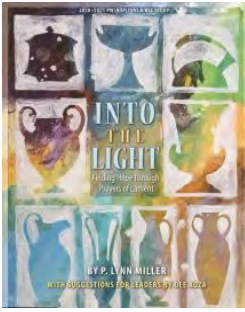
where will our energies and efforts go as a congregation in the next three years? After a plenary discussion, three groups were formed that explored a series of questions. From these questions, ideas and initiatives were listed. Then, those who were gathered, had the opportunity to

vote. From this, we collated the data into four categories :

- Relating to people in a new/different way
- Local Mission
- Youth/Young Families
- Endowment/Stewardship

A Strategic Planning Committee is being formed now to pursue creating a vision for action on these four goals. Exciting things to come and a bright future for our congregation. If you're interested, please contact Rev. Karmann.

ADULT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



INTO THE LIGHT Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament

**Lesson Five: February 1
6:00 pm (Eat and learn!)
By Zoom**

The February study will be about Lamenting Life.

The primary scripture is from Job 3: 1-4, 9-13, 24-26 with Deb Teall leading. There is still a couple of the book studies available for free to anyone joining. We always have room for more and we will be thrilled to have anyone join us!

This study is for everyone!

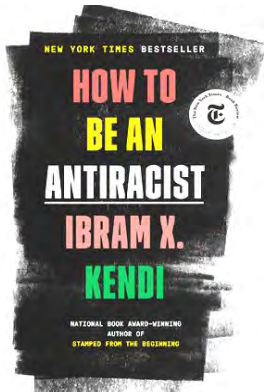
If you would like to consider leading a lesson, please email Deb.

Join Zoom Meeting Hosted by Deb Teall and PW:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86590898594?pwd=VFdOMjk4U2laOEhjcXJvZWsySUxTQT09>

Call, text or email Deb for a Study Guide: (908) 917-3990 or debteall@optonline.net OR jump on the Zoom even without a Study Guide!

Racial Justice Book Study



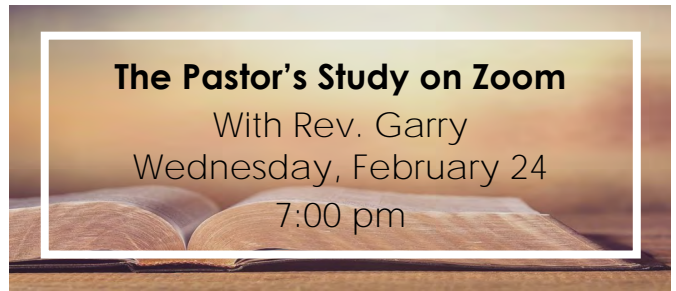
Sunday, February 21st at 11a.m.

Join us this Sunday for another meeting of a virtual book study of Ibram X. Kendi's "How To Be An AntiRacist". This continuing study on racial justice will cover Chapters 8 through 11. Members of the Racial Justice Committee will lead discussions in smaller group settings to allow for a richer exchange and conversation. This ZOOM link will be used for all scheduled book studies:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6094807259>

Use this meeting ID to join: 609 480 7259

We invite you to check out pages 13 and 14 for a Racial Awareness Resource guide created for everyone.



Jesus and John Wayne, by Kristin Kobes du Mez, was a tough read.

Granted, she is a wonderful writer and her prose moves quickly and gracefully from one topic to another. Truly, the research she has done is thorough and lacks the sloppiness of someone trying to publish a book quickly to capture the fickle attention of the American reader.

And, her topic, religion in America, is not something that I find to be beyond my interest or comprehension.

But this book was tough for me.

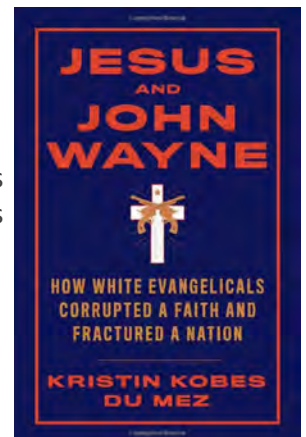
The difficulty was how close it hit home and how much of my adolescence was contained in its pages. She is writing about the great hope of so many: America is a place of God's choosing; this is a land of manifest destiny; we are a key part in the plan of creation. In each chapter she unravels this hope, lays bare its myopic vision, and, more importantly, begs the reader to consider that a drunken Hollywood star may not be a role model for following Jesus.

But it became really tough when I remembered: I had a poster of John Wayne in my room for most of my youth!

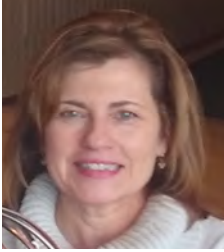
Jesus and John Wayne is a careful, well researched consideration of what Christianity can become in America.

There is a temptation to make our faith a triumphant march instead of a humble following.

What du Mez does is ask a single question again and again: Is Jesus really a soldier killing them all? Is Christianity really about swagger? It may be that you have exhausted all Netflix has to offer. If so, or even if you haven't, read Jesus and John Wayne.



Celebrating 15 Years



Nancy Leardi

This February marks Nancy Leardi's fifteenth anniversary as staff member of the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen.

Little did we know, when Nancy joined us back in 2006, how well she would foster and facilitate our young people's ability to share Christ's love in so many ways. As Director of Christian Education, Nancy excels at culti-

vating biblical curiosity and education for our youth from Preschool up to High school! Over the past 15 years, Nancy has significantly improved Sunday School curriculum as well as upgrading training for our Sunday School Teaching volunteers. And she's done a remarkable job re-making our VBS program, along with Brenda Day and Julie Shaver. But it's not just about the little ones - Nancy singlehandedly developed and leads Presbyterian Young Women, for middle and high school girls. She has worked hard at also developing different types of opportunities for adult Christian education.

A few weeks ago, The Personnel Commission recognized the incredible work that Nancy has done this past year during the pandemic. Some of these accomplishments include:

Creating "Faith Kits" for the virtual Sunday school. These to-go bags contain crafts and activities organized so that

when the Sunday School teacher "virtually" announces a project, the children can quickly find what they need in the worship bags.

Developing a virtual VBS program. Nancy was not going to let a pandemic stop our VBS program. She even added decorations to the Sanctuary so that the children wouldn't miss out— even though they could not be in the Sanctuary this year.

Finding readers for our Sunday Services. Worship has been very different this year, and having Congregants read during services is one way to make enhance Worship. Nancy encourages readers and meets with them during the week to ensure they are comfortable with their reading in advance of Sunday Services.

Seamlessly shifting to a virtual Sunday school curriculum and then coaching and supporting the Sunday school volunteer teachers in leading their zoom classes.

Organizing Virtual Sunday Adult Enrichment sessions, Bible Study, and other "gatherings" that are of interest to our congregation. This includes making sure everyone can attend these virtual sessions via Zoom.

Nancy, it has been a wonderful 15 years and on behalf of the Staff, Session, Deacons, Commissions, Committees, the Congregation and the Community, we thank you for your dedication and devotion to our Church and look forward to many more years to come.



A pilot program for a Soup Ministry will take place from now until Easter. We face a few more months of winter weather as vaccines are distributed, which will leave many still isolated. We are looking for volunteers to make a pot of soup. Containers of soup would be delivered to congregants who are homebound, recovering from surgery or covid, working on the frontlines in health care, or feeling isolated.

Why soup? Soup is warm and comforting. Soups can be made ahead of time and reheated. Most soups can be made simply and fairly inexpensively and divided into quart containers which can be left safely on a porch for congregants.

If you know someone who could use some "soup love" or are interested in helping with this ministry – donating a pot of soup, delivering soup to a doorstep, or in some other way – please contact Laura Draper (draperfam44@gmail.com).

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Here's something to look forward to—

A scaled down version of the popular rummage sale is scheduled for June 5 (Rain date June 12). The sale is being planned outside for outside under the tent and in the field. We know many of you are eager to send in your donations. Since this is a smaller version of what is normally done, donations are limited to a selection of items. Details of this sale are still being finalized and we will share this in the April Parish News.

PW is committed to supporting financially various church programs and other ministries. The income from the rummage sales has allowed them to do this, together with your partnership.

Stay tuned!



BLOOD DRIVE

First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen
FPC Social Center Dining Room
Sunday, February 21, 2021
10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Schedule your appointment today!
 Call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or download the
 Blood Donor App or go to www.redcrossblood.org
 Enter when prompted the sponsor code: **FPCM**

Special offer from Amazon as a *Thank You!* for those
 coming to give blood Feb. 1 to 26:
 Receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card by email
 Terms and conditions apply: visit redblood.org/together



We are updating our Photo Directory and we need YOUR help! NO appointments needed - just a simple selfie of you and your loved ones— as simple as that!

Whether you're local or out of state—this invitation is for everyone! If you are reading the Parish News, we want you! We need just one picture per family. If you are local and need help with your picture, let us know and we will figure out a way to help you.

Email your photos to:

Sue Harmon sharmon@fpcweb.org or
 Vicky Lacson at vlacson@fpcweb.org

We have extended the date with hopes that more will participate. Please send them by February 19, 2021. We can't wait to see our complete family album with your photos!



Community Nursery School has begun registration for the 2021/2022 school year. FPC families will receive a 5% discount on tuition for the year. If you are interested in taking a tour of CNS, please call the office at 732-491-2240 to schedule an appointment after school hours. CNS will be offering half day classes for our Young Learners (2.5 years old) and Pre-K3, and half day or full day options for Pre-K4s. Half day K-Wrap will also be offered to compliment

the half day kindergarten programs in Edison and Metuchen.

For additional information on the Community Nursery School Program, please visit our website: www.communityns.org

A Sincere Thank You

The extended Krauszer family would like to thank you for all of your well wishes expressed to our family. The cards, flowers, phone calls, memorial gifts and prayer shawls honoring our Mom were so heartfelt. What a blessing!

Joan Krauszer was so much a part of the Church family and we are so thankful for you, the congregation at First Presbyterian Church to walk with us through this difficult time.

Peace be with you.

Barbara, Nancy, Cindy and Jim

Thank You, First Presbyterian Church



Together with my siblings, we're grateful for the warm expressions of love and sympathy that you have extended on the sudden passing of our beloved Mom, Lydia Sugue. She lived a full life and now rests in her eternal home.

Be blessed.

Vicky Lacson & Sugue Family



First Presbyterian Church
of Metuchen

Where God's Love Welcomes All

Contact

First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen
270 Woodbridge Avenue
Metuchen, NJ 08840
Fpcweb.org
732.491.2300

Amazing Grace

Statement of Faith in *Action*

~&~

Racial Awareness Resource



First Presbyterian Church
of Metuchen

Where God's Love Welcomes All



Statement of Faith in Action



- *We believe:* Black lives have been disproportionately impacted by violence and oppression, with many cut short by acts of racism.
- *We believe:* Black lives have been treated as if they matter less in America for far too long.
- *We believe:* Racial oppression is the opposite of what God intends for humanity.
- *We believe:* The Church is called to denounce and oppose all forms of racism, discrimination, brutality, violence and oppression, particularly those reinforced by systems of power.
- *We believe:* People – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religion, age, or sexual orientation – deserve dignity, love, respect, freedom from degrading or violent treatment, and equitable access to social, educational, and economic opportunities.

Racial Awareness Resources

Suggested Books

- Christian Perspective & Secular Perspective
- *"So You Want to Talk About Race"* by Ijeoma Oluo (Jan 2018)
- *"How to Be an Anti-Racist"* by Ibram X. Kendi (August 2019)
- *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* by Beverly Daniel Tatum (September 2017)
- *"Caste"* by Isabel Wilkerson (August 2020)
- *"Brian the Brave"* by Paul Stewart and Jane Porter (August 2019) – children's book
- *"Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor"* by Layla F. Saad (January 2020)
- *"Anti-Racist Baby Board Book"* by Ibram X. Kendi (July 2020)
- *"Let Justice Roll Down"* by John Perkins (August 2014)
- *"The Cross and the Lynching Tree"* by James Cone (January 2015)

Books May Be Purchased at Source of Knowledge, a Black-Owned Book Store in Newark, NJ. (973.824.2556)

Parents & Teacher Resource

- *Talking About Race.* National Museum of African American History & Culture of the Smithsonian Institute
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>

Study & Training

- **Growing a Personal Anti-Racist Voice and Identity.** A self-guided study developed by Louisville Seminary – August 5, 2020
<https://pcweb.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/racial-identity-study.pdf>
- **Resources for Self-Study on Racism** from the Presbyterian Historical Society – September 22, 2020 (New Jersey):
<https://amp.mycentraljersey.com/amp/3151371001>
- **Classic Civil Rights Material:** MLK's Letter from Birmingham Jail:
https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles/Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
- <https://www.pcusa.org/racial-justice-resources/>

Black History for White People on Apple Podcasts or Spotify

BLACK HISTORY



- **Our goal is simple—educate white people on black history.** #BHforWP is a multiethnic collective dedicated to loving black and brown people by educating, resourcing, and challenging white people to actively participate in racial justice. The highest calling of humanity is to love. Whether you know it or not, the racial disparities in our country hurt us. New episodes will be released on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month.

First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen

CHURCH CLERGY AND STAFF**CLERGY****Rev. Dr. Fred Garry**732-491-2330*Senior Pastor/Head of Staff* fgary@fpcweb.org**Rev. Justin Karmann**732-491-2260*Associate Pastor* jkarmann@fpcweb.org**Rev. Robert A. Beringer, Pastor Emeritus****CHRISTIAN EDUCATION****Nancy Leardi**732-491-2264*Director Christian Ed.* nleardi@fpcweb.org**Kat Davis***Christian Education Production Leader***MUSIC MINISTRY****Brenda Day**732-491-2266*Minister of Music* brendaday@fpcweb.org**Elaine Hansen** ehansen@fpcweb.org*Assistant Bell Director and Accompanist***SUPPORT STAFF****Sue Harmon**732-491-2302*Director of Operations/Treasurer* sharmon@fpcweb.org**Jonathan Hollenbeck**732-491-2270*Facilities Manager* jhollenbeck@fpcweb.org**Bob O'Connell** 732-491-2270*Facilities Assistant* boconnell@fpcweb.org**Vicky Lacson** 732-491-2303*Office Assistant* vlacson@fpcweb.org**Nick Spadavecchia** 732-491-2305*Communications Consultant*

..... nspadavecchia@fpcweb.org

Nate Brown 732-347-9951*Technician and Sound Design Consultant*

..... nbrown@fpcweb.org

Merry Matlock 732-491-2301*Administrative Asst.* mmatlock@fpcweb.org**Sarah Teti** .. 732-491-2325*Food Pantry Coordinator* foodpantry@fpcweb.org**COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL****Fran Brennan** 732-491-2242*Director/Treasurer* fbrennan@fpcweb.org**Colleen Smith** 732-491-2242*Head Teacher* csmith@fpcweb.org**CHURCH 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. Our priority is to ensure the safety of our congregation, staff, and others who are part of our ministry. Please exercise judgment but always check for details of a possible cancellation or modification of our Sunday morning service and programs.

**FRIENDLY REMINDERS
FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE:**

- Please pick up your 2021 Offering Envelopes anytime from the Church Office Lobby.
- Office will be closed on February 15th in observance of President's Day.



- Missed a livestream service? Not on Facebook? Wish you could see the service again? Well, you can because each week our services are uploaded to our YouTube channel, usually by noon on Sunday. Check out FPC Metuchen. Tune in anytime at your convenience. Be sure to become a subscriber.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz6R3230GroUcBGiOgW7HXQ>

**INDONESIAN FELLOWSHIP
FEBRUARY PULPIT SUPPLY**

February 14 Rev. Ferdinanda Pattipeilohy

February 21 Rev. Henderika Wattimena

February 28 Rev. Ferdinanda Pattipeilohy

All Indonesian Worship Services will continue to meet virtually through Facebook Live.

*"Tak berkesudahan kasih setia TUHAN,
tak habis-habisnya rahmat-Nya, selalu baru
tiap pagi; besar kesetiaan-Mu! "TUHAN
adalah bagianku," kata jiwaku, oleh sebab
itu aku berharap kepada-Nya."*

- Ratapan 3:22-24

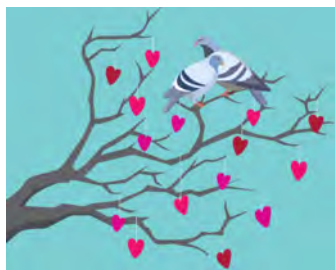
FEBRUARY 2021 PARISH

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

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ
PERMIT 746

Address Service Requested

TO:



**Beloved,
let us love one another,
because
love is from God.**

1 John 4: 7a

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 vlacon@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
Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 4:30pm
Telephone: (732) 491-2300 Email: fpc@fpcweb.org

Sunday Worship Service

(By Reservation only) 9:30 am

Online Sunday Morning Worship : 9:30 am

Livestreamed on FPC Metuchen Facebook