



The First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood

First Press Newsletter

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

February 2024

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 to share with you that during its May 2023 meeting, our Session made the decision that First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood would become a **Matthew 25 Congregation!**

In the words of the Presbyterian Church (USA) website: *Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities....*

The themes of the Matthew 25 invitation are grounded in the gospel. Jesus calls us to serve with and for “the least of these” — not as a group to be pitied, but as people who are deeply loved by Jesus.



The selected focus of First Presbyterian Church will be *building congregational vitality* by challenging members **to deepen and energize their faith** and **grow as joyful leaders and disciples** actively engaged with their **community**, seeing **new disciples** engaged in **ministry** and **longstanding believers** develop in faith as the gospel of Jesus Christ is **shared in word and deed**.

So that we might become more familiar with this significant passage of scripture and its implications for our life together, I will offer a Matthew 25 Bible Study during the month of February. This four-week study will take place in the **Minnema Room on Mondays at 6:00 p.m.**, and the same study will also be offered on **Wednesdays at noon**. Just pick the day/time which works best for you, then let me know you plan to attend (so I know how many handouts to prepare), then join us as we explore God’s word together!

Grace and peace,

Bruce

Matthew 25 Bible Study: Mondays @ 6:00pm or Wednesdays @ Noon - Minnema Room



MATTHEW 25

Feb. 5th & 7th Matthew 25:31-46: Examining the Text/Context
Feb. 12th & 14th Three Foci of the Matthew 25 Vision
Feb. 19th & 21st Reading this Passage in Light of Jesus' Ministry
Feb. 25th & 28th How Then Shall We Live?



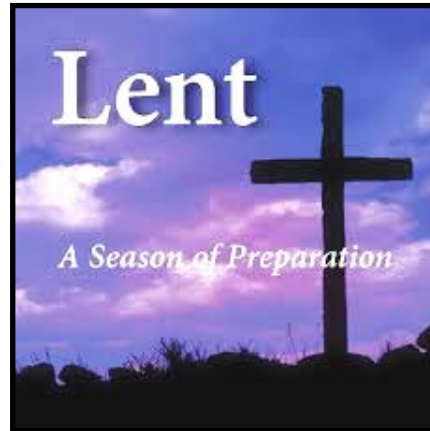
Ash Wednesday Worship Service

7:00 p.m. February 14th in the Sanctuary

During **Lent**, be sure to join us at **6:00pm** on **Wednesdays, February 21st and 28th and March 6th and 13th**, for supper and worship.

During worship, members and friends will share a portion of their faith journey. The evening will conclude at **7:00pm**.

All Lenten Suppers will take place in the Auditorium. Watch the Interest Items for additional information. And one more thing: **Bring a friend!**



CANDLELIGHT MEDITATIVE SERVICE

Wednesday, February 7th, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel

*For the first time First Pres Church will offer a **midweek 30-minute contemplative service** during this winter season. Join us for an **intimate oasis – a time of stillness and centering to calm the mind and open the soul**, in the midst of our busy lives. Gathered as a community, we will pray together in word and song, and rest in silence as we open ourselves to God's loving presence. We will enjoy a night of meditative singing in a candlelight setting, which makes the very words of the songs a prayer. **Come and be refreshed and renewed.***



GET AQUAINTED BREAKFAST GATHERINGS:

Sundays February 4, 11 & 18 @ 8:30 a.m. in the Minnema Room.

Are you interested in becoming a member of First Pres? Or would you like to **learn more about the church** as you consider **becoming a member?**

If so, you are invited to attend a series of **three Get Acquainted Breakfast Gatherings** on Sundays, February 4, 11, and 18, in the Minnema Room (lower level).

Sponsored by the **Growth Committee**, the breakfast gatherings provide a convenient way to **get acquainted** with the church, some of its **members and staff**, as well as various First Pres **ministry and mission opportunities**.

Please contact **Pastor Bruce** at **215.337.5623**

or **email pastorbruce@firstpresridgewood.org** if you have any questions or if you plan on attending.



Endowment Corner February 2024

“THANK YOU!”

We are most grateful to the many supporters of our Endowment Fund during our Bicentennial year who are responsible for the continuing growth of the Fund.

The 2023 donors include:

*Sarah & Kent Anderson Laura & Leo Magrath
Daniel Bartkewicz* Jo-Ann & Dwight Massey
Joanne & Larry Bonwick Michael Klag & Lucy Meoni*
Joan & Richard Davies Signe Myhren*
Mona Desesa* Jane Neuviller*
Rose DeVera* Steven & Jessica Strader Paz
Edna Faber* R. Kinckle & L. Robinson*
Melinda & Max Frangulov* John Rogers
Claire Hothem David & Sally Sease*
Anita Hutton David & Mary Shaw
Michael & Brianna Hutton Joe & Marcia Unger
Eric & Claire Johnson* Dennis Yachechak
Janet Johnston *Starred names are non-members.*

Our Endowment Fund grew with the following gratefully received contributions:

Tree of Life Donations: \$2,000

Green Umbrella Note Card Program: \$575

Other Memorial and cash gifts: \$13,410

Total received: \$15,985

The Endowment Committee, in 2023, voted unanimously to make the following gifts:

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

\$24,000 to underwrite the cost of Worship Service Live stream by Tesla Media

\$20,000 to help fund the kitchen renovation project in 2024

\$ 700 to help the Bicentennial Garden grow

Endowment Fund as of 12/31/23 totaled \$1,273,747.75

“We are dutifully reminded in Matthew 19:21 *“Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”* (KJV)





We just completed our annual parent/teacher conferences in January. The Nursery School staff prepared a Developmental Checklist and Student Portfolio for each child. Student Portfolios and Developmental Checklist were shared with parents during their conference time.

Our Threes class began their Arctic Adventure Enrichment class. All classes enjoyed the Scientifically Science In-House school field trip. Each of our classes will be celebrating Valentine's Day by making special Valentine's for their families and sharing special treats with their classmates.

If you are looking for a quality, nurturing preschool for your 2 ½ - 6-year-old child, or know of someone who is, please call us to arrange a tour of our school. We have begun registration for the 2024-2025 school year. We are offering half-day and full-day classes. Active members of First Pres. Church receive a tuition discount. If you have any questions about our program, please call **Julia Bolt, Director, @ 201-445-2552.**





Lessons for **January**: Baptism of Jesus, God calls Samuel, Jonah.

February: Mark: 1:29-39, The Transfiguration, OT lessons & Lenten lessons



Get into the game by making a donation in a soup pot after worship service on Sunday, February 11th!

Our Youth will be posted at all exits to collect your donations after worship.

Let's come together!

As we enjoy the Super Bowl and
remember *those who do not have even a bowl of soup to eat!*

We invite everyone to **join us after Worship** and
enjoy a cup of soup or chili in our Auditorium!

Help us to support Eva's Village in Paterson, N.J.
So they can continue to be the place "where hope begins" for so many.

****If you love to make soup or chili please donate your specialty in a crockpot to serve at our Souper Bowl of Caring Fundraiser after worship.**



January 28nd our **Youth led our worship service** on the fourth Sunday of Epiphany. **Thank you** to all the **students** who **participated** in serving.

As always you were AMAZING!

Denim Day was on January 28th. Thank you to all who donated to our **Denim Day fundraiser** and wore your jeans to church! Your donation of \$10.00 enabled you to come to church in comfort!

Proceeds will go toward our **High School Youth Group trips and events!**



MISSION:



On **January 7**, the **Murdock/Lavine family** delivered **dinner** provided by **First Pres Volunteers** to the men at **St Paul's shelter**. On the menu was **Meatballs** made by **Marjorie Vanacore**, **Chicken Lasagna** provided by **Li Towt**, **Macaroni and Cheese** made by **Bobbe Kutcha**, **Greek Salad** made by **Joel Torielli**, and **fruit and bread** provided by **Linda Strickland**.

Thank you so much to these volunteers for their generosity and for their time and skill invested. The men were very thankful for everything. And a special thank you to **Dawn Murdock** for offering to **deliver** the meal to the shelter this month with her family.

It is a pleasure to let you know that **the Torielli family has volunteered to take over the coordination and delivery of meals to St. Paul's each month**. If you are interested in helping out with this mission, or have questions, please contact **Joel Torielli by email at Torielli@hotmail.com or by text at 201-661-1452**.

****Special thanks to Suzy McDivett** who tirelessly lead this important mission for four years. Thank you for your unwavering service!

!REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS!

First Presbyterian Nominating Committee



**HAVE YOU HEARD
THE CALL?**



It's that time of year again and your Nominating Committee is looking for dedicated members to serve in the leadership of our Church!

These leadership roles directly affect how we as a church support one another and the community. Through worship, mission and care we fulfill Jesus' teachings to serve one another with hearts in fellowship and faith.

Would you like to serve as a **Deacon? Elder?** On a church **Committee?** Is there someone you would like to nominate to serve? If so, or if you would just like to discuss the **possibility** of serving or nominating, you may contact **Marcia Unger** through a note in her church mailbox, at marciamunger@gmail.com or by phone at (201) 666-4523.

The Bicentennial 200 Year Celebration !

On **January 14th** we had a wonderful **celebration** as the **finale** of our **200th year Anniversary**. Special thanks to **"Team 200"** for all of the work they put into celebrating this **milestone** for our church. The luncheon was very enjoyable and very delicious. Those in attendance dined while being surrounded by many interesting, **historical, artifacts** that the team assembled for the occasion. In addition we had a **group photo shoot** of the entire congregation that we can look forward to seeing in the near future!



200 Seconds presenters - What First Pres means to:



Carrie Werner



Michael Burger



Laura Magrath



Jill Critchley
Kali-Roi Eklof
Salwa Eliya
Doris Greenleaf
Matthew Leibfred
David Marchionni
Andy McDevitt
Linda Strickland

Here's wishing you 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

Church Phone: (201) 652-2504

Church Web Site: www.firstpresridgewood.org

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

Administrative Manager: Dana Feeney

Bookkeeper: Lavonne McMillen

Sexton: Tom Carozza

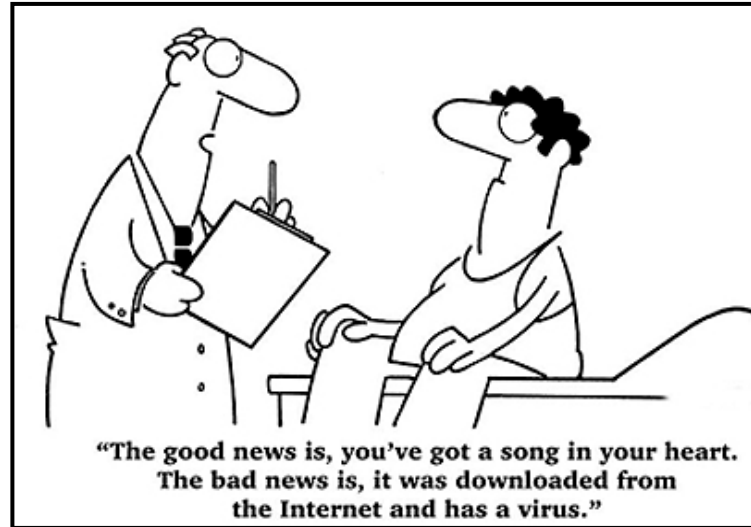
Custodian: George Wood

Director Nursery School: Julia Bolt

Newsletter Editor: Carrie Werner
(Volunteer)

Thank you to **Joan Davies, who for many years has volunteered to edit and create the **First Press Newsletter**. Kudos to Joan for a job (super) **well done** and for **amazingly** making the time to be the **editor**, while performing **Clerk of Session responsibilities**, along with many other wonderful things she does for the church! Please send all future newsletter submissions by the 15th of the month to Carrielwerner@aol.com

☺ Just for laughs ☺

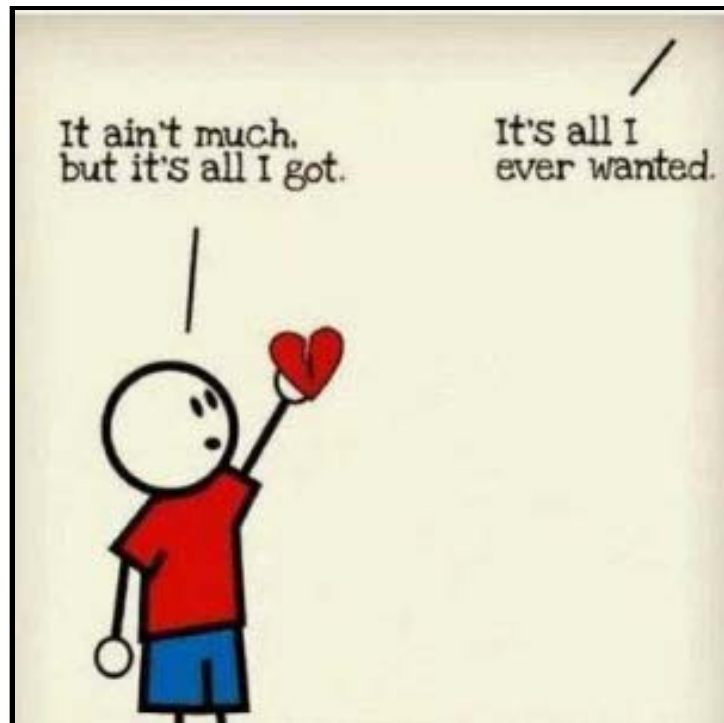


The Church Mouse:

Thought for the month:

"Keep your face always toward the sunshine – and shadows will fall behind you."

... Walt Whitman



Happy Valentine's Day