



# The First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood

## First Press Newsletter

722 E Ridgewood Ave, Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
(201) 652-2504

**June 2025**

*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,

On Sunday, June 8, at First Presbyterian Church, we will observe the Day of Pentecost. It was not long after the ascension of Jesus and during the Pentecost festival that God commanded the attention of the gathered disciples in a big way with a mighty wind and divided tongues as of fire, and the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

So often when we talk about the Holy Spirit we use descriptive terms such as Helper, Advocate and Comforter. The Spirit plays each of these roles in the life of the Christian. But there's another dimension to the Holy Spirit. It's the Pentecost side of the Spirit's personality. Dramatic. Bold. Powerful. Like a mighty wind or a raging fire.



That's the side of the Holy Spirit which the gathered disciples experienced on Pentecost. All of a sudden, they were given words to speak in languages they didn't understand. And all of a sudden, Peter, who not long before had been so fearful of being associated with Jesus that he denied his Lord. That same Peter is so transformed and empowered by the Spirit that he goes out in the streets and preaches a bold, dramatic sermon in the very city where Jesus had been crucified.

It's an in-your-face sermon, which has a profound effect on many of those who heard it. So they ask Peter and the others, "What should we do?" Peter's reply: "Repent and be baptized ...." And in response, 3,000 people line up to be baptized.

Pentecost. Some say it's the birthday of the church. You could also say it's the day the church exploded, growing exponentially in a single day. And within days afterward, many of those 3,000 new converts would travel back to their home countries to tell others about Jesus and the Way.

Thus, on Sunday, June 8, Pentecost 2025, Christians all over the world will celebrate the birthday of the church. And at First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood, we will celebrate by receiving members of the 2025 Confirmation Class: Cole Bellorgey, David Edelbach, Maddie Eliya, Luca Torielli and Hudson Wall. A wonderful day in the life of our congregation!

It also happens to be a Youth Sunday service – a don't-miss-it event on our worship calendar!

(Con't)

So, on Sunday, June 8, be sure to wear something red (the liturgical color of Pentecost) and join the celebration.

See you in worship!  
Bruce



In May, during class time, we studied Doubting Thomas, Mother's Day, John 13:31-35 & Memorial Day. **Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>** is Father's Day and Summer Sunday School classes will begin for grade school students through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.



**SUNDAY, JUNE 1st**  
**Two exciting events are happening!**

Sunday School **Family Planting Day** will be held after worship and coffee hour.  
We will plant annual flowers in the Bicentennial garden! Wear your planting clothes!  
MaryEllen & Pete Castaldo will meet you in the garden!

**-AND-**

Come one; come all to the **mulching party** also after worship and coffee hour! Come and help spruce up the church gardens and manse. No experience necessary, bring work gloves if you have them!  
Questions contact Sandy Santangelo 201-519-6660



Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, is the last day of Church School and we are holding our Youth Service. Our confirmands will be received as new members and we will recognize our High School and College Graduates! It is Pentecost Sunday, so we encourage you to wear RED!

Our Five Confirmation Students that will be received into membership are: Cole Bellorgey, David Edelbach, Madeline Eliya, Luca Torielli and Hudson Wall. Our 2025 High School graduate is Patrick Edelbach. Our 2025 College Graduates are: Katelynn Edelbach, Collin Feeney, Kristina Rae and Ryan Schnure.



**Congratulations to our First Pres.  
High School and College Graduates Class of 2025!**  
May God Bless you in all your future endeavors!



**High School Graduates:**

**Patrick Edelbach**



**Patrick** is graduating from Paramus High School. During his time in high school, he was a 4 year varsity swimmer earning many awards and accolades, as well as being accepted into the National Honor Society. Additionally, Patrick swam competitively for the Ridgewood YMCA Breakers club team for the past 8 years. He worked as a swim instructor as well, teaching swimming lessons to children and adults of all ages. He works as a certified lifeguard at Darlington County Park in Mahwah and is going into his second summer season there. Patrick will be attending the University of South Florida this summer/fall to study Criminology.



**College Graduates:**



**Katelyn Edelbach**



**Katelyn** graduated from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Arts in Genetics. During her time at Rutgers, she was actively involved in service and leadership, volunteering with the Rutgers Alzheimer's Buddies Club and later serving as the Club's Vice President. She also worked as a Resident Assistant for two years, supporting and mentoring fellow students.

Passionate about women's health and reproductive biology, she conducted research in this field for two and a half years and completed a senior honors thesis, earning three awards for her work – the Department of Genetics Award for Excellence in a Research Presentation and 2 University Awards - the Henry Rutgers Scholar Award and the Paul Robeson Scholars Award.

She is currently applying to medical schools with the goal of becoming an OB-GYN. During her gap year, she will be working as a medical assistant at an internal medicine practice in Ridgewood while continuing her role as a psychiatric patient care technician at Holy Name Medical Center.

**Collin Feeney**



**Collin** graduated from Ithaca College School of Business earning his Bachelor of Science degree, with a concentration in Finance. Collin was a student athlete having been on the baseball team for four years and was two-time Captain of the team.

**Kristina Rae**



**Kristina** graduated from Ithaca College with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting with a minor in Data Analytics. During her time at Ithaca she served as President of Women in Business, Vice President of Beta Alpha Psi Honor Society, peer advisor and tutor. She was a college lacrosse athlete as well for 2 years. Kristina will continue her studies at Ithaca next year to earn her Master's degree in accounting and her CPA license.

**Ryan Schnure**



After 4 incredible years at Penn State University, **Ryan** graduated from Smeal College of Business with a degree in Risk Management. He has accepted a position as Risk Management Associate at Risk Strategies, a specialized insurance brokerage firm, in New York City. Beginning in July, he will participate in a rotational program to learn more about the various services the company provides and determine his area of concentration.

## **We NEED Volunteers for Vacation Bible School**

Please prayerfully consider helping to make this week a successful one!

Monday – Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> 9:00am – 11:30am

Please see MaryEllen Castaldo or email at [marecmt@aol.com](mailto:marecmt@aol.com)







## **SUMMER FOOD/NON-FOOD DRIVE**

Through the month of JUNE we are collecting non-perishable food, cleaning and toiletry items

Sponsored by First Pres. Church School  
to support the Social Service Association of Ridgewood and Vicinity

Please NO Glass Jars or Containers! THANK YOU!

### **Non-Perishable Food Items:**

- ♥ Canned Proteins (Chicken & Tuna)
  - ♥ Cake & Brownie Mix
  - ♥ Instant Oatmeal
- ♥ Canned Fruit & Vegetables
  - ♥ Mac & Cheese
- ♥ Pancake Mix & Syrup
  - ♥ Tomato Sauce
- ♥ Pasta or Spaghetti
  - ♥ Peanut Butter \*Jelly
- ♥ Boxed Mashed Potatoes
  - ♥ Stuffing \*Gravy
- ♥ Baked Beans, Canned Chili & Beef Stew



### **Non-Food Items Needed:**

- ☺ Paper towels, Toilet Paper, Tissues
- ☺ Cleaning Products & Laundry Detergent
- ☺ Shampoo & Conditioner, Toothpaste
- ☺ Men or Women's Deodorant

♥ Thank you in advance for your generosity ♥



## **First Pres. Church leads Nursery School morning program celebrating Spring!**

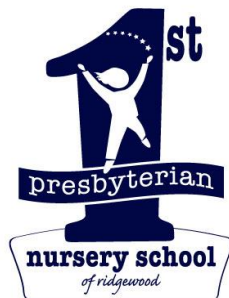


On Wednesday, April 30th, First Pres. Nursery School students enjoyed the story “The Hungry Caterpillar” in the Chapel with Mrs. Castaldo. Students made a 3D flower crafts in the auditorium followed by snack time eating yummy ice cream with sprinkles!


To end the program, the students received a goodie bag of treats! It was such a wonderful morning celebrating “Spring” with Julia Bolt, the Nursery school teachers, and all of their amazing students! 43 children were in attendance!

\*A special thank you to Peter Castaldo for all of his help!





[www.fpnsr.com](http://www.fpnsr.com)

 First Presbyterian Nursery School

Mary Ellen Castaldo welcomed our preschoolers to a joyful spring morning filled with stories, crafts, goodie bags and ice cream!



Our preschoolers and church members joined in a heartwarming community service project – gathering books to share the joy of reading with others.

We have been busy practicing for our End-of-Year/ graduation program, which takes place in the Sanctuary on Friday, June 6th at 9:15 am. All Church members are invited to attend!



We still have limited openings for the 2025 - 2026 school year. We offer programs for children 2 ½ years – 5 years, 5 days/week with half day and full day options. Please contact Julia Bolt, Director, at 201-445-2552 for more information and a tour of our preschool. Church members receive a tuition discount. We offer a fun, nurturing environment, while preparing our children for kindergarten. We look forward to hearing from you!



Wishing everyone a safe, restful, and enjoyable summer!





## Mission:



The Torielli family led the charge with a perfectly roasted turkey, smothered in rich gravy—the kind that makes you forget your manners and reach for seconds. The Dickinsons followed with a generous spread of fresh fruit and warm, crusty bread, because no meal is complete without something wholesome and something to soak up the gravy. Sue Sofka kept the carbs coming with a hearty pasta dish, perfectly cooked and clearly made with love. Joan Davies rounded it all out with sweet potatoes that could pass for dessert and a savory ham that smelled like the holidays came early. Once the feast was packed and ready, the Toriellis made the delivery. They shared some laughs and good conversation with Thomas, and, as always, he asked the most important question of the day: “What sounds good for June?”

If you'd like to get involved please use the link below to signup:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0845ACAE2BA7F49-51100449-stpauls>

## Sidney Bowie, City Relief Donor and Mobilization Officer

At a recent workshop Sidney Bowie spoke about responding with compassion and walking alongside our neighbors who experience homelessness.





## Who Benefits Most From Endowment Giving?

Summer is a good time to reflect on where we are in our lives.

Is God at the center? Or is He on the periphery of our lives?

Do we invite Him to sit at the Dinner table with us or do we wrap up the leftovers to give to Him? Do we trust Him to be our coach in life? or do we keep Him on the bench to call on only in an emergency?

These are some of the ongoing questions our Endowment Committee wrestles with on an ongoing basis. A healthy Endowment Fund helps our church but more importantly helps us take God's message beyond the church walls to show others the power of God in the world. The church is the vine and we are the branches...long may they wave and produce life-giving fruit. A growing Endowment Fund benefits more than just those in our church. It takes the abundance of our fruit out into the world.

Happy Summer Reflecting!



\*Written and submitted by Joanne Bonwick, Endowment Committee member.

~~~~~

## Presbytery Meeting May 17<sup>th</sup>

At the most recent meeting of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey, Pastor Bruce was installed as a Co-Moderator. **Congratulations Pastor Bruce!**



## **We gave the gift of Reading and made a difference in Children's Lives**



The Matt25 Task Force and 1<sup>st</sup> Pres Nursery School's first Children's Book Drive was an outstanding success bringing in 1,460 books! The goal of the book drive was to inspire our church congregation and Nursery School to serve others. You all rose to the challenge.

The children generously shared their own books, which they loved, and gave them to others in need. Adults gave of their family books and reached out to relatives, friends, neighbors, libraries and schools to donate.

The 1,460 children's books were collected and donated to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hawthorne, Clifton, Paterson, & Wayne, N.J. Books were also given to New City Kids of Paterson, and The Paterson Education Fund. We gave only new or "like new" books to the local organizations. Others were sent to Planet Aid, who sent them to Planet Aid Children in Puerto Rico. Thus, all books we received were valued and distributed. The leftover bags were given to the Helping Hand Food Pantry in Hillsdale.

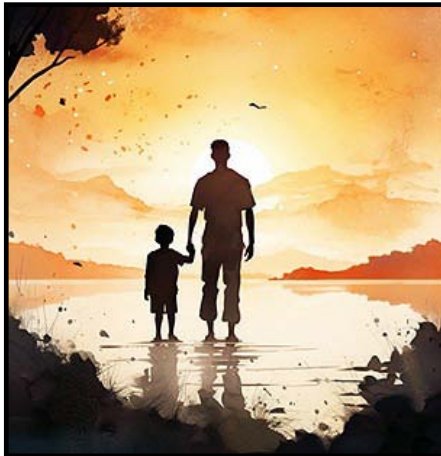
Thank you to all who donated books and to those who helped behind the scenes to make this a success.

**Sally Teschon and Julia Bolt**





### Happy Father's Day



"Blessed indeed is the man who hears gentle voices calling him father."

*Lydia M. Child*

"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."

*1 Thessalonians 2:11-12*

"The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him."

*Proverbs 20:7*

### The Church Mouse:

#### Thought for the month:

*"In the summer the song sings itself, above the muffled words".*

... *William Carlos Williams*



**Have a wonderful summer!**

**First Pres. Newsletter will "see you in September!"**





## June: July:

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Isabella Burger    | Diane Amoruso      |
| Jim Davidson       | Pam Brady          |
| Andrew Dickinson   | Diane Eliya        |
| Lucy Dickinson     | Frankie Feltmann   |
| Christine Di Iorio | Ruth Plucinski     |
| Laura Di Iorio     | Amanda Schnure     |
| Carol Eliya        | Carrie Werner      |
| Kyle Feltmann      | Brooks Yates       |
| Luke Feltmann      | James Yates        |
| Anita Hutton       |                    |
| Michael Hutton     | <b>August:</b>     |
| Sandy Santangelo   | Janis Ax           |
| Dave Shaw          | Krystina Dickinson |
| Lucy Sourial       | Don Kender         |
| Lindsay Strickland | Evelyn Kender      |
| Shane Strickland   | Kyle Schnure       |
| Rob Tedeschi       |                    |
| Kate Yates         |                    |

Here's wishing everyone a *great birthday* and a *wonderful* year ahead...

## Church Staff

**Pastor:** Rev. Bruce Ballantine

**Director of Children & Families:** MaryEllen Castaldo

**Director of Music:** Dr. Edward Schmiedecke

**Organist:** Linda Sweetman Waters

**Director of Youth Music & Handbells:** Carol Schmiedecke

**Administrative Manager:** Dana Feeney

**Bookkeeper:** Lavonne McMillen

**Sexton:** Tom Carozza

**Custodian:** George Wood

**Director Nursery School:** Julia Bolt

**Newsletter Editor:** Carrie Werner (Volunteer)

**Photography and Community**

**Bulletin Board:** Joanne Bonwick (Volunteer)

**Church Phone:** (201) 652-2504

**Church Web Site:** [www.firstpresridgewood.org](http://www.firstpresridgewood.org)

**Pastor Bruce:** (215) 337-5623 Please contact him directly for Pastoral Care.