

She will give birth to a son,
AND YOU WILL CALL HIM JESUS.

MATTHEW 1:21a (CEB)

“Remember the former things, and let them teach you... Do not remember the former things... Behold, I am about to do a new thing”, says the Lord, “Don’t you perceive it?”

Isa.41 & 42

Dear Friends,

Here is one of the places in scripture where we scratch our heads and wonder what God is getting at. In the first citation, it's clear that Isaiah knew that remembering is a good thing, because our past teaches us lessons we have to learn if we're going to make progress. We know that hindsight helps us to refrain from making the same mistakes. More than that, God knows that we also draw a lot of comfort from our memories. Looking back can be a refuge for us, because we realize all over again that we made it through a tough time - when the present is difficult.

But then not too many verses later, God seems to contradict the remembering advice with his call to let go and let God do something new. Placing these two verses together means we have to forget the past *whenever it gets in the way of real progress*. In other words, when holding on to the past stunts our growth, or shuts down our possibilities - we have to let it go.

When God is wanting to do a new thing, our job is to adapt, so that we can be fitted for a new situation. God wants to “customize” us so that we can live our faith, and serve God in a way that keeps pace with the changes that have happened around us.

Part of our challenge is just getting over that threshold. So often we just don't know what God wants us to do or where we belong in God's scheme of things. So often, when we're wondering what to do next, it feels unsettling. Then, it is so easy to just stick to what we already know. It gets so easy to lower the bar and sit in our favorite seats in the sanctuary and sing our hymns and say our prayers and just stop there. But when we do that, we miss what the new and exciting future God wants us to experience – and that's when God asks us, “Don't you perceive it?”

At the close of one year and the beginning of a new one, this creative tension is good for us to work with. Our task, as a congregation, is to keep a vital connection with the best of the past, AND to discover the new things God is longing to accomplish in and through us. This is an essential skill if we want to be transformed and grow as a congregation, and it is how we can be part of God's redemptive purposes for our church, at this time in our history.

Peace, and Blessings,
Ed

TOWER CHIMES



Vol. 15 Issue 12

December 2024

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The Christmas Season has arrived and the Outreach Committee needs your help in offering assistance for the holidays.

Since the beginning, the success of the Giving Tree, and the number of

families aided by it, has grown due to the strong support this church has always offered. After careful consideration, this year, we plan to offer assistance to a number of residents in the 3 Senior housing buildings in Rahway. Many of them have very limited income and no family members in their lives.

With the assistance of the Social Worker, she will select those in the greatest need. Gift bags with a few necessities will be put together, including one gift card(s) equal to a nominal amount. Any questions, or concerns, please speak with Gail.

Please consider purchasing a gift card(s) from ShopRite, Walmart, or Target, and present it to Gail by Sunday, Dec 15th. If sending a check, please make it out to 'First Presbyterian Church' and put 'Giving Tree' in the memo.

Christmas Blessings to All!

Manse Fireside Chats December 13th & 27th

Let's gather around a warm firepit (weather permitting) for some refreshments, fellowship, and prayer.

Feel free to call Ed (585-447-0859) or Diane (585-694-0881) if you want confirmation.

Editor:
CAB
office@1stpresrahway.org

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tuesday, December 24th @ 7:30 pm

We invite you to join us on this most joyous night!





Christmas Poinsettias

We will have our usual beautiful display of poinsettias in the Sanctuary for the holidays. If you would like to purchase a plant, they will be available in both red & white for \$8. To reduce waste / over-ordering only 12 plants will be displayed. If that should change, we'll let you know (depending on availability).

If you're interested in a plant, please let Gail know. As in the past, your plant will need to be picked up no later than Christmas Eve.



Christmas Reception at the Manse Sunday, December 15



Ed and Diane are hosting coffee hour in the manse following the worship service on Sunday, December 15th. All are welcome to stop in for some fellowship and holiday cheer. Feel free to invite others you feel would enjoy getting to know this church family in a relaxed atmosphere.



Mid-Week Christmas Caroling!

For the second year in a row, we will join members of Zion Lutheran Church to sing Christmas Carols at the Rahway Train Station on December 3, 10, and 17 at 7 pm. This is something you can invite your friends to, (especially if they like to sing, and even if they don't). So bundle up and let's bring some Christmas cheer to our community!



Pull Tabs Collection

Robin would like to thank everyone who brought in pull tabs from cans that were collected by her grand-nephew for the Ronald McDonald Charities. It has been decided that the church will continue collecting the tabs for the same charity. The container will be located in Davis Hall or tabs may be dropped in the mailbox on Church Street.



Dec.

- 1 - Maurice (MJ) H.
- 6 - Samantha S.
- 9 - Ashley N.
- 11 - Kristen H.
- 13 - JoAnn R.
- 13 - Tara C.
- 14 - Scott N.
- 16 - Daniel D.
- 20 - Thomas M.
- 25 - Jesus
- 26 - Robin S.
- 27 - Charlotte K.
- 28 - Diana N.
- 29 - Carol D.
- 29 - Dawn M.



Dec.

- 5 - Megan & Andrew
- 11 - Terry & Arnold
- 29 - Laura & Randy



Union Street Resource Center Update

We are moving along with the necessary renovations to rooms in Squier Hall in preparation for beginning the operations of the Resource Center. Here are some pictures of the 2nd floor Multi-Purpose room (on the left as you face the bathrooms at the top of the stairs) before and after work was completed. The floors were sanded and resurfaced and repairs were made to the walls that had severe water damage from the leaking roof before being painted. Tables and chairs will be purchased and window treatments will be added. The room will also have Wi-Fi capability and will be outfitted with a projector and pull down screen.

We would be very happy to give you a tour any Sunday after worship.

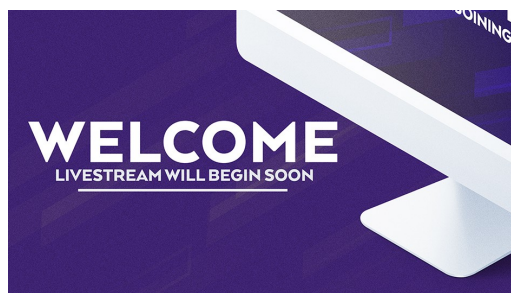
Before:



After:



Wow ... looks amazing!



Join Us for Our Live Streams on Sundays

If you would like to view/be a part of our worship live streams on Sundays @ 10:30 am, there are two ways to do so:

Facebook:


Our Facebook page is where you can join us for our live streams starting at 10:20 am (the service begins at 10:30 am). Our page is where you can also catch up on the most recent events at the church and view our daily posts, however, you will need a Facebook account. You can search for our page by typing "First Presbyterian Church Rahway" in the search bar. If you aren't following us on Facebook, we hope you'll support us by liking our page and interacting with our posts whenever you're using FB.

YouTube:

We also have a YouTube channel where you can watch our live streams beginning at 10:20 am. The good news is that you don't need an account to join us, YouTube allows anyone to watch without having to sign up or subscribe. You can search for our page by typing "First Presbyterian Church Rahway" in the search bar, then click on the link that is listed/displayed (you will recognize the steeple photo used as our thumbnail). Once you go to our channel, you will need to click on the "Live" menu option to go to the live stream section of our channel. We'd truly appreciate a 'subscribe' if you have a YouTube account.

Please note: Recorded videos are immediately available in FB & YouTube. A post is also placed on our website's Homepage so you can view it at your convenience. A link is also in-

Christmas Blessings Mix



Bugles: Bring us the joyful message of the Heavenly Host, announcing peace on earth, good will to men.

Pretzels: Symbol of a mother's loving arms; as Mary wrapped her Son in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger.

Red Hots: Red berries that decorate the holly plant, a reminder of eternal life and Christ's redemption.

Nuts or seeds: Promise of a future harvest, one we will reap only if seeds are planted and tended with diligence.

Dried fruits: Remind us of the rich gifts brought by the Wise Men.

M&Ms: Memories of those who came before us to guide us to a blessed future.

Hershey's Kiss: The love of family and friends that sweetens our lives.

Candy Canes: Represents the shape of the shepherd's crook, used to bring lost lambs back to the fold.

naturepics.com online



New Roof Project at the Church

New Flat Roofs: A Learning Experience and Moving Forward

For quite some time, the need to replace the flat roofs at our church was a pressing concern. The old roofs had developed leaks and wear, making it necessary for us to take action to protect the church building and its contents. We found only one company capable of providing a suitable solution: Gunner Roofing, a nationally recognized roofing company. We decided to move forward with them to replace all of our flat roofs with a superior rubber roofing system, which is known to provide better durability and protection compared to membrane roofs.

The Project Begins: Expectations vs. Reality

The roofing project began in April, with the expectation that the work would be completed within two weeks. However, the weather was less than cooperative, and we faced several days of rain and high winds during the installation process.

When Gunner Roofing first removed the old roofs, they did not cover the exposed areas with tarps to protect the building from the elements. As a result, the rain that followed caused significant water damage in multiple areas of the church, including the hallway, chapel, offices, and bathrooms.

After realizing the extent of the problem, Gunner Roofing eventually covered the exposed roof with tarps. Unfortunately, they did not secure the tarps properly, and the strong winds blew them off, causing additional leaks and further damage to our church building. It was a frustrating situation, as we had trusted the company to protect our property during the roofing process.

The Cost of the Roof and the Impact on Our Investments

The total cost for replacing all the flat roofs amounted to a staggering **\$171,000**, a significant expense for our church. While necessary, this large cost had a major impact on our financial situation. As a result, the cost of the roof installation greatly reduced the balance of our investments, making it even more challenging to maintain financial stability.

The Building and Grounds committee worked diligently throughout the process, but the combination of unexpected damage from the roofing process and the financial strain it placed on our church was overwhelming.

Insurance Troubles: A Frustrating Experience

Once the roof was completed, we contacted our insurance company to address the damage caused by Gunner Roofing's negligence. The adjuster confirmed the issues caused by the exposed roof and the subsequent leaks, and we were advised that we could begin making repairs, but we were asked to keep all receipts for the work done.

However, we were taken aback when we received an email stating that the insurance company was not responsible for the damages and would not cover any of the costs related to the leaks and damage caused by Gunner's poor workmanship.

Session and the Building and Grounds Committee were fully aware that they were not directly responsible for the damage. We had assumed that they would pursue compensation from **Gunner Roofing's insurance** for the additional damage caused by their failure to properly protect the roof during installation.

Continued from page 6

A Change in Insurance Providers

In June, our church was informed that we were changing insurance providers, and we have now switched to **Guide One Insurance**. However, the process of transitioning insurance providers was yet another challenge during an already difficult period.

Moving Forward: Seeking Accountability and Making Repairs

In light of the issues we've faced with Gunner Roofing and our previous insurance company, letters are being sent out to both parties expressing our dissatisfaction with their handling of the situation. We want to make it clear that while we understand accidents happen, the lack of care and attention to detail in the installation process, coupled with the inadequate response from our insurance company, has left us feeling unsupported.

We are committed to making the necessary repairs to our church and ensuring that we are fully protected moving forward. We will continue to work with our new insurance company, Guide One, and seek compensation from Gunner Roofing's insurance provider for the damage caused by their poor workmanship. It is essential that we recover from this situation so that we can focus on our ministry and the mission of our church without the burden of ongoing repairs and financial stress.

Conclusion

The replacement of our church's flat roofs was a necessary project, but it has come with unforeseen challenges and expenses. While we are grateful that the new roofs are now in place, we are deeply frustrated by the damage caused by Gunner Roofing's negligence and the inadequate response from our former insurance company. We will continue to address these issues and work toward a resolution, but we also want to express our gratitude to all of you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

We ask for your continued prayers and support as we navigate the next steps and work to protect and care for our church building for many years to come. Thank you for being a part of our church family and for your ongoing commitment to our ministry.

Blessings,
The Building and Grounds Committee



Thank You to Our Volunteers: Church Improvements Underway

We are thrilled to share the progress made in several areas of our church, thanks to the hard work of our dedicated volunteers. Andy and Ted have recently completed a number of important improvements to the church building. They removed the old hallway tiles and moved the electrical and fire alarm wiring higher to accommodate a new drop ceiling in the hallway. Additionally, they replaced damaged ceiling tiles in the chapel, bathrooms, and offices, and repaired two toilets in the ladies' room.

In the chapel, Andy and Ted also worked on painting the walls, and they removed the outdated paneling near the office, replacing it with new sheetrock and carefully spackling the walls for a fresh, updated look.

We are grateful to Ed and Cheryl Anne for helping Andy and Ted paint the hallway, as well as to Linda Anderson and Bill Siocha, who have volunteered to assist with painting in other areas. Their support has been invaluable!

If you are interested in helping with any future projects or painting, please don't hesitate to reach out to Andy. We are always grateful for the time and effort our volunteers contribute to improving our church.



“Fabulous Finds” Markets Update: A Huge Success!

We are thrilled to announce that our annual “Fabulous Finds” Markets have been a tremendous success, raising over \$22,125 this year! This milestone is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all those involved. From sorting through donations to setting up, pricing, and assisting customers, each participant played a crucial role in making this year’s event one of our most successful yet. A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who contributed their time and energy – your support truly made a difference.

The Flea Market is more than just an event – it’s a community effort that brings together our church family, neighbors, and friends. The hours spent going through donated items, organizing and pricing, and then being on hand to assist customers make this event a labor of love. Whether you worked behind the scenes or greeted customers with a smile, your involvement helped us achieve our fundraising goals, and we couldn’t have done it without you.

As we reflect on this year’s success, we are already looking forward to the next “Fabulous Finds” Market, which will take place on the first Saturday in January 2025. Mark your calendars now for what promises to be another fantastic event filled with great finds, fellowship, and fun. We are excited to see how we can make the next market even better, but we need your help to do so!

We encourage all members of our congregation to consider getting involved in the planning and preparation for next year’s market. The more hands we have, the smoother and more enjoyable the process will be for everyone. From sorting and pricing items ahead of time to helping on the day of the sale, there are plenty of ways you can contribute. Even if you only have a small amount of time to spare, your participation will make a big impact.

We are also in need of additional volunteers to help with the various tasks during the sale itself. As always, your willingness to pitch in and lend a hand is what makes this event such a success year after year. Please consider joining us in the coming months as we prepare for the January 2025 market. And if you know others who would like to volunteer, don’t hesitate to recruit them – the more, the merrier!

Once again, thank you to everyone who made this year’s “Fabulous Finds” Market so successful. Your generosity and hard work are deeply appreciated, and we look forward to working together again in the coming year. Stay tuned for more details in the months ahead, and please keep an eye out for opportunities to get involved as we prepare for the first Saturday in January 2025!

Let’s continue to work together to make our church’s “Fabulous Finds” Market a beloved event for years to come!

Blessings,
First Presbyterian Church “Fabulous Finds” Team





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, Barbara & James E., Bari, Bob, Carlos B., Carolyn & family, Celeste & Doris, Dan, Diane & Helene, Destiny, Dorothy R., Edna-Wendy & Artie, Michele & Eileen P., Eileen, Eric-Judy & family, Eunice-Barbra & Dave, Gail G., Gary, German M., Hector & Jasmine, Harper, Helen, Joe S. & family, John, Logan, Maureen, Mike-Evelyn & family, Nicole, Savannah B., Vicky, those in war-ravaged areas; those affected by the recent hurricanes; those that are homebound—Caroline Balla, Doris Kapus

Our deepest condolences to...



The Ginda & Panila families have had a lot of heartache recently. Michele Panila sent a prayer request and shared the photo to the left of Russ & Garrett Please keep them in your prayers during this first holiday season without their loved ones.

I am so sad to share that mine & Russell's nephew died suddenly last night at home. Garrett is the son of Russ' sister Joanne, Joanne's husband Jeff and their daughter Trisha. Garrett is only 33 yrs old. It hurts so badly. Please pray for us ... especially Joanne.

We are in shock! How are we to understand their deaths? Russell the uncle/godfather & Garrett his nephew/godson ... and just a month apart??? Garrett & Uncle Russie (as Garrett and Trisha called him) were very close. Russ was so proud of him and thrilled to be his godfather.

With me, we were quite the trio. We had sleepovers in a tent made of rope & bedsheets - great way to make homework time less like work, shared year round vacations skiing and motorcycling, cooking/baking classes, art projects and a whole lotta snuggle/together time.

Thank you all - God bless you all.

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

Prayer Persons

DECEMBER

Dec. 1st - Sean Simpson & Family
Dec. 8th - Tracie Wiebush
Dec. 15th - Linda Simpson
Dec. 22nd - Patrick Weaver
Dec. 29th - Gail Woolley

JANUARY

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

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**In-person / Facebook & YouTube Live Streams
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**Office: office@1stpresrahway.org
Rev. Ed Hoener: edhoener1@gmail.com**

1stpresrahway.org



May hope, peace, joy, & love be yours this Christmas!