



CHURCH KEY NEWSLETTER



First Presbyterian Church
of Branchville, New Jersey

Volume 24, No.1

January 2024

JANUARY AT A GLANCE:

1st – Office Closed for New Year’s

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

15th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day—Office Closed



28th – Annual Congregational Meeting



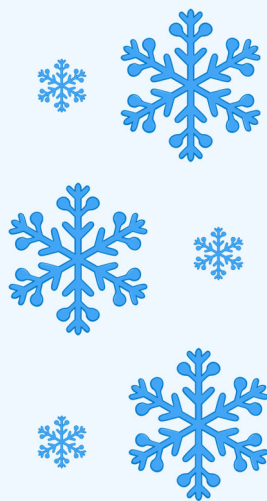
CHURCH KEY NEWSLETTER



Our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to gather as a church family for worship and spiritual fellowship, to nurture and educate, and to proclaim the gospel to the world.

INDEX	Pg.
Cover Page	1
Pastor Page	2
Prayer Concerns	3
Church News	4-5
Session Update	6
Stewardship	7
Birthdays/ Recipe	8
Information/ Calendar	9-10



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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BRANCHVILLE, NJ 07826



VOLUME 23, NO. 12

DECEMBER 2023

NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

It's time to ring in the New Year!! We hope everyone had a joyous and meaningful Christmas celebration and that all the wishes you had have come true!

We can remember, back when most transactions were handled by paper checks, how many times we ruined a check by writing "2023" instead of the new date of "2024." It was a transition that was normal and understandable and that gradually changed over time.

The same may be said of the transitions we are going through as a congregation. It is time to look ahead to "what comes next" for permanent pastoral leadership. It is a process, and it requires discernment and discussion, review and reflection, dreaming and doing as we move into the future that God has already planned for us.

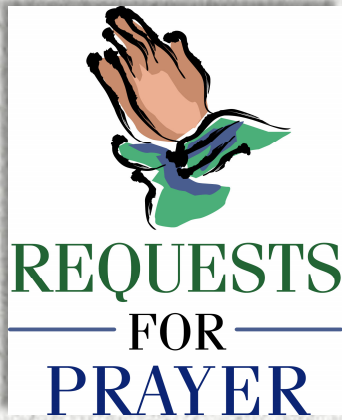
These are exciting times! They are also challenging times as we realize that everyone handles change differently. Some are chomping at the bit to move forward with all deliberate speed. Others are willing to climb on board the wagon that those horses are eager to pull. But others are saying, "Wait a minute! Hold on there. Let's not be too hasty."

And all of these attitudes and many more are found in any congregation, at any time in its life, but especially in times of transition like the ones we are going through.

We are confident that the foundation of love and trust among us will hold firm and that God will see us safely through. Our hope is that the year 2024 will be a wonderful year of mission and ministry, of education and service, of spiritual growth and discernment, and renewed commitment to the good purposes that God in Christ Jesus has for the family of faith known as the First Presbyterian Church of Branchville.

Yours in service to Christ,

Interim Co-Pastors Nancy and David



Please offer prayers for these concerns that have been brought to our attention. They are collected each Sunday morning during the past month from the prayer concerns list

- Aaron
- Andrew
- Andrew R.
- Anita
- Anna Marchette
- Baby Matt
- Beth
- Bev Keur
- Bob
- Bobby
- Carolyn
- Casey
- Cathy
- Charlie
- Cindy Jones and the Hornyak Family for the loss of Gail Pollard 3rd one to pass away in 1 month
- Connie & John Dubas
- Donna
- Edmund Zukowski in the hospital
- Esther
- Evalyn & Nancy
- Fierdorczyk & Elvidge families on passing of Maria.
- For those whom Christmas brings loneliness and sorrow.
- Grace
- Jamie
- Jean Ransom's family for her passing on Christmas Eve morning.
- Jim Toth
- John Lawson in hospice
- Joseph Matheis
- Joyce
- Larry
- Laura S. recovering from hip replacement.
- Marian with Covid
- Marilyn DalCin who had back surgery
- Mercedes
- Michele
- Nancy Young's Mother, Marge, who underwent heart surgery
- Paul Opilla
- Peace for Israel, Peace on earth.
- Rayna
- Rev. Barry Young's Brother, Brian, esophageal cancer, and surgery 12/19/23
- Renie
- Rispoli family with the passing of Grandpa Rispoli
- Robert Fedder
- Tammy, Tom & family
- The Brook family with the loss of Pete Brook
- The family of Glenda Williams, Joe Matheis, Kris Krueger, Amy Smith, and safe travels for all the Christmas travelers near and far!
- The family of Kelly O'Brien, Ingrid Davies, Tara Butler & The White family
- The Henderson family with the loss of Linda Dare
- The Kut family after the death of Andre
- The Pipe family & Mr. Pipers
- The Sueing family
- Tom Coulter



Church News



It's a new year – with an age-old challenge: HUNGER! Our first quarterly Local Mission once again focuses on helping to feed the hungry in two local “soup kitchens”: Manna House and Harvest House. Both of these long-running programs have adapted to the changes that come with time as they continue to provide a solid meal to those in need. Your donations will ensure the food and supplies that are needed will

be available in order to serve our local population in need. Please help us continue to support these well-established organizations with a check made out to FPCB with “1st Quarterly Mission” in the memo line. If you are in the sanctuary, you can use the special envelopes in the pew. Your donations really make a difference! And, if you have time to contribute, we often need volunteers to help prepare and serve the meals at the First Presbyterian Church of Newton on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. You can contact the church office or Bev Simon for more information. It is a wonderful experience!



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION - The Congregation and Corporation of the First Presbyterian Church will hold an Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 28, 2024, immediately following the annual luncheon. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the Annual Reports and to conduct such business as may be required. By Order of the Session, Kathleen Katzenstein, Clerk

OFFICER TRAINING - In the Presbyterian Church we elect our leaders to serve as either Ruling elders, Deacons or Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Elders and Deacons are also called “officers” in the church. Our Nominating Committee is the group that considers the gifts and talents God has poured out in our congregation and makes the big “Ask,” inviting members to accept the call of God through the voice of the congregation.



This “ask” also includes the promise of training and support so that everyone is well-equipped for the particular tasks of serving on the Session or on the Board of Deacons.

This year's Officer Training will be held on January 20 from 10-Noon in Fellowship Hall. This is not a closed meeting and everyone is invited to attend. We especially invite current Elders and Deacons to be there to share in their experiences in leadership and to join in the discussion and fellowship.



RENEWAL OF BAPTISM - On Sunday, January 14th, we will be celebrating the Baptism of Jesus. In the Presbyterian tradition the Sacrament of Baptism occurs only once, but it is renewed in our hearts and minds, time and time again. We hope you will be on hand for this opportunity to renew and rededicate ourselves in discipleship and service to our servant Lord.



STAR WORDS - Epiphany is the Day when we celebrate the arrival of the Wise Men. They were led for many days and an unknown number of miles in their search for the Christ Child. A Star was there to guide them.



In remembrance and in celebration of God's ability to lead us and guide us throughout our years, we will have "Star Words" for everyone who wants one. These words are intended to be a guiding light throughout the year, providing inspiration and food for thought.

Put it in a prominent place (refrigerator, desk, bulletin board), use it as a bookmark, place it like an air freshener in your car...

It's a simple thing, but it may be just the thing you need as this new year unfolds!



NEW MEMBER GATHERING - Several of our regularly attending folks have expressed a desire to make a more "formal" commitment to our congregation by becoming active members. If you would like to explore what membership means and whether this might be a good time to take this next step in your walk with Christ, please let Nancy or David know so that a meeting date may be scheduled.

PRESBYTERY MEETING JANUARY 27th- We are part of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, which includes all the Presbyterian Churches in Sussex, Morris, Warren, Hunterdon counties and several churches south and east of these county lines. The Presbytery meets several times a year. It is made up of commissioners (ruling elders of each congregation and all the pastors, both active and retired, within the bounds of the presbytery). The presbytery exists to assist the congregations in carrying out their mission and to coordinate mission and ministry activities that go beyond the ability of any one church to carry out on its own.

All commissioners have equal voice and vote.

Since the pandemic, the presbytery has held most of its meetings online. The January meeting will be online using the Zoom platform. If you are interested in seeing what our presbytery is up to, you may register for the meeting through the presbytery's website: www.highlandspresbytery.org.





Church News



ANNUAL REPORTS ARE OVERDUE - The deadline to submit your 2023 Annual report was December 29th. Please email it to the church office ASAP at: presbsec@ptd.net or drop it off. Thank you!

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES - For those who use offering envelopes, your new box may be found on the table just inside the Fellowship Hall - organized in alphabetical order. For those who chose to be assigned a "giving number" rather than using the boxed envelopes, you may continue to use the envelope number that was assigned to you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the church office.

DECEMBER SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS (12/11)

- Ma's Coffee Service has been approved by the Session to maintain our coffee machine.
- YTD pledges are at \$50,372.
- Member Giving is at \$38,155.
- Per Capita is at \$3960.
- Other income is at \$96,374.
- E giving is at \$23,282.
- Pastor Nancy will be in the church office on Tuesday mornings. She will be away from December 13th thru 23rd.
- Officer training will be held on January 20th from 10 am to 12 pm.
- Ordination & Installation will take place on February 11th.
- The Congregational meeting will take place on January 28th.
- Pastor David will be in the church office on Monday mornings and as needed.
- Friday will be their "Sabbath".
- The Sunday School pageant will take place on December 17th.
- Sunday School instructors are needed. Please volunteer.
- The Fellowship Committee has plans for the coming year: offer an online book club especially for the home-bound, discuss with Pastors an online membership and membership classes, and will plan a winter activity.
- Mrs. Claus will be in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour on December 17th and will hand out candy canes and read a story.
- Epiphany Sunday will be held on January 7th.
- Baptism of the Lord service will be held on January 14th.
- We are considering a joint service with the Methodists for Ash Wednesday.
- A new roof over Fellowship Hall and the breezeway have been installed.
A new hot water heater has also been installed.
- The connection for the stove is being worked on.
- Stewardship has received 25 out of 110 pledge cards. We have 180 members. This is 35% less pledges received to date compared to last year.
- This is \$56,420 in pledges vs. the \$80,000 budget.





Step Up and Out for Stewardship

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own: You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace; that is enough for me. Amen.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

What is Stewardship: Prayer

Prayer is another of the 4 pillars of stewardship.

Have a heart to heart with God. It is the start of a new year. Many will make resolutions. Maybe one is a certain amount of time for quiet reflection and prayer.

As we prepare for the January congregational meeting, please remember stewardship in your prayer with God.

If you have yet to complete and hand in your 2024 pledge, we ask you to please do so.

We almost ready with a virtual pledge option. In the meantime, if completing the physical card is not an option, please email your pledge to me at sepik@icloud.com or to the church office at presbsec@ptd.net.

Please include in your prayers to see, understand Christian kindness and a guidance for giving to the church for our community and mission.

Happy New Year 2024!

Yours In fellowship –

Susan Parson

Stewardship Chair

sepik@icloud.com

551.358.1266

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JANUARY

James Bellush	1/4	Kathleen Katzenstein	1/16
Debbie Gardner	1/4	Sam Decker	1/18
Virginia Fitch	1/4	Cully Opilla	1/24
Judy Casey	1/8	Trish Cherny	1/29
Billy Leenheer	1/11		
Corine Barton	1/12		

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Molasses Meatball Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme
- 1/4 cup Crosby's fancy Molasses
- 3 tablespoons dijon mustard
- 2 dozen precooked meatballs



PREPARATION

1. Blend the ingredients for the sauce in a small bowl and add to the meatballs.
2. Simmer for 8 to 10 minutes until the sauce thickens and the meatballs are glazed.
3. Top with sesame seeds and green onions (optional)



JANUARY
USHERS

Deacon of the Month—Judy Casey

- 7th – OPEN**
- 14th – OPEN**
- 21st – OPEN**
- 28th – OPEN**

LAY READERS

- 7th – OPEN**
- 14th – Debbie Gardner**
- 21st – Judy Casey**
- 28th – Patrick**

First Presbyterian Church of Branchville
PO Box 1

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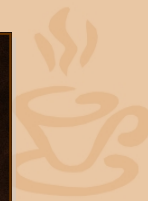


View our website at:
<http://www.fpcbranchville.org>

and Facebook at:
<http://www.facebook.com>

You may e-mail
the secretary at presbsec@ptd.net

View a daily devotion at:
<http://www.d365.org>



JANUARY COFFEE HOUR

DEACONS

JANUARY FLOWER CHART:

If you would like to provide flowers for any of the dates, please see instructions below:

Dates:

- 7th –**
- 14th –**
- 21st –**
- 28th –**

Call Lisa the week before your signup to have flowers delivered. Gail Burckes will contact you for your dedication or memorial.

Flowers By Lisa 862-268-3123





JANUARY 2024



First Presbyterian Church of Branchville, NJ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																															
	<p>1</p> <p>Office Closed</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Food Panty</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>11:00 AM Jean Ransom Memorial Service</p> <p>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Chancel Choir</p> 	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>																																																																																																															
<p>7</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>3:00 PM Music & Worship Meeting</p> <p>7:00 PM Session Meeting</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>7:00 PM Deacons Meeting</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Food Panty</p> 	<p>11</p> <p>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Chancel Choir</p> 	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>																																																																																																															
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