



November

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,

During this season of Thanksgiving, I have so many reasons to be thankful. And prominent on my list of things to be thankful for is you!

Just a few lines into his Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul wrote: I thank my God every time I remember you (1:3). And I feel the same way. I am thankful for each of you, the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood NJ.

Together we do our best to live out our mission statement: *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.*

So often we think of those words of our mission statement in terms of how we bring them to life by serving the needs of people out there in the world. And that is as it should be. But as I write these words, I am also thinking of how we bring those words to life within our community of faith, how we bring them to life by serving each other.

My father died on the night of Saturday, October 28, and I will miss him terribly. I am writing these words 24 hours later. This morning during worship, I shared the news of his passing with you. To say the words out loud was difficult, but I had to tell you in person that my dad had died.

Someone later said to me that it must have been difficult to lead worship so soon after losing my father. I admitted that it was difficult, and I had thought about staying home, but then added, "I realized that this is where I needed to be."

Together, we are part of the family of God, and I needed to be among you, my sisters and brothers in Christ. I needed to share what I was feeling, needed to hear your words of comfort and encouragement, needed to be reminded that you too have experienced loss, needed to know you are praying for me and my family just as I pray for you and yours, needed to receive your hugs, needed to receive your flowers.

In other words I needed to receive and be lifted up by your love. Thank you for the many and various ways you expressed it.

Believe me when I say, "I thank my God every time I think of you."

Grace and peace,

Bruce



How Thankful **ARE** We????

How easy it is to take the good things in our lives for granted. In our church alone, we enjoy a beautiful sanctuary. In the true meaning of 'sanctuary', we feel safe within its walls. We enjoy its heat in the winter and its air conditioning in the summer. In this sacred space there is room to come together to worship and give thanks to the God who gave us life.

How do we show thanks for this abundant life? One way we express our appreciation is to insure that this sacred space is taken care of while we are here and remains so for those yet to come, so they too will have a sacred space to gather and give thanks.

Through our Endowment Fund we are committed to providing a sanctuary that will last through the ages, where the Word of God may be freely preached, where love, grace and forgiveness may be freely practiced and never taken for granted.

During the month of November consider sending a *Green Umbrella* "Thank You" or *Appreciation*" note card to someone in the congregation. For a minimum of \$25 you can lift someone's spirits and be part of this ongoing ministry. Cards can be found on a table in the hallway.

Make checks out to First Presbyterian Church with a memo to "Endowment".

For questions, call:
Laura Magrath (201) 214-3499 or
Joanne Bonwick (201) 652-7520

Mission



On Sunday, October 1st, Joan Davies delivered food, made by First Pres volunteers, to about 25 men staying at St. Paul's shelter in Paterson. On the menu was American goulash made by Joan, brats made by Sandy Santangelo, chicken and rice with veggies made by Laura Magrath, pasta salad made by Lynn Malyso, and fruit and bread provided by Rebecca Burger. Also donated were a tray of rice pilaf, pita bread and baba ghanoush that remained from the fundraiser for the Aleppo Christian Center, which was held the prior evening.

Thank you so much to these volunteers! The men surely enjoyed and appreciated this delicious meal!

If you are interested in providing part of a meal but have questions about this mission, please feel free to contact Suzy McDevitt by email at suzyjmc2@yahoo.com or by text at 201-315-2063.



200 Cans For 200 Years to be extended until 11/5!

We are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way~ please help us reach our goal!

Cans will be donated to the Center for Food Action- in time for Thanksgiving!

Thank You!



**We have a build date for Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, December 2nd!
Sign up at coffee hour or email Donna Flagg @ flaggbda@gmail.com.**

ALL SAINTS DAY



All Saints' Day will be observed at First Pres on November 5th.

During the worship service there will be a Litany of Remembrance and Prayer of Thanksgiving to thank God for members, family members, and friends who have died in the previous 12 months.

If you would like to have a family member or friend included in the prayer, please notify the church office by October 30th.



Congregational MEETING

A congregational meeting has been called for Sunday, November 5th, immediately following the worship service, for the purpose of electing a member of the congregation to serve on the Board of Deacons.

All members are encouraged to attend.



Team 200 is still selling once in a lifetime, limited edition, gold plated, church bicentennial ornaments for members, friends and families!

Cost is \$20.00 with all proceeds going towards our bicentennial celebrations.

You will find a table set up in the auditorium on most Sundays following Worship, or you may contact Joan Davies @ joandavies916@gmail.com.



Missing from the photo are regulars - Pastor Bruce and Bonnie Brooks.

Thanks Pastor Bruce for organizing Walk and Talk. It's been a fun fall fellowship time for all.

Sunday School Notes

Sunday school lessons covered for November: Joshua 3:7-17, Noah and the rainbow experiment, We are thankful: A church school Thanksgiving celebration, Christ the King Sunday/1st Sunday of Advent.

On Sunday, October 15th Bibles were presented during worship to Axel England, Jack Morris, Evelyn Horner and Claire Hlavacek (not present). October 8th and 15th church school students of all grades decorated 2 x 4 studs for Passaic Habitat for Humanity.



College Care Packages

On October 22nd care boxes were filled with goodies and mailed to 15 of our First Pres. college students!



Our Bicentennial garden continues to flourish!

Thanks to the First Pres angels who donated to our bicentennial garden,
We planted blue catmint, dianthus and vincas this summer.

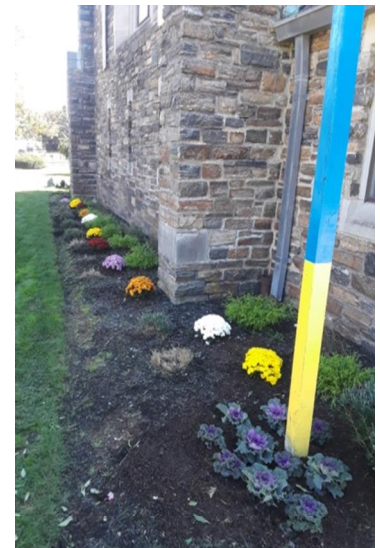
On October 11th we planted fall mums in the garden and cabbage plants (around the peace pole).

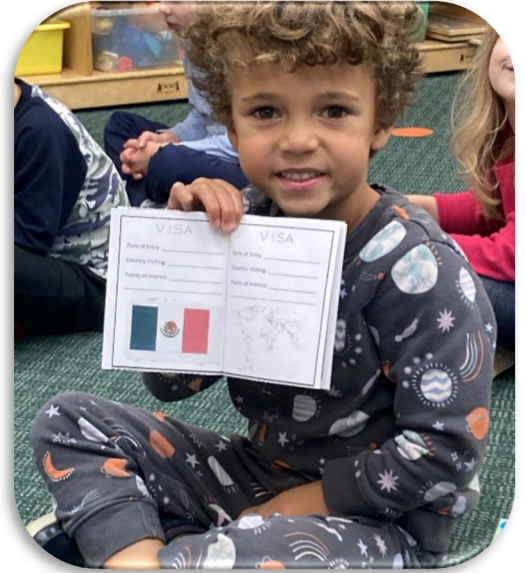
We also planted over 60 bulbs of hyacinth and daffodils, which will bloom in the spring!
All of the plants and flowers are rabbit and deer resistant. We plan are to add a new plant
every season, so First Pres will have a garden which blooms from spring through fall!

A Special thank you to Laura Magrath and our Endowment committee who graciously donated
\$700 to our Bicentennial garden, which allowed us to plant 13 golden cypress plants this past
May in addition to fall plants and spring bulbs!



*Bloom
where
you are
planted*





The Weekday Nursery School is bustling with activity!

The children did a great job in their Halloween parade and sing-along, their first performance of the year. This month the teachers are emphasizing thankfulness and acts of giving as we move toward the holiday season. Each class will be hosting its own Thanksgiving mini feast. The children are also busy learning their songs for our upcoming Christmas program, Friday, December 15th @ 9:15 am in the Sanctuary.

Students in our Fours class are enjoying our Around the World Enrichment Class. The students created a passport and visit a new country each week! Each country has something different to share; a sprinkle of literature, a dabble of maps and flags and a whole lot of art. The students have discovered the thrill of the journey without leaving school!

If you are looking for a quality, nurturing preschool for your child, or know of someone who is, please feel free to call and schedule a tour. Soon we will be enrolling for the 2024-2025 school year. Active members of First Presbyterian Church are eligible for a discounted tuition. If you have any questions about our program, please call Julia Bolt, Director, @ 201-445-2552.

We wish you and your families a blessed Thanksgiving.



Consecration Sunday is Coming!

As we continue to celebrate our bicentennial, one valuable effort has been a treasure hunt of sorts around the church. Looking in dusty corners and locked closets, Team 200 discovered mementos and artifacts of the past. Together, all these treasures bring to life our faith history and demonstrate how much our predecessors expressed gratitude for God's blessings and looked toward the future.

Stewardship is much the same mindset—faithful management of all that God gives us. In this way, we can use our gifts to transform us spiritually and extend Christ's transforming love to others. *Consecration Sunday* is based on the stewardship philosophy that teaches the biblical and spiritual principals of generous giving. It helps us answer the question "God, what are you asking me to give?"

During worship on *Consecration Sunday*, **November 19th**, members will be asked to make their financial commitments to our church's mission, benevolent and educational ministries that serve us here and around the world. Every member who completes an Estimate of Giving Card does so voluntarily. After worship, we will all gather together in the Auditorium to enjoy our Celebration Luncheon. Since this is a catered meal, reservations will be required. Reservation cards will be made available during worship leading up to *Consecration Sunday*.

Just as our history has shown, our faith has a tremendous potential for improving and enriching people's lives today and into the future. Financial stewardship is treasure management-- it keeps us spiritually focused and steadfast in our love for God, our First Pres family and the ministries he calls each of us to serve. Just as Jesus said in Luke 12:34, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be".

Let us all commit that this, our bicentennial year, will be one of "*Joyful Giving as we enter our Third Century*".

Anita Hutton

Consecration Sunday Chairperson

Aleppo Christian Center Fundraising Dinner ~ September 30th!

A Splendid Night!



Special thanks to Team 200, The Mission, Peace and Social Righteousness Team, and to everyone who donated to this fund!

Together we raised over \$22,000 for the Aleppo Christian Center!

“Blessed to be a Blessing”!





Emmy, Sami and Ramzi shared personal stories and gave thanks for God's saving grace!





Rev. Dr. Mark Mueller, Executive Director of The Outreach Foundation preached on World Communion Sunday.

“You are my witnesses...”



In 200 Seconds What First Pres Means To~



Kendra Morris



Chris Wilson



Li Towt



Bonnie Brooks



Hammering for Habitat held at First Pres on October 20th!





MaryEllen Castaldo
Joe Amoruso
Larry Bonwick
Michael Reid
Ryan Schnure
Palmer Yates

If you are not on our church birthday list, please email davies333@aol.com

Pastor	Rev. 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
Bookkeeper	Lavonne McMillen
Sexton	Tom Carozza
Custodian	George Wood
Director Nursery School	Julia Bolt
Newsletter Editor	Joan Davies (Volunteer)

Church Phone (201) 652-2504

Pastor Bruce: (215) 337-5623

