



# *THE TOWER*

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

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## **GOD'S LOVE CHANGES US!**



Vacation Bible School “campers” had a great time with the “Rome- Paul and the Underground Church” theme. So many fun activities, stories, crafts, songs and snacks! Thanks to the talents of Christian Education Director Lisa Guida and Pastor Roberto Fois, along with the wonderful assistance of our volunteers, Gloria Southward, Lynn Doll and Raffaella Conetta, the VBS-2022 was a complete success!

And even when the forecast called for rain and clouds – we had sunshine, splashing in a pool and LOTS of laughter!



A Message from Rev. Fois

## **Nothing, no, no, nothing!!!**

*“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39 NRSV-UE)*

Nothing, no, no, nothing!!! This was the chant at our Vacation Bible School this week at FPC Springfield. We discussed with the children that there is only one God, the parent of our Lord Jesus, who loves us unconditionally, whose love cannot be broken or taken away.

The kids chanted with glee their understanding that nothing can separate us from the love of God, but I wonder how many adults would have the courage to do likewise. How many of us are bold enough to proclaim, with no reservation or shame, that we believe in a God that loves all of creation fully and completely? Who has the confidence to declare that nothing can separate us from such amazing love?

There is quite a bit of chanting and shouting these days. People shout for a variety of reasons, many of them noble and worthy of our voices and marches. But, I wonder, is our faith not a good enough reason to let everyone know what we feel and think? We seem to have bought into this idea that the only way to get along is to avoid talking politics and religion, but I think that in doing so, all we have left is either silence, small talk about irrelevant issues, or shouting.

Allow me to propose an alternative. Let's invite a dialogue. Let's promote and engage in conversation. Let your neighbor know how much you enjoy the company of the faith community. Let the grocer know that you are a Christian and make no apologies about it. Let your doctor know that, as much as you esteem her knowledge, you also believe in the power of prayers.

No amount of advertising and clever brochures and social media that the church can produce will have nearly as much impact on the growth of the church as your own personal and sincere endorsement and invitation.

If you believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God, tell someone. Let them know that there is a church in town that believes likewise, and invite them to witness firsthand how that unbreakable love is manifested in the lives of this faith community.

And may nothing deter you from such noble purpose.

Pastor Roberto

## In Memoriam.....Yolanda Rueda

- Ordained Elder
- Ordained Deacon
- Ladies Evening Group/Presbyterian Women  
Treasurer 1971-2013 (42 years!)
- Nursery volunteer
- Sunday School Teacher
- Office Staff – Financial Secretary
- Office volunteer
- Wedding Supervisor
- Friend to all – Angel on Earth



What can one say about a woman who dedicated 50 years of unparalleled service to this church in thanksgiving for being offered refuge for her family from Cuban dictatorship? A woman who anticipated every need of the Pastors and fellow members without expecting recognition? A woman who made sure that the church and Parish House were in order and secure, brides were ready to walk down the aisle, Nursery and Sunday School students were nurtured, club finances were balanced, and office projects completed?

“Well done, good and faithful servant” - Matthew 25:23

While there is no way to adequately share how much Yolanda has meant to the members and staff of the church, we can all thank God, that when her time came to transition from this world to join her beloved husband, Emeterio, in Our Lord's Heavenly Kingdom, it was peaceful.

Yolanda is survived by her daughter, Yolie Mauriz (Gerry), sons, Emet Rueda and Henry Rueda (Jean), and grandchildren, Gerry, Alex, Christopher, Zachary, Catherine and Joey.

A memorial service and burial are planned for the Fall. The family has requested memorial donations be directed to this church.

Rest in peace, dearest friend!



**“Never Give Up on Hope”** a poem by Adaora Obiorah

We all have been broken. Let down. Our hearts sank in the deep shallow mind of ours, with no hope. What can we do? Nothing? Maybe not, but we all read books of hearts broken by love. But what really breaks a heart is taking away its dream, whatever that dream might be. The heart will never give up on hope.

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A report from Rev. Fois

**Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore.**

It is no secret that the situation of the church has changed. It's also not news that the pandemic has accelerated the trend away from the church that started a while back. While we must do our part to control the spread of viruses, the price we paid is steep; isolation, broken relationships, depression, loneliness, all of which affect us personally and affects the way we “do” church and relate to each other. The church of the past, the one we know and love is no more and is not coming back.

With that in mind, the leadership at FPCS is engaged in shifting the paradigm towards a new way of doing church, one that is more open and collaborative and more geared towards integration with the community.

In the past several weeks, I have been busy connecting with the township government, many volunteer organizations in town, and – quite frankly – anyone who would listen to our offer to connect, coordinate, and cooperate.

Stay tuned for more specific information about initiatives in cooperation with the Recreation Department, the Rotary Club, the ARC of Union County, the Library system, and – something that fills me with joy – with various houses of worship in town, specifically St James the Apostle and the Jewish congregations.

Please reach out to me to discuss the many opportunities to be a part of this exciting new chapter in the life of our church community.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Roberto

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Address label

On June 23, 2022 the annual commemoration of the Battle of Springfield was conducted by the Daughters of the American Revolution at the Battle Ground Cemetery on Mountain Avenue, followed by a procession lead by the Sons of the American Revolution color guard to the monument of the Continental Soldier in front of FPC.

242 years ago, the Battle of Springfield was fought right in front of the church! Rev. James Caldwell collected the Watts hymnals from the sanctuary, gave them to the soldiers to use as wadding, shouting, "Give 'em Watts, Boys!"

Even though the British were forced to retreat, they burned down the church in their wake. The members rebuilt the church on the original foundation in 1791.

In 1905, this monument was erected by the NJ Historical Commission and is officially New Jersey's smallest state park (10'x10'). This church has become the icon of the Township!

