

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,

“All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we’re giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That’s one of the things that connects us as neighbors - in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver.”

- The World According to Mister Rogers, p. 136

Long before I read these wise words by Fred Rogers, I had come to believe that the person who needs to be helped is, at the same time, offering something significant to the one who is providing the help. This may be especially true within the community of the church.

For when we allow a church member to help us, we are providing a Christian friend with the opportunity to experience the joy that comes from service; and in the process, our friendship is deepened. We are providing a sister or brother in Christ with the opportunity to live out the commandment to love a neighbor. Remembering that the scriptures teach us that faith without works is dead, we are providing another person of faith with the opportunity to fully live out his or her faith.

Therefore, my friends, if you need a ride to worship or another event at the church, don’t hesitate to ask Sue Sofka to arrange for a member of the Transportation Team to pick you up. If you have been ill and struggling with cooking meals for yourself, don’t hesitate to contact Mary Shaw to ask for some help from Caring Cooks. If you have been struggling with food insecurity, you should be aware that the Deacons are in the process of starting a new food ministry to assist people who find themselves in that situation; don’t hesitate to contact Christine Tobias (or me) to learn more. If you have been struggling financially, please know that you are not alone. Don’t hesitate to contact me to inquire about the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. If you are feeling overwhelmed by life and need someone to listen, please email or call me to arrange for a time to meet.

When you need help and are willing to accept it from the church, you are, in effect, helping the church. You are helping us live out our mission statement, which reads in part: “We are a welcoming community formed in Christ, committed to sharing his love with others”

Therefore, the next time you need help, please make your need known to your church family. In so doing, you will be helping another person of faith and the church as a whole. And who knows? The next time someone else needs help, you may be the one to provide it.

Yours in Christ,
Bruce



In 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group:
"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."

Get into the game by making a donation in a soup pot. High School Students will be posted at all exits to collect your donations. After Worship come and enjoy a cup of soup or chili and stew courtesy of Christian Ed and Growth committees!

OUR GOAL IS TO RAISE \$680.00 FOR EVA'S VILLAGE- ENOUGH TO FEED 100 PEOPLE!

+++++



First Pres has been richly blessed by members who have come before us, come find out how you too can be a part of our legacy circle.

Please join us for worship and conversation on **Legacy Sunday, February 2nd** when Reverend Ellie Johns-Kelley, our Ministry Relations Officer at the Presbyterian Foundation, will be with us in worship and for a workshop following the worship service.

+++++



Come to Second Saturday Worship!

February 8th at 5:00 PM in the chapel, then stay for a light supper and fellowship in the dining room.

The Confirmation Class will be participating!

+++++



The Session has called a Special Congregational Meeting on **Sunday, February 9, 2020**, after the 11:00 a.m. worship service to hear and act on a report of the Pastor Nominating Committee.

+++++



Ash Wednesday Service will be held at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, February, 26, 2020.

Check the church bulletin for more information.

Endowment Corner



Thanks to an astute succession of financial watchdogs, from Bruce Crocco to Tim Wentworth to Richard Davies, and their loyal teams, our Endowment Fund reached the original goal of just over one million dollars by the end of 2019. We gratefully give substantial credit to our professional money managers at Romano Brothers, for their expert money management over the last few years. Our partnership with Romano Brothers has enabled our fund to grow even during uneven financial markets.

But this is not the time to sit back and rest on our laurels. We know the value of a strong Endowment and we are committed to continued growth because we know that a larger Endowment means larger gifts to share with the world. God knows our every thought and intent. In Matthew 25:40-45 Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." God knows our hearts. He knows when we're slacking. When we love we give sacrificially.

We currently raise funds through our "Tree of Life" project, Memorial Gifts, Green Umbrella Note Cards and outright Cash Gifts.

In February, we're introducing more information about legacy gifts; those gifts that are planned to be left to the church in support of its ongoing life after we have passed. We have decided that we would like to acknowledge those legacy gifts and an engraved Memorial Dove will be placed above the "Tree of Life" for all who included the church in their estate giving.

The Reverend Ellie-Johns-Kelley, a Ministry Relations Officer for the Presbyterian Foundation will be preaching on "God's Legacy of Love" in February. This will be followed by a presentation, so please watch for an invitation to this exciting opportunity.



Monthly Mission

On January 5th, the Di Iorio family went to St Paul's homeless shelter in Paterson to serve the 18 men staying there overnight.

Thank you to Jessica Strader and her HS students who cooked enough lasagnas and chicken casseroles to serve two months in a row! Suzy McDevitt made a delicious mexican dish.

Thank you to Joan Davies for freezing the delicious hash brown leftovers from the Christmas brunch!

First Pres has renewed its yearly commitment to serve a meal to the St Paul homeless shelter in Paterson on every first Sunday of the month.

Volunteers to cook a large tray of any entree are always welcome to participate in this joint effort. Meals can be prepared at your own convenience and placed in the freezer downstairs. We will thaw your dish a day before serving it. You can also bring it to the FP kitchen on the first Sunday of the month and we will take it with us after the Worship Service.

Please contact Laura Di Iorio at lauradiiorio6@gmail.com for any information.

Matthew 25:35' For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in...

Sunday School News

Thank you to all who made the Sunday Pageant on Sunday, December 22nd a great success. It ran so smoothly and all of our youth shared their special gifts to create a beautiful service! A special Thank you to Jill Critchley and Sue Fischer for your help with the costumes and to Linda Sweetman Waters and Carol & Ed Schmiedecke for all of your help with practices and sharing your extraordinary gift of music!

And to all the students who shined~

Isabella Burger	Frankie Feltmann	Kyle Schnure
Olivia Coleman	Luke Eliya	Shane Strickland
Katelyn Edelbach	Kyle Feltmann	Colden Tobias
Olivia Davis	Maddy Eliya	CJ Torielli
Patrick Edelbach	Luke Feltmann	Collin Feeney
David Edelbach	Kennedy Tobias	Dante Torielli
Hudson Feeney	Maddy Santangelo	Palmer Yates
Johnny Eliya	Samantha Santangelo	Gianna Torielli
	Amanda Schnure	Will Yates

And Samantha McDevitt and Taylor Magrath for their amazing solos!

Our Confirmands are busy! They will be visiting a homebound member to serve communion and a short service. Confirmands and their families will be providing a meal on Saturday, February 8th at our Second Saturday Service. Youth will take part in the service and assemble bookcases to be delivered on Saturday March 21st to a Habitat Family.



Thank you to Sue Fischer and Linda Strickland for teaching rotations in January on Moses and the burning bush and the Red Sea!



Christmas Bake Sale was a great success~ A BIG thank you to Kate Yates and Sandy Santangelo and everyone who baked and made this bake sale a wonderful event! Thank you to Santa for making a special appearance! Total proceeds raised for Family promise were \$1,438.00 to support CAMP LOTS OF FUN!

Nursery School News~ Things have been very busy at the weekday Nursery School. The Nursery School staff was appreciative of the Nursery School Committee members who visited and brought "Welcome Back" refreshments for the start of the New Year.

We just completed our annual parent/teacher conferences in January and are enjoying getting back into the swing of things. We hosted an Open House on January 24th, with great reception.

In February, our classes will be enjoying a visit from Ridgewood pediatric dentist, Dr. Zimmer, to celebrate Dental Health month! Let's not forget about our Valentine's Day celebrations! Each of our classes made special Valentine's for their families and shared special treats with their classmates!

Registration for the 2020-2021 school year is underway. Feel free to stop by and check out the Nursery School happenings! There are still openings for the 20/21 school year. We offer programs for children 2 ½ years – 5 years, 5 days/week. Please contact Julia Bolt, Director, at 201-445-2552 for more information and a tour of our preschool. Church members receive a tuition discount. We offer a fun,



nurturing environment, while preparing our children for Kindergarten. We look forward to hearing from you!

The hand bell choir making joyful noise on Christmas Eve!

Church Staff~

Interim Minister	Pastor 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
Treasurer	Carolyn Reitz
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

