



MARCH

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,

I am pleased that after two years of *Lenten Suppers Minus the Calories* (that is, Lenten Supper Worship via zoom), this year the **Lenten Supper Series** will return to its in-person format, providing food for body and soul. Each Wednesday in March, members of First Pres and Trinity will gather at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium to share a meal and a time of worship. During the worship service on March 1, 8, 15 & 22, we will listen as members and friends share a portion of their faith journey or faith story.

On Wednesday, March 29, we will not take part in a traditional worship service. Rather, you are invited to come early or stay following the supper to experience the **Lenten Prayer Stations**, which will be available, courtesy of the Worship & Arts Committee, in the Sanctuary and Chapel.

I hope you will plan to take part in these unique opportunities to enrich your spiritual life during this Lenten season!

Grace and peace,

Bruce



2023 Lenten Supper Series ~ Journeys of Faith

Join us at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays as First Pres and Trinity members and friends share a portion of their faith journey. The evening will conclude at 7:00.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meal Preparation</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
3/01	First Pres W&A / Growth	Sophie Stone - Trinity International Mission
3/08	First Pres Christian Ed	Jerome Lane - Community Organizer, Presbytery of NE NJ
3/15	First Pres Deacons	Suzy McDevitt - First Pres Deacon
3/22	Trinity Presbyterian	Richard Davies - First Pres Elder
3/29	First Pres Session	No Speaker - Lenten Prayer Stations

Come and receive food for body and soul. And one more thing: Invite a friend to join us!

~ Experience Lent in a New and Deeper Way ~



The Worship and Arts Committee invites you on Wednesday, March 29, the last day of the Lenten Supper Series to visit six prayer stations that will be set up in the sanctuary. It is a wonderful opportunity to take time to reflect on our spiritual and faith journey as we prepare our hearts and minds for Easter.

What are the Lenten prayer stations?

There will be six interactive stations that we hope will facilitate a unique prayer experience for you. Each station has a theme and takes you through a guided activity with instructions and all the materials needed that will help you pray creatively. One of the stations will be **Come to the Table** and you will be invited to join Pastor Bruce in the Chapel for a time of prayer and communion.

When?

Wednesday, March 29

5:00 p.m. . 6:00 p.m. (Before the Lenten Supper)

6:30 p.m. . 8:00 p.m. (After the Lenten Supper)

You can come one or both times and stay as long as you like



Fountain of Grace - Our burdens weigh us down and separate us from our loving God who invites us to lay them down. Place a small rock in the water to let go your burden. Feel the peace of God as you lay down your burden to Him.



Light a Candle of Concern, for Yourself or for Someone You Love - Throughout the world, lighting candles is a sacred ritual. Candles have always been a symbol of the Christian life - a light in the midst of the world's darkness. Light a candle to represent you and your life, and another candle to represent a person who may need your light and pray for them.



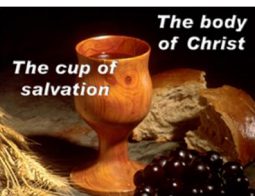
Our Gracious Loving God . Words from the heart offered as a prayer of thanks for God's presence is powerful and beautiful. Use letters to create words to describe who God is to you? What God means to you? How has God worked in your life? Consider connecting your words **Scrabble-style** to the words added by others or create a word in a new area of the board.



The Light of God's Love Shines Through Others - Be Still. Take a couple of deep cleansing breaths. Slowly-in and out. Blessings to those persons who have had an impact on your faith life. Take a moment, hold those persons in God's light, write their names and place them in the Blessings jar.



Called to Be the Light of the World - Pictures speak to us about the reality of the world - how people are living, dying, serving, suffering - their hopes, fears - . Listen to the emotions stirred within you, say a prayer of thanks, and ask God how you can use your gifts to be a light of the world.



Come to the Table - Around the Table of the Lord, the Lord's people are in communion with the crucified and risen Lord, and with all who belong to Christ. Take a few moments to reflect on the Sacrament of Communion as a gift from God and how you can give thanks to God for His grace. The Sacrament of Communion is a great feast of meaning and mystery we have received through Jesus Christ. You are invited to join Pastor Bruce in the Chapel for a time of prayer and communion. You may: share any prayer concerns, join him in a time of prayer and receive the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper.

Worship and Arts Committee: Pastor Bruce Ballantine, Joanne Bonwick (Co-chair), Diane Eliya (Co-chair), Sue Dickinson, Kali-Roi Eklof, Donna Flagg, Susi Hudson, Dr. Edward Schmiedecke, Marcia Unger.

3rd Annual Church Fundraiser for One Great Hour of Sharing!

Fish (or Chicken) and Chips Dinner~ provided by Tastefully British



This is a takeout event but tables set up to eat onsite if you prefer!

Date: Wednesday, April 5th (rain or shine)

Time: 5 PM to 7 PM

Where: Food truck will be in front church lot (unless you require handicap parking, please park in back lot or on Circle Ave)

Cost: \$20.00 for Fish (or chicken) French fries and coleslaw

Portions are large enough to share!

ALL fish or chicken orders must be received by Wednesday, March 30th

To order- email joandavies916@gmail.com or text Joan at 551-206-2081

Or call Dana at the church office at 201-652-2504

You may Venmo the church with memo “fish and chips” or pay at the event BUT please note-when you place your order we are obligated to pay for your dinner!

The need is great and so is our calling, please come and support this cause!

The Mission, Peace and Social Righteousness Team thanks you in advance for your support!

ENDOWMENT CORNER

A gracious thank you to all who helped add to our Endowment Fund in 2022.

There are many ways to give at First Pres and we wish to acknowledge all those who made donations through Endowment the past year.

*Starred names are non-members.

Bonwick, Joanne & Larry
*Bradford, Jeff & Karen
*Bradshaw, Linda
*Calvetti, Dawn
*D'Alesandro Family
Davidson, Jim & Carol
Davies, Joan & Richard
Denice, Susan
Flagg, Donna
Hothem, Claire
Johnston, Janet
*Karch Family
*Keller, William & Cynthia
*Kotch Family
*Macon, Joanne & Preston
Magrath, Leo & Laura
*Mateo, Carol & Alan
*Monsen, Margaret & Eric

*Muldoon Family
*Mulholland Family
*Novak, Carol & David
*O'Keefe Family
Reitmeier Trust
*Sawruk, Susan & Gary
Schagen, Al
*Skinner Family
*Speizer, Donna
Strader- Paz, Jessica & Steven
*Toscano, Robert & Susan
*Turley, Leonard & Phyllis
Unger, Joe & Marcia
*Waggoner, Sara
Weyant, Don & Mary
*Wos, Frank & Terry
*Zamboldi Family

Total "Tree of Life" donations in 2022	\$ 1,500
Total Green Umbrella Note card gifts	\$ 795
Total other memorial and outright gifts	<u>\$ 10,964.43</u>
Total Donations in 2022	\$ 13,259.43

Your Endowment dollars at work in 2022:

\$20,000 to Mission Committee in the name of Paul and Alpha Jo Haffey

\$2,700 to support Pastor Bruce's mission trip to Syria and Lebanon

\$2,700 to cover the cost to clean portions of the church's slate roof

\$24,000 to underwrite the cost of the worship service livestream by Tesla Media.

SUPPORT ENDOWMENT FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE CHURCH!



MISSION

On Sunday, February 5, the McDevitt family delivered food made by First Pres volunteers to the men staying at St. Paul's shelter in Patterson.

The night's dinner menu consisted of Baked Penne made by CJ Torielli; Pulled Chicken sandwiches made by Sandy Santangelo; Salisbury steaks with mashed potatoes and gravy made by Suzy McDevitt; Roasted potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots and green beans made by Donna Flagg; and fruit and sweet Hawaiian rolls provided by Rebecca Burger.

Thank you so much to these volunteers for keeping the mission going by sharing your love with the men at the shelter.

We are always looking for volunteers to cook or provide food for the St. Paul's dinners, which always take place on the first Sunday of each month. If you are interested in helping, or just have some questions, please contact Suzy McDevitt. Currently being scheduled are the April, May and June meals. (March is complete) Suzy can be reached by email at suzyjmc2@yahoo.com or by text at 201-315-2063.



yum!



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The Mission, Peace and Social Righteousness Team has sent \$1500.00 to the Outreach Foundation.

If you would like to send a special offering you may do so directly to PDA

[Presbyterian Mission Agency | Donate Now \(pcusa.org\)](https://www.pcusa.org)

Or to the Outreach Foundation

[Emergency Appeals — The Outreach Foundation](#)

Or, you can send a check or Venmo the church with memo PDA Earthquake.

“Out of Chaos, Hope”

“

God of mercy, we join in prayer for our siblings in Syria and Turkey, and all other regions affected. In the face of the terrible images that come to us, we ask that your Spirit, O God, once again move in the midst of chaos and destruction. May your Spirit be with the first responders, neighbors putting their lives at risk to help those around them, and anyone assisting during this time of emergency. May you provide protection, energy and strength through your presence. Be with them as they search for loved ones, guide them during the long hours and allow them to find hope through your Spirit





The Weekday Nursery School has been very busy creating, experimenting, and learning!

Each of our classes celebrated Valentine's Day by making special Valentine's for their families and sharing special treats with their classmates.

Our Valentine's Day Food Drive was a huge success! The Nursery School families collected non-perishable food and grocery items to help restock the food pantry for the Social Service Association of Ridgewood. It was wonderful to see the children share a little act of kindness and watch them add a heart sticker to our large heart poster board.



Registration for the 2023-2024 school year is underway. Feel free to stop by and check out the Nursery School happenings! There are still openings for the 23/24 school year. We offer programs for children 2 ½ years – 5 years, 5 days/week. 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!

On 2/19/2023 we welcomed Rev. Butros Zaour and Wafaa Zaour!



Rev. and Mrs. Zaour were given a gift and a prayer was offered by the youth.



Rev. Butros Zaour, Pastor of the National Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Damascus, Syria preached a sermon titled *"The Hope in Christianity"*.



Rev. Zaour showed pictures and discussed the damage caused by the recent earthquake and then answered many questions. Sammy Eliya and John Eliya were available to help translate when needed.

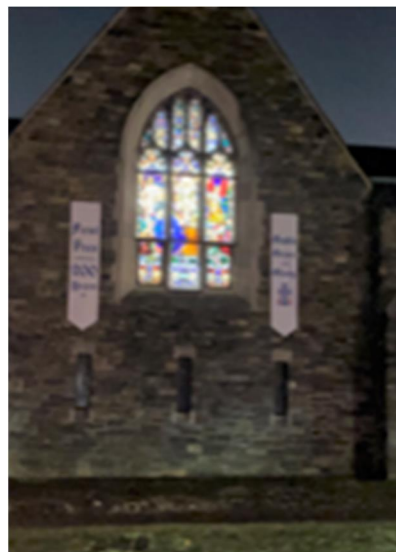


In 200 Seconds-What First Pres means to Jessica Strader, Sandy Santangelo, Peggy Norris and Emmy Eliya!



Hobbyist Sunday
2/19/2023- Bob
Mosher thanked
First Pres for being
a home to the
Hobbyists!

New stairs are
being installed in
the front of the
church!



Bicentennial Banners
were hung outside the
church on East
Ridgewood Avenue,
some damage
occurred following a
wind storm, but they
were repaired!



Thanks to all who cooked, served and donated- over \$1300.00 was collected for Eva's Kitchen in Paterson!

*If you love me,
feed my sheep.*
John 21:17



The Christian Ed and Growth committees sponsored the Souper Bowl of Caring.

Thanks to all our soup & chili makers and those who brought crackers and cornbread! ~MaryEllen Castaldo, Elisa Cerrina, Jill Critchley, Sue Fischer, Cynthia Rae, Sandy Santangelo, Jessica Strader Paz, and Craig Walters.

A big Thank you to Chris Wilson and the students who collected donations in soup pots and served the soup & the chili! ~ Hudson Feeney, Frankie Feltmann, Luke Feltmann, CJ Torielli and Dante Torielli.

Sunday School Notes

Sunday school lessons for March: Matthew 5:13-20 Salt and Light. The Widow's Mite, The Transfiguration.

Lenten Calendars were given out to church school students!

Fish banks were distributed to all Church school students for One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, February 26th!



Throughout the month of March our Sunday school will be collecting nonperishable food, cleaning and toiletry items!

All donations will support the "Helping Hand Food Pantry of Hillsdale, NJ"

NO Glass Jars or Containers please!!! THANK YOU!!!!!!

Non Food Items

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

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 Potato | |
| *Stuffing | *Gravy | *Baked Beans | *Chili & Beef Stew |



It's back! St. Patrick's Day Bingo sponsored by the Growth Committee in the auditorium after worship on Sunday, March 19th!

B there for a B square!



Dawn Murdock
Jeanine Jamieson
Dante Torielli
Mary Weyant
Dennis Ax

Marjorie Vanacore
Andy Castaldi
CJ Torielli
Laurie Feltmann
Rebecca Burger

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 and Handbells	Carol Schmiedecke
Administrative Manager	Dana Feeney
Bookkeeper	Lavonne Mcmillen
Tom Carozza	Sexton
Custodian	George Wood
Director Nursery School	Julia Bolt
Newsletter Editor	Joan Davies (Volunteer)

Church Phone (201) 652-2504

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

www.firstpresridgewood.org

Session Members

Andy Castaldi	Anita Hutton	San Barkho
Rick Friedl	Laura Magrath	Sue Fischer
Sandy Santangelo	John Eliya	Dawn Murdock
Robin Byrne	Tom Gibson	Jessica Strader
Jill Critchley		Marcia Unger

Officers of the Corporation

President ó Rick Friedl Vice-Presó Richard Davies Treasurer ó Andy Castaldi Clerk ó Joan Davies

Deacons

Bonnie Brooks	Kathleen Barkho	Linda Cascardo
Britt Tunick	Sue Dickinson	Nancy Walters
Rodger Yaden	Robert Morris	Suzy McDevitt
Greta Croucher	Elisa Cerrina	Emmy Eliya
Donna Flagg	Jeanine Jamieson	Li Towt