

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 15 Issue 10

October 2024

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Would you Like a Visit From Our Pastor?

Our pastor would love to come and see you! Anyone who would like a visit, or Home Communion, is invited to call Pastor Ed or send him an email.

Your call will be returned right away to schedule a time!

From Pastor Ed...

Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, I'm praying for my followers, because my life is on display in them. Guard them as they pursue this life. I'm praying also for those who will believe in me because of their witness. The goal is for them all to become one heart and mind." John 17

Dear Friends,

As Jesus prayed that night, he was anticipating the way that his gospel would spread after he was gone, and the reaction the world would have to it. His prayer has some excellent guidance for his Church when it comes to reaching out to the world.

One way that the Church often gets derailed is when we put way too much emphasis on our traditions – and the battles that get waged over them. Notice that Jesus said, that it wouldn't be the *ideas* or the *liturgies* of the Church that the world would react to - it would be to the way people's lives were changing, by virtue of the difference Christ made in their lives. In other words, when people can see God's love and mercy and grace on display in our lives - it is *that* difference that the world notices and reacts to one way or another.

It also looks like Jesus anticipated that we'd get caught up in controversies with each other in the Church, when we look at the next portion of his prayer. Jesus asked that God would help us to be united in heart and mind. This is a prayer for unity. But when we read the surrounding verses, Jesus is praying for a unity based on our *relationships*, not on creeds, or worship styles, or traditions. Jesus prayed for us to be united - *with* all our differences. The only way that is even possible is if it's based on our devotion to Christ, and the power of His Spirit. It must come from the new heart that is given to us by God. (Jer.31: 33) It must come from the promise that Jesus always provides the grace I need to fulfill what he asks of me – in this case: "to love one another *as he loves me.*" (John 13:34)

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The truth Jesus was getting at, is that it's our relationships that transform us in the church, not our religion. It is the way we relate to God and each other that empowers our life together and our mission. This is why there has been several attempts in the last two years to create more small groups! People who may not come to church may come to a small group, where they can hear the stories and real life concerns of people they know, whose lives have been changed by Christ.

The promise is that whenever and wherever people can see God's love, God's life in us, *that* is when we're on the Way towards being living *answers* to Jesus' prayer for the witness of His Church.

Peace and Love,
Ed



Diane held a 'Grief Support' meeting on Sunday, September 29, in the chapel. If you haven't seen the invite that went out via email, below is the introduction. More meetings will be scheduled, so if you missed this meeting and would like to know more and/or have suggestions for Diane, please give her a call.

Dear One,

I'm still developing this new thing.

I've been developing a program for church folks, friends, family, and neighbors.

You're feeling big feelings. I want to support you as you feel them. Others are too.

I haven't decided what to call this: Loss Sucks! (Probably not). Grief Stricken (Meh) What Now? (Hmm) "I Dreamed a Dream" (Susan Boyle - The lyrics fit. We'd have a theme song) Any ideas?

The first session will be at 12:30 pm on Sunday, September 29 at the church in the little chapel. Those in attendance can determine the best time, day of the week, and frequency for subsequent sessions.

I have a great idea how to kick it off, I think!

There are quite a few people feeling loss and grief right now. Where this group goes can be determined by you and the other attendees.

I'll start off by practicing vulnerability (aka: sharing with others, honesty) and sitting with the feelings for both those coming to the session and for the facilitators (who most likely will be each of us as we listen). No platitudes. No answers. (Rats!) Lots of listening and hopefully sharing in a safe space.

We will be looking at loss in its many forms: death, death of a dream, death of a relationship...that sort of thing. I hope you can make it!

Diane



Nov. 9th & 10th

At our last Session meeting, it was decided that we schedule an opportunity to receive some expertise, encouragement, and practical understanding of how there are possibilities for First Presbyterian Church, to help us move forward into the future. We've invited Firebird Spirit a nationally recognized organization that specializes in church transformation and growth, to present a weekend-long seminar to introduce our congregation to the possibilities for creating a future path for FPC.

The November 9th weekend will feature an *exciting* comprehensive event from 9:30-12:30 on both Saturday and Sunday (including a worship service). There will be plenty of food and drink, and some small group offerings on topics to be announced (based on the feedback we receive from our congregation). Some possible topics might be: how to lead change; how to implement our church's mission, discipleship in the 21st century, reaching out beyond our doors, and more. ***The most important part of this event is that the specifics of the presentations will be created in consultation with us, so that we are part of determining the content of the weekend. We will be creating opportunities to get your feedback; please take a few minutes to respond.***

If you want to be part of making sure that FPC will be a thriving spiritual community *well into the future*, save the dates, and make *your* commitment to being part of building the community that will be here for the next generations to come!

"The Chosen", Season 3



There are a few more episodes. Let's meet on Sundays at noon at the manse on these dates:

October 13 & November 3.

You don't have to watch these in their original sequence to benefit from the message they are sharing.

Please consider stopping in!



Oct.

- 3 - Matthew S.
- 4 - Carlos A.
- 12 - Michaela W.
- 12 - Cheryl Anne C.
- 16 - Helene H.
- 17 - Emma Rose O.
- 19 - Robin S.
- 20 - Makenzie M.
- 21 - Florence O.
- 29 - Bill M.
- 31 - Richard E.
- 31 - Ashley N.



Oct.

- 3 - Rachel & Sarah
- 6 - Joanne & Ted
- ..8 - Carlos & Erwin
- 20 - Elizabeth & Vincent
- 20 - Diane & Ed

Thank you, **Roz & Dona**, for making our day with the lovely notes you both include with your offerings.



We appreciate you!

Fabulous Finds Mini Mart

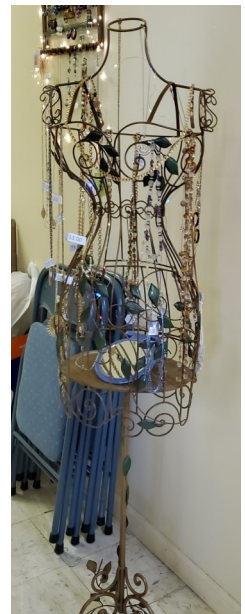
October 5th
9 am — 1 pm

In the spring, we didn't put everything away from our annual spring market. Instead, we decided to hold the 1st of the month sale the following week and still have most of the items not sold available. We are going to do the same for our fall market. We will pack up what doesn't sell the following week.

As always, there are volunteer opportunities available so please join us whenever you can.

We enjoy working together and we truly appreciate your help.

Here are more photos of 'Carmen's Jewelry Boutique'; if viewing electronically, zoom in to see the images more clearly. Several pics of her displays can also be found on our FB page.



Amazing!

Food Items to be collected during October

Throughout the month of October, canned and boxed food items, may be brought to Church on Sundays as our congregation continues its discipleship of feeding the hungry. Members have been generous over the last two years since we accepted the challenge to collect food during the months of February, June and October.

At the end of the month all items will be brought to the Rahway Food for Friends Food Pantry for distribution to those in need.

Food items may also be brought to the Church Office on Thursdays between 10 AM and noon.

The items that follow are some suggestions of food most needed and appreciated.

1. Kraft Mac and Cheese in a box
2. Boxed milk (such as Parmalat)
3. Pasta sauce and spaghetti noodles
4. Canned pasta
5. Canned veggies and soup
6. Rice a-Roni
7. Cooking oil
8. Spices, salt and pepper
9. Tea bags and coffee
10. Sugar and flour
11. Canned tuna
12. Cereal
13. Crackers
14. Peanut butter and Jelly
15. Cake mix and frosting
16. Stove top stuffing



Fireside Chats @ 7 pm

October Friday Dates: 11 & 25



It's time to grab a light jacket and gather around a nice warm firepit for some refreshments, fellowship, and prayer.

The weather will be low 70s/ high 60s, so apple, blueberry, and cherry pies, made over the coals, sound perfect, don't you think?

If you're interested in hosting one of the gatherings, email the church office, or speak to Ed or Diane. We'd love to have you involved if this is something you might be interested in.



Donna Gutches & Family Shenanigans, October 5th

As many of you know, Donna's daughter, Shannon, tragically passed quite suddenly in 2019. What you might not know is in 2021 the family set up a scholarship fund in her name. For the past five years, they hold a fundraiser in Rahway Park with proceeds going toward the scholarship fund. All are welcome to go, and please let others know as we come together to support Shannon's family & honor her memory.

Donna said that she would love to see some FPC people there and sent her heartfelt thanks to us for helping get the word out.





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

Ali & family, Alyne B., Amy, Avril Muller & family, Bari, Bob, Carlos B., Carolyn & family, Celeste & Doris, Chrissy, Diane & Helene, Dorothy R., Eileen P., Elizabeth M., Eunice - Barbra & Dave, Fred R., Gail G., German M., Jean K., Jesus M., Kulsoom, Marilyn & Jasmine, Meli, Russ G., Savannah B., Vicky, Those in war-ravaged areas

Those that are homebound—Caroline Balla, Doris Kapus



Our deepest condolences to...

Ilanda: I am asking for prayers for **Bob Bresenhan**, I just found out that his Mom passed away, she lived in North Carolina. Please keep him and his family in your prayers. Thank you & God Bless.

Bob sent an email to us in response:

Thank you all for your prayers for mom and our family. Ilanda, thank you.

May God continue to bless and watch over each and every one of you and your families.

With deepest gratitude
Bob B and family



The Cornwall & Thomas families on the passing of **Clarice Cornwall**. Please keep them in your thoughts & prayers during this difficult time.

If you have a prayer request please give Ilanda a call at 732-382-6193 or send her an email: ikero-bo@comcast.net. Ilanda will ensure that your request is addressed/sent to our wonderful prayer warriors.

Prayer Persons

OCTOBER

Oct. 6th - **Odrigue Joseph**
Oct. 13th - **Donna Gutches**
Oct. 20th - **Russihon Daye**
Oct. 27th - **Candace King**

NOVEMBER

Nov. 3rd - **Judy & Eric Rickes**
Nov. 10th - **Mimi Zahradnik**
Nov. 17th - **Harold Wilcox**
Nov. 24th - **Sara Thode**

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**In-person / Facebook & YouTube Live Streams
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Rev. Ed Hoener: edhoener1@gmail.com**

1stpresrahway.org

