



THE TOWER

*First Presbyterian Church
37 Church Mall
Springfield, NJ 07081*

VOL. 78 NO. 10-12

(June-July-August)

SUMMER 2020

CHURCH OFFICE STILL CLOSED TO VISITORS

The church office will remain closed for the coming months. Linda Jurczak or Pastor Rhonda will staff the office on most weekday mornings. But any church business will need to be handled by telephone, fax or email in order to maintain proper social distancing protocols.

VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICES

We will continue to Livestream our worship services on Sunday mornings at 10:15am via YouTube, with the video of each service posted on YouTube and our Website, www.springfieldpresbyterian.org, later in the day. One way to easily connect to YouTube for the live service each week is to click on the link for the Virtual Worship Service on the home page of our Website. This link will take you to the church's YouTube page. Once there, hit "Subscribe," and you should have no trouble connecting with us on Sunday mornings.



STAY IN TOUCH

The church staff is still hard at work responding to the ministry needs of our community and they would like to thank you for your support and prayers. We hope you will stay in touch with us if your situation should change, or as needs arise, so that we may respond with care. That care may come in a different form than in the past, due to social distancing guidelines. But we will still be available to respond.

SUMMER TOWER SUPPLEMENT

We usually do one newsletter for the summer season. But, because the pandemic has made it tough to do much calendar planning ahead of time, there will be at least one supplement to the Tower this summer to help us keep up with the changes at hand, while also keeping us connected to one another. May God bless us all with a healthy summer!

VIRTUAL STORY TIME—SOARING WITH GOD

The COVID19 pandemic is causing us to make changes to our summer Christian Education program. As our traditional Vacation Bible School involves a great deal of close contact, we will not be hosting VBS this summer. However, our children still need to know that God is with us and that the Spirit gives us the strength we need to persevere despite the obstacles we confront.

To meet those needs, we will host a Virtual Story Time. The theme for the series will be “Soaring With God,” based on the scripture from Isaiah 40:31, “*Those who hope in the Lord...will soar on wings like eagles.*” Every Wednesday morning at 10am, starting July 1st, a new video will be released with a story of the week. Using books from the Christian publishing house, Flyaway Books, we will highlight topics such as: kindness, confidence, love, strength, togetherness and dealing with change.

We are still working on the particulars of the story series. But we will introduce a new topic each week, read a children’s book on the topic, discuss what makes that topic important to us (especially right now), and share in some virtual activities to underscore our trust in God and the assurance that Christ is helping us through this crazy time! Plus, for those children who are registered, we will provide a box of crafts for use with each story, and we’ll spend some time building those crafts “together.” Registration must be received by Lisa Guida by June 15th to prepare the craft kits. Please see form below.

The Virtual Story Time videos will be available to anyone on YouTube once they are released each week. But only those children who are registered will receive the box of craft kits ahead of time. Our hope is that the parents’ obligations for making this program fun and rewarding for their children are easily managed: register your child, tuck the craft box away somewhere the child won’t see it, take the weekly craft out at the start of each episode and, where necessary, be an extra set of hands for assembling the craft.

We will be taping Virtual Story Time in the sanctuary so we can use the Livestream equipment. You will need to have access to YouTube or the church Website if your child or grandchild (or neighbor’s child) is to participate in this wonderful summer offering.

VIRTUAL VBS REGISTRATION FORM - “SOARING WITH GOD”

Child’s Name _____ Age _____.

Date of Birth _____ Grade in School _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone Number __ (____) _____ Parent’s e-mail _____

Parent Name _____ Phone (Cell) _____

VBS will be 8 weeks long, one lesson per week starting June 29 -August 10

Crafts Kits will be delivered to the child’s home prior to the start of VBS.

Cost of Kits \$25 per child for the 8 weeks. Checks payable to *Springfield Presbyterian Church* and mailed with this form to Lisa Guida, 323 Hillside Avenue, Springfield, NJ 07081 Questions? Contact Lisa at Medusa12558@msn.com

Please note: please save the cardboard tubes from TP and Paper towel rolls for some of the VBS crafts ☺

Faith Matters



**“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season...and encourage
—with great patience and careful instruction.” (2 Timothy 4:2, NIV)**

Dear Friends in Christ,

The church in the U.S., and around the world, is experiencing a season of change. The COVID19 pandemic is requiring faith leaders to assess what is essential to our ministry and how those essentials can be continued despite the guidelines put in place to keep us safe. Some congregations have gone full stop and, given their limited resources, may struggle to recover from this interruption in ministry.

We are blessed to have had the resources necessary to continue our essential ministries, especially weekly worship, fellowship in prayer, communication via several media, and a mission presence in the community. Of course, much of this ministry looks different than it did before the pandemic. Six months ago, I couldn't have imagined that we would rely on internet technology for so much of the work we do. And yet, while we would love to be worshipping together in our beautiful sanctuary and holding a neighbor's hand in prayer, we realize that this season of change cannot be avoided.

Our presbytery staff were included in a phone call from the Governor's office last week to hear a plan for reopening businesses and venues in phases. In short, by the end of the conversation, it seemed unlikely we will be worshipping in-person for quite some time. And, even when we do open our doors, our church leaders will have to put precautions in place to keep us safe.

Health officials are already advising that group singing will be unwise, as a singing or talking voice projects particulate matter farther than breathing alone—an increase from 6 to 20 feet. It will be a while, then, before we can sing together and share in responsive liturgy. And traditions like passing the peace, handing the offertory plate or communion plate to a neighbor, or other practices that could transfer germs from one set of hands to another, will need to be set aside for the time being.

I know there is a lot to lament. Yet, even though we are a community dispersed, we trust that we *will* find ourselves together again. It will just take some time. And while the changes being outlined may seem harsh, we trust that following the government guidelines will keep us safe and well. In the short term, the church will press forward with virtual worship, an internet prayer chain and meaningful communication. We will continue to support food ministries. And we will move forward with a new program: virtual Christian education for our children this summer since traditional Vacation Bible School cannot be offered. In the long term, we will look ahead to consider ministry with a new model.

We are at a pivot point as the church, in Springfield as elsewhere, and decisions about the practice of ministry may make us sad or uncomfortable. We could certainly hang our heads in grief for what seems lost. But that won't achieve much. So, I propose that we do as Paul instructs, looking to the future with hope. The church of Jesus Christ has adjusted to *changing seasons* for 2,000 years; this is nothing new. There have always been seasons of seeding and seasons of growing; seasons of harvesting and seasons of lying fallow. There are also seasons of plague or pandemic where nothing seems to grow. Yet, even in those seasons, Christ is at work beginning a recovery.

In each season of church life, we are called upon to prepare for a new day, trusting in Christ to nurture our faith and strengthen our ministry. With God's help, we *will* make our way through this season of change. And, as we head into summer, let's keep hope alive, trusting that this crisis will pass and that the churches which prepare for a new season of seeding will thrive.

Pastor Rhonda

KEEPING OUR COVENANT OF CARE THROUGH OUR GIFTS

The Session and Board of Trustees would like to thank every one of you who has continued to remember the church with maintaining your pledges and financial gifts. It is still the hope of the church leaders to pay our staff fairly and maintain the same quality of ministry we are accustomed to, despite the restrictions placed upon us by the current pandemic. Your financial support helps us meet our obligations while also helping us keep a covenant of care with our staff and ministry partners. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

PRESBYTERY MEETING

The Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Elizabeth will be held on Tuesday, June 9th via Zoom. Details were not yet available at the time of publication.

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Our staff holidays for the summer season include Friday, July 3rd (Independence Day Weekend) and Monday, September 7th (Labor Day).

CELEBRATING GRADUATIONS



At the time of this printing, we have been advised of the following students celebrating a graduation this Spring: Russell A. Werner, Jr. (RJ) (FM Guadineer Middle School); Daniel Kitsko, (Kean University) son of Treasurer Steve Kitsko, with a degree in Psychosocial Rehabilitation ; Daniella Wichik, (Montclair State University) daughter of Sexton Steve Wichik, with a degree in Early Childhood Education. If you have a graduate in your household that you'd like to celebrate in the next issue, please send in the details. Include a photo if you'd like -we'd love to share the good news!

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR AWARDS

Once again, by the blessing of our education endowments, the Scholarship Committee is able to make awards to a few Jonathan Dayton High School graduating Seniors, in thanksgiving for their community service. The decision regarding the awards was based on the level of service, as well as an essay describing that service and why they believe it to be important. Kristin Ruebling-Jass and her committee selected *Jessica Miller, Jocelyn Duallo and Jordyn Engel* to receive \$500 each. Unfortunately, due to the closure of the schools through June, the awards ceremony will not be conducted in person. The High School will be preparing packets for the winners which will include a message from our Scholarship Committee along with the awards.

PASTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Rhonda can be reached at her personal email address: revrhon@aol.com.

She can also be reached (by voice or by text) on her cell phone at: 973-255-0846. Please feel free to contact Pastor for any reason. If she is unable to answer your call, please leave your contact information on the voice mail and she will return your call.

HISTORY AT OUR DOORSTEP

A new booklet is being published by the Springfield Historical Society and of course, this church's history holds great importance in the history of the community. June 23rd will be the 240th anniversary of the Battle of Springfield, which was fought literally at the front steps of the church. This fact was illustrated through a painting by John Ward Dunsmore entitled, "Battle of Springfield". The original is at Fraunces Tavern in NYC, and a copy is in the display case in the back of the church along with an Isaac Watt's hymnal. For those of you who are not familiar, or for those who like to remember, here is our brief history:



HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT SPRINGFIELD, NEW JERSEY By: Linda Jurczak

Founded in 1745, the first meeting house was a log cabin structure erected at or near Spring Street and Main Street in what is now known as Millburn. It was the only house of worship in Springfield for the first 90 years. In 1761, a second church was built on the site of the present building. In November 1778, the church was the center of revolutionary interest and the sanctuary was converted to become a public storehouse, to be used as any had need. The congregation was forced to meet in the garret (top room or attic) of the parsonage.

On June 23, 1780, the Battle of Springfield was fought to keep the British from reaching Washington's headquarters in Morristown. In the midst of the all day battle, the Continental soldiers were running out of wadding for their guns. Rev. James Caldwell, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabethtown and a Quartermaster for Washington's army, grabbed the hymnals written by Isaac Watts and threw them to his men to use as wadding as he shouted, "Give 'em Watts, boys!" The British were defeated, but before retreating, they burned the church and town to the ground.

In 1786, the church was incorporated under the name, "The First Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield". The next four years were spent in the planning of the current sanctuary. Plans for a brick and stone structure were abandoned as too expensive. The building was raised August 4, 5, 6 and finished on August 10, 1790. Men brought their tools and timber, and women set up tables on the front lawn to prepare and serve food to the men. It was built by volunteer labor under the direction of Benjamin Scudder (1733-1822), who lies buried across the street in the old burial ground.

Contributions were made by all the churches in the Presbytery of New York. Work continued on the building through the next year. The interior was different than what you see today. It was then fitted with a large window behind the pulpit, a wide center aisle with pews running off each side. The pew backs were higher and there were doors on the aisle end of each pew. The pulpit was round and mounted on a high column, elevated so as to overlook the body of the church and also sweep the galleries. The first public worship in this sanctuary was November 30, 1791. On the bell in the steeple we find the inscription, "A gift of Samuel Tyler, Esquire, to the Springfield Church. Made by David Ross of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, 1792."

In 1868, the sanctuary was renovated. The high back pews were put in the balcony, the current pews installed. The pulpit was replaced by the present one and the windows were removed from behind it. The large pot-bellied stove was removed from the center aisle and a hot air furnace was installed in the basement. It is at this time that the first organ was acquired. The Chapel was added in 1856. Additions were made in 1875 and 1899, at which time the buildings were wired for electricity. The Church and Chapel were connected in 1915.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, modern plumbing, HVAC, sound and safety systems have been installed and maintained. Cedar shake siding, roofing, custom insulated windows and masonry refurbishments have been made. The Carillon Bell was dedicated in 1956 and the present Moller organ was installed and the front part of the balcony renovated in 1968. In 1990, the church and properties were approved for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

The Continental Soldier statue on the church lawn was erected by the State of New Jersey in 1905. The land was donated to the State (100 square feet) for \$1.00. The unveiling of the statue was a grand event which is documented in detail in the *History of Union County*. It is the smallest State Park in New Jersey.

THE PARSONAGE (MANSE) 1764-1844

The first manse was raised August 22, 1764. A story and a half high with a long sloping roof. It had an old brick fireplace with the oven at the side. The kitchen floor was wood, while the rest of the building had an earthen floor. It had a ground level door which exited to a path which led to the parsonage spring and remained that way until around World War II when the low land was filled to avoid flooding by Van Winkles Brook. From the letters of a relative of Rev. Jacob Van Arsdalen (pastor from 1774-1801) written between November 1891 and April 1892 we have recorded:

“The house was set on fire after the church was burned and her father (Rev. Van Arsdalen) preached in his barn for some years and received no salary until the New Church was built. His only income came from preparing young men for the ministry. His house was saved by a heavy piece of furniture being thrown on the fire they kindled and it put it out.”

Several sources have recorded that General George Washington stayed for a short time at the Old Manse in 1780.

In 1844, the congregation voted \$1,500.00 for a new Parsonage. The committee was instructed to dispose of the Old Parsonage “to the best advantage.” They dismantled the building and erected the new, present parsonage, keeping intact the existing fireplace, oven, and foundation.

The home underwent extensive renovation in 1946 for the Rev. Bruce Evans family. In the early 1960’s, the Pastor and family moved to a newer home in town and the “Old Manse” became the caretakers’ home. A complete renovation was undertaken in 2017-2018 and houses the current caretakers.

-Much of what is written here comes from the 250th anniversary program written by Jean Quinton, Church Historian in 1995

Answer: plane, car, sign, ship, suitcase. The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. Psalm 121:8, NIV

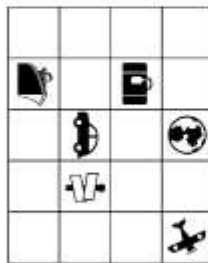


PUZZLES

Wherever we go

No matter where we journey, God always protects us.

Directions: Use the map and compass to answer the clues. Then write the boxed letters in order in the spaces below to complete Psalm 121:8, NIV.



Start at the SHIP.

Move 1 space N, 3 spaces E, and 2 spaces N

___ □

Start at the WORLD.

Move 1 space W, 1 space S, and 1 space SE

___ □

Start at the SUITCASE.

Move 1 space NE, 2 spaces S, and 1 space E

___ □

Start at the PLANE.

Move 2 spaces SW, 1 space S, and 1 space W

___ □

Start at the CAR.

Move 1 space E, 1 space N, and 1 space NW

___ □

Start at the SIGN.

Move 1 space SE, 1 space W, and 2 spaces NW

___ □

The ___ ORD will watch ove ___ your comi ___ g and go ___ ng
both no ___ and for ___ vermore. Psalm 121:8, NIV

IN MEMORIAM



The sympathy of the Congregation is extended to the family and friends of Sada Weber who passed away on April 19, 2020 at the age of 92. Sada and her husband, Bill, were active members for 35 years until Bill's passing in 1995 and Sada's move to Hillsborough, NJ in 1998. Sada remained a friend of this church since then.

Friends we have recently lost: Estelle Danneman, wife of member Fred Danneman who died this past February, passed away on May 2nd at the age of 95 due to Covid-19. Beatrice Mabutha, a regular attendee, passed away May 19th after a long illness.

May each one of these dear ladies rest in peace.



The June financial statements will be mailed in the beginning of July. Please review your statements carefully, and contact Linda J. in the office. She will follow up with the Financial Secretary to resolve any errors or concerns. If your pledge is in arrears, we ask that you bring it current as soon as your means allow. Thank you to all our church members and friends for their continued support.

SUMMER BIRTHDAYS TO CELEBRATE!

JUNE 2-Ken Bogden, Sue Bogden; 4 - Julianna DeTrollo; 5- Angela Ruebling-Jass
6- Gladys Gieser; 14- Deborah Biber, John Nattermann; 15- Helmut Grimm;
19- Richard Briggs; 20- Jack Bliss; 21- Theresa Werner; 24- Michael Gleicher;

JULY 1-Jonathan Riccie, Avery Sarno; 2- Linda Jurczak; 4-Phillip Gallardo; 5- Ruth Batiste;
7-Kenneth Bogden, Jr.; 9-Danielle Priest; 10-Karon Williams;
12-Amy Donnelly; 16- Meghan Paglia; 22- Betty Ignace; 26- Carol Johannsen;
28- Bonnie Ivankow; 29- Gloria Southward;

AUGUST 2- Ted Lyons; 3- Lauren Guida; 7- Jessica Lau Gutkin, Tory Smith;
8- Donald Bogden; 10- Rysonia (Dawn) Clarke; 13-Linda Maas; 18 - Brian Donnelly;
19- Russ Werner; 22 - Olivia DiGirolamo; 23- Jeremy Riccie; 26- Robert Stefany;
27 - Jennifer Wahlers; 31- Jenna Guida, Joan Stefany



IF YOUR BIRTHDAY IS NOT LISTED IN THE TOWER, WE DO NOT HAVE IT IN OUR RECORDS. WE ARE HAPPY TO CELEBRATE ALL !

Special June Dates: Trinity Sunday: June 7th Flag Day: June 14th
First Day of Summer: June 20th Father's Day: June 21st

THE FIRST CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT SPRINGFIELD
37 CHURCH MALL
SPRINGFIELD, NJ 07081

stamp

PLACE ADDRESS
LABEL HERE



FATHER'S DAY IS JUNE 21ST!

To all the fathers and father-figures in our lives, we thank you for your love, protection, and guidance. For the fathers that have gone before us, we hold the memory of them close to heart.

May God our Father, continue to bless us all and surround us with His love, each and every day!