

## First Press Newsletter



*We are a welcoming community formed in Christ, committed to sharing his love with others – with feet that carry us out into the world, with hands that serve, and with hearts in fellowship and faith.*

Dear Friends,

Two years ago during Lent, we created the opportunity to experience a midweek worship service combined with a simple meal. Because the Lenten Supper Series has met a need by providing food for body and soul, we will once more offer this opportunity to gather as God's people. Again, members of Trinity will join us. All are encouraged to make the supper series a part of your Lenten experience!

Grace and peace,

Bruce



### ***2020 Lenten Supper Series Journeys of Faith***

Join us at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays in the church dining room for a simple supper followed by a brief worship service. During worship, members and friends of First Pres and Trinity will share a portion of their faith journey. The evening will conclude promptly at 7:00. MaryEllen Castaldo will provide a Lenten children's activity during worship. Sign up each Sunday or call the office by 1:00 p.m. Monday (201.652.2504) to let us know you're coming.

<u><b>Date</b></u>	<u><b>Speaker</b></u>	<u><b>Preparing the Meal</b></u>
3/04	Joanne Bonwick, First Pres Deacon	First Pres Growth Committee
3/11	Al Schagen, former FPC Clerk of Session	First Pres Board of Deacons
3/18	Robin Brickman, VP of Consistory, Wyckoff Reformed Church	Trinity Presbyterian
3/25	Karen Daeschler, Elder, Trinity PC	First Pres CE Committee
4/01	Elise Bates Russell, Executive Director Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center	First Pres Session

## Endowment Corner



The Celtic tree of life (in Irish, Crann Bethadh) plays an intricate part in Irish heritage and is among one of the most popular Celtic symbols. It symbolizes the forces of nature coming together in perfect harmony to maintain balance in the universe. The Celts believed that trees were ancestors of human beings.

When a new settlement was formed in Ireland a tree was planted in the middle of the plantation. Assemblies were held beneath it as it provided shelter, food and acted as a home for wildlife. Without Trees, life would have been extraordinarily difficult. Trees were also considered to hold a connection to the spirit world, ancestors and doorways into other worlds. The most sacred of all was the Oak tree. The tree of life symbol itself relates qualities to it such as wisdom, strength and longevity. The Celts believed that their enemies would be rendered powerless if their sacred tree was cut down.



What does all this have to do with Endowment? Well, we have our very own “Tree of Life” as our way to honor those present and past. We treasure those engraved Leaves and Stones as symbols of our respect for those who came before us and for those who we wish to be remembered long after we have passed away.

Consider purchasing a Leaf (\$500) or Stone (\$2000) to create a lasting memory of someone important in your life. Pick up a “Tree of Life” brochure on the table in the hallway across from the large bulletin board or contact Joanne Bonwick for more information. Tel (201) 652-7520 or email [joannedbonwick@gmail.com](mailto:joannedbonwick@gmail.com).

And may bheannaigh Dia thú!



***Legacy Sunday,  
February 2nd***  
Reverend Ellie Johns-Kelley, our Ministry Relations Officer at the Presbyterian Foundation, preached and led a workshop following the worship service.



## Sunday School News

Thank to Kathleen Barkho, Sue Fischer, Christine Tobias and for teaching our February rotations.



Wandering in the wilderness and the 10 commandments and  
The battle of Jericho!

And to Paul and Sarah Eliya for teaching the end of  
January and helping the students make the parting of the Red Sea  
banner!!!



Confirmation class news-

Confirmands visited a church member to serve communion on Wed. January 29<sup>th</sup> and enjoyed  
dinner together at the Tom Sawyer diner in Paramus.



On  
Saturday  
February 8,  
our last  
Second  
Saturday  
service of  
the season.



First pres. confirmands worked on assembling bookcases for our Habitat family and took part in  
the worship service. Parents of the confirmands provided supper, a delicious meal!  
Thank you to all who participated it was a wonderful and meaningful event.

**The March Food Drive~ we will be collecting non-perishable food items for  
Ridgewood Social Services...sponsored by Christian Ed**



Please bring in your donations for Ridgewood Social Services throughout the  
month of March

Suggested items include: Canned Fish, such as salmon, tuna and sardines  
Canned meat, such as chicken and turkey, Rice, Quinoa, Pasta, Tomato Sauce, Cereal  
Canned fruits / canned veggies, Chili or canned legumes, such as peas, lentils, beans, Low-  
fat dry milk or shelf stable milk **Please NO GLASS JARS!**

**Thank YOU!**

\*\*\*\*\*Save the date\*\*\*\*\*

Vacation Bible School is planned for the week of August 3-7 2020



Before you plan your vacations, mark your calendars.  
Hope to see you there!

**First Presbyterian Church**

**MaryEllen Castaldo at [maryellen.castaldo@firstpresridgewood.org](mailto:maryellen.castaldo@firstpresridgewood.org)**

Please prayerfully consider volunteering to make this program a great success!

## Mission

In February, Isabel Jacoby and Jessica Lee brought Girl Scout Troop 132 from Glen Rock to serve the monthly dinner at St. Paul's. Seven girls cooked and served, preparing lasagna, chicken mac and cheese, along with green salad, fruit salad, bread and homemade chocolate chip cookies. This is the third year the Troop has handled the February dinner, and the last one as they prepare to graduate and leave for college. It's one of their favorite community service activities. Special thanks to First Pres for sharing the St. Paul's experience with them.



In March, Jessica Strader will be organizing the youth group to cook and we will be continuing with our regular volunteers again in April! We serve the first Sunday of each month and if you are interested in becoming involved in this mission, please reach out to Laura Dilorio at [lauradiiorio@gmail.com](mailto:lauradiiorio@gmail.com) or 201-634-9322.



Set your clocks ahead on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> for a Special Worship Service as Jan Cross, Donna Flagg, Ruth Plucinski, and Li Towt share their experiences on a build in New Orleans for Habitat.

**Our Next Habitat build date is March 21<sup>st</sup>, sign up or see Donna Flagg.**





# MEET our *Pastor*

It's official  
he's our  
Ballantine!



Members of the PNC~ Sami Eliya, Jessica Strader, Robyn Byrne, Michael Reid, Kathleen Barkho and Andy Castaldi (Christine Tobias not present) presenting Pastor Bruce with gifts following the Congregational vote on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> !

Pastor Sam Stone from Trinity was the moderator for the meeting, and then there was cake!



*And  
I will give you  
shepherds  
after my own heart,  
who will feed you  
with  
knowledge  
and  
understanding.  
Jeremiah 3:15*



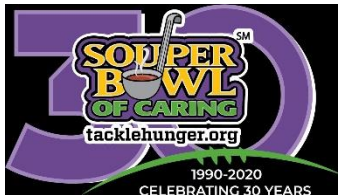
Stay tuned for Pastor Bruce's Installation Date!

## First Pres in Pictures



Ella dancing to the music of Brian Princing during the Second Saturday Worship Service in February.

The children presented Pastor Bruce with a sign that reads Ridgewood-no place like home!



Souper Bowl Sunday raised \$700 for Eva's Village!  
Denim Day raised \$677 for the High School Mission this summer at  
Almost Heaven Habitat in West Virginia! Thanks to all who donated!





## Session Actions~

### January/February:

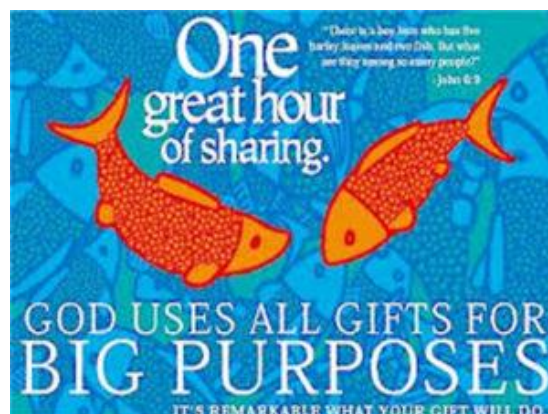
- Approved 662,000 Church budget for 2020.
- Approved the infant baptism of Hunter Benjamin Wilson.
- Donated \$250.00 to Will Yates to purchase gifts for his Cambodia Mission trip.
- Spent \$250.00 for ¼ page ad supporting Dana Feeney in the Ridgewood High School Jamboree program.
- Spent \$250.00 for ½ page ad in the Dad's Night program at Ridgewood's Somerville/Hawes Schools.
- Elected the following officers of the Corporation for 2020:  
President-Richard Davies                      Vice President-Craig Walters  
Treasurer-Andrew Castaldi              Secretary-Joan Davies
- Voted the free will offering at Lenten suppers go to One Great Hour of Sharing

## Church Staff~

Pastor	Rev. Bruce Ballantine
Director of Children & Families	MaryEllen Castaldo
Director of Music	Dr. Ed Schmiedecke
Organist	Linda Sweetman Waters
Director Cherub Choir and Bells	Carol Schmiedecke
Administrative Manager	Dana Feeney
Youth Leader	Jessica Strader
Tom Carozza	Sexton
Custodian	George Wood
Director Nursery School	Julia Bolt
Newsletter Editor	Joan Davies (Volunteer)

**Church Phone** (201) 652-2504

**Pastor Bruce:** (215) 337-5623 please contact him directly for Pastoral Care  
[www.firstpresridgewood.org](http://www.firstpresridgewood.org)



**Our One Great Hour of Sharing goal is \$10,000!**