

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 16 Issue 1

January 2025

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Manse Fireside Chats

January 10th
February 28th

Fellowship, prayer, and refreshments. Does a Friday night get any better?

All are welcome!

Feel free to call Ed or Diane if you want confirmation.

Editor:
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From Pastor Ed...

"This one thing I do; forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ." Phil.3: 13

Dear Friends,

One of the hardest things to do in our lives has to be about letting things go, in order to be ready for a new year. As difficult as it may be, it's probably a good thing to take time to review our lives and identify the things that we're hanging onto, that keep eating at us. It's good to take the time to let go of guilt, and all the "shoulds" and resentments that weigh on us. It's good to let go of what isn't working well anymore; in our lives or our jobs or our ministries. We also have to remember that letting all those things go is an ongoing exercise. *Forgetting* what lies behind, has to be continuous - which is why developing a regular prayer life is so important.

One side of what Paul said above is a kind of spiritual accounting - to get whatever isn't adding up anymore off the ledger. However, we don't stop there.

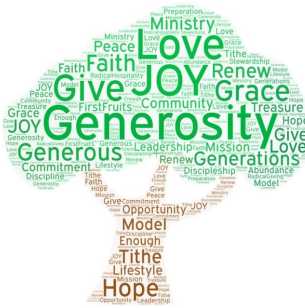
The next side, Paul said, is *pressing forward* towards the goal.

Many have thought that the goal reference is only about getting through this life to make it to heaven. But it's about more than that. It's about all the ways that we're called to work at being disciples - God's people in the world. It's about all the ways that God frees us so that we can do whatever we're called to do as followers of Christ. It's about leaving all the burdens that we carry in God's hands, so that we can go forward into each and every day, without all that weight - and be effective for God's goals for us and for our churches and our world.

So, this passage calls us to do serious business when we pray each Sunday. It may not be easy for many of us to have a heart-to-heart with God when the opportunities for personal prayer are offered. But when we do, whenever we do, we'll find that God will give us peace, and the strength we need to go on. We'll find ourselves hearing from the Spirit, what our next steps will be. With the Spirit's help, we'll cultivate the capacity for discernment and insight. This is a good promise to hang onto, and something good to practice as we make our way into a new year.

Peace and Blessings!
Ed

Consecration Sunday Is Coming, on Sunday, January 12, 2025!



Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's finance committee has selected the *Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program* as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. *Consecration Sunday* encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?"

During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every person who completes an *Estimate of Giving Card* does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship a guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship.

We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and governing board members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Peace and Blessing,

Your FPC Finance Team

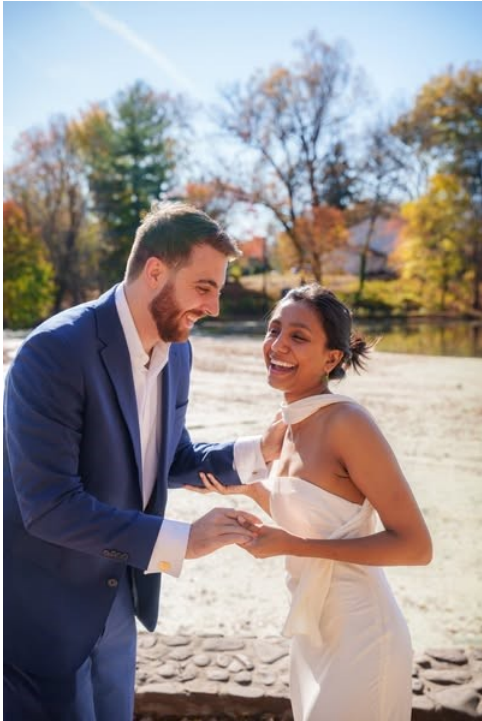


"Weighing" the Truth and Life

The Latin root of the word to "ponder" means literally to "weigh". It is used to describe thinking carefully, even contemplatively, about something; and often for an extended period of time. Beginning in January, a new resource will be offered each week to help deepen our congregation's understanding and practice of discernment, spirituality, and mission. It will feature excerpts from various books and articles that are helpful for navigating change, encouraging congregational growth, and engaged mission. It will also offer various ways and means to deepen faith, prayer, contemplation and worship. This will be taking the place of *Traveling Mercies*, and will be accessed in the weekly church email newsletter and the Website . It will provide plenty of food for thought and participation. *Check it out Next Year!*

Congratulations

Levi & Kulsoom



On November 2, 2024, Levi and Kulsoom were married at Milton Lake by Pastor Ed.

We wish you joy, love, and happiness as you begin your new life together.



And the award goes to...

Ilanda

who was awarded *Senior of the Year* at her Senior Building by Rahway's Housing Authority.

**Congratulations, Ilanda!
It's well-deserved!**



Jan.

- 1 - William D.
- 2 - Princeton N.
- 8 - Dona M.
- 12 - Cheryl M.
- 12 - Lucas P.
- 21 - Caroline D.
- 21 - Alyne B.
- 25 - James C.
- 25 - Megan R.
- 25 - Ukoha K.
- 27 - Hagen E.
- 29 - Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook
- 29 - "New Dawn"



Jan.

- 20 - Andrea & Sean

Richard, Dona, & Roz all sent their warmest wishes for all of us during the holiday season.

We're so blessed to have such thoughtful church family!



**Time for
Rahway First Pres Members
to Submit their 2025 Per Capita Assessment - \$38**

What is this assessment?

First, Rahway First Pres is a connectional church.

We are connected to the Presbyterian Church USA, which has the responsibility of spreading the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Under the Presbyterian Church USA, the national body is called the General Assembly, the regional body is called the Synod and the local body is called the Presbytery. Our Church is a member of The Presbytery of The Northeast which includes Rahway.

A blessing of being a part of a connectional church is that each member of the congregation can help support the work of our denomination through per capita giving. When we each pay our share, we enable our Presbytery – Synod – and General Assembly to do the creative work of the Holy Spirit throughout the world.

What is the 2025 per capita assessment?

Our Presbytery, The Presbytery of The Northeast, has announced that the assessment for 2025 is \$38.00 per person, the same as last year.

Who should pay the 2025 per capita assessment as per the formula?

All Active members. (Please use the attached blue envelope)

Any member who was active in 2023 and/or 2024 but is no longer active.

The importance of paying your per capita assessment:

It is important that each member of First Pres pay their per capita amount of \$38.00 so that our Church may continue to be faithful in sending our Presbytery the amount we are assessed. We are prayerful that this year, as in past years, our membership will respond.

Thank You,



Giving Tree Update

Thank you to all who contributed to 2024's Giving Tree!

Diane, Lita, Ilanda, JoAnn, Gail, and Cheryl assembled 30 bags for 3 senior buildings; the bags were delivered by December 20th.

Our Mission to Feed the Hungry To continue in 2025

Since 2000, our church has supported efforts to feed the hungry by participating in programs including the "National Crop Walk," the Souper Bowl of Caring Food Collection," and the Rahway Food for Friends Food Pantry. Our giving to the Food Pantry has expanded in the last two years and we plan to continue and expand our giving potential in the coming year.

At the beginning of 2023, Session voted to increase our food collection donations from one month a year (February to coincide with the Souper Bowl Collection) to three months a year. Since that vote, our congregation has generously brought food items to church during February, June, and October. Our donations have brought needed nourishment to area residents who are going through difficult times.

After our June and October collections this past year, we stored a portion of the items we collected in a closet in the church that enabled us to distribute food to the folks who came to our door. We plan on expanding our giving potential by setting up a larger pantry area in a space to be determined.

Our congregation continues to do God's work by feeding the hungry.



We Welcomed a New Elder

On Sunday, December 1st, we welcomed a new Elder:

Awa

Awa felt called to serve, this photo was taken by Sue during the "Laying on the Hands" section of Awa's ordination/installation.

Do you feel called to serve? Speak to Pastor Ed or Elder Cheryl Anne.

Welcome, Cliff Williams



On Sunday, November 17th, we welcomed **Cliff** into our church family. We are grateful you are with us during your faith journey. We look forward to many years of worship, fellowship, and ministry with you!



HAPPY NEW YEAR



*May God be with you through the New Year
and fill your life with love, comfort and cheer.
May this day and the days ahead, hold many
blessings for you and yours.*

Have a very Blessed New Year



Please consider either calling or sending a card to church family who are homebound; call the church office (732-382-0803) if you need phone numbers and/or addresses.

Prayer Requests

Alyne B., Amy, Avril Muller & family, Barbara O., Carole H., Carlos B., Diane & Helene, Dorothy R., Eileen P., Eunice-Barbra & Dave, Harper, Helen, Logan, Savannah B.



Our deepest condolences to...

LJ & Corrine on the passing of their father, **John Shipley**. Please keep them and the Shipley families in your prayers during this difficult time.

If you have a prayer request please give Ilanda a call or send her an email. Ilanda will ensure that your request is addressed/sent to our wonderful prayer warriors.

Prayer Persons

JANUARY

- Jan. 5th - Gladys Bond
- Jan. 12th - Andrew J. Roesch & Family
- Jan. 19th - John Ludington III
- Jan. 26th - Clemens Family

FEBRUARY

- Feb 2nd - Alyne Borst
- Feb. 9th - Jack Miesowitz
- Feb. 16th - Robin Shivers
- Feb. 23rd - Andrew Russell

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH**



QR Code for donations

**Worship with us
Each Sunday at 10:30 AM**

**In-person / Facebook & YouTube Live Streams
Recorded Video Available Also**

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Rev. Ed Hoener: edhoener1@gmail.com**

1stpresrahway.org



New Year blessings to you!