



THE TOWER

*First Presbyterian Church
37 Church Mall
Springfield, NJ 07081
www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.com*

VOL. 71 NO. 06

FEBRUARY 2020

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING – BEGINS FEB. 2nd

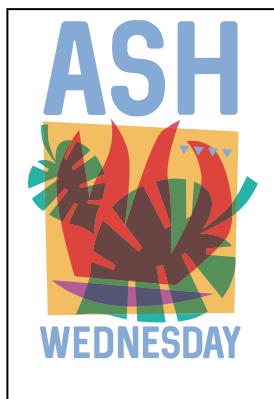


Let us be mindful that while many of us are enjoying the “Big Game” and enjoying plenty of food, there are some who can’t even enjoy a bowl of hearty soup... We will be collecting cans of soup and any non-perishable food item you’d like to donate. (canned tuna, chicken, beans and hearty soups). There is a particular need for lower-sodium items. The “kick-off” is Sunday, **February 2nd** and will continue through the month. Please place your items in the care closet boxes in the fireside room or in the Parish House.

Thank you for your generosity! Whatever is not used for our neighbors and friends, will be donated to a local food pantry.

The annual **Joint Meeting of Session and Trustees** will be held on **Monday, February 3, 2020** at 7pm in the Parish House Auditorium. If you are a currently serving or newly elected member of the Session or the Board of Trustees, please make it a point to participate in this joint meeting. If, for some reason, you can’t make the meeting, please ask Linda Amiano (Clerk of Session) or Ken Bogden (President of the Trustees) to be excused.

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 IS ASH WEDNESDAY.



Lent begins on February 26th and we invite you to the first Soup and Bread event for 2020. Supper will begin at 6:00pm in the Chapel. An Ash Wednesday service of prayer and meditation in the style of Taizé, with the imposition of ashes and the sacrament of holy communion will follow at 6:45pm. Please put this on your calendar and plan to join us.

ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE!

If you are a leader of a group within the congregation, and have not already submitted one, your 2019 Annual report is due immediately. The annual reports are combined into a book and distributed to the membership one week before the Annual Congregational Meeting. There are a few copies of the 2018 Annual Report book, should you need it as your guide. As a Deacon, or call the office.

When the financial reports are accepted at the Joint Meeting, the annual report booklets will be printed and distributed to the Congregation for approval at the Annual Congregational Meeting, which has been set for March 8, 2020.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Thank you to the following members who have accepted the nomination, were elected on January 12th.

- **Elder Class of 2022:** Janice Bongiovanni*, Kristin Ruebling-Jass, Loretta Werner
- **Trustees Class of 2022:** Russ Werner, Joe Sarno
- **Deacon Class of 2022:** Ifey Okobi*, Art Biber, Jennifer Werner
(* indicates second three-year term)
- **2020 Nominating Committee Members at Large:** Gloria Southward & Ruth Ammerman

We thank the following outgoing Officers who completed their term:

Deacons: Don Auer and Nancy Hennessey

Elders: Art Biber, Donald Rathjens;

Trustees: Ruth Ammerman, Ted Lyons and Frank Spital

LEADER TRAINING

Equipping the Saints

The Presbytery of Elizabeth will hold its annual leader training event on Saturday, February 8th from 9am to 2pm at First Presbyterian Church, 270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen. The theme of this year's training is the 21st Century Church, and the plenary speaker is Presbyterian pastor Deb Swift who serves a church in Rochester, NY that five years ago was within months of running out of money and wrestling with closing.

With God's help, South Presbyterian has become a thriving congregation with 255 people involved in their ministries each week and 5 healthy worshiping communities using their facilities. This is one example of how the Spirit moves faithful leaders through the storms in life, and beyond the shipwrecks, to a bright future. Pastor Deb will talk about the changes that are happening all around—and within—the church today. And she will lead discussion on resurrection hope and what may lie ahead for our congregations.

Equipping the Saints is geared for currently serving leaders in the church. But anyone who is interested in talking about the future of the church is welcome to attend. The Session will be carpooling to this event and would be happy to make room for any who would like to join them. We will leave from the church parking lot @ 8am on February 8th. (Snow Date: February 15th) Just let us know to expect you.

FAITH MATTERS

February 2020



“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

“Nothing happens unless first we dream.” (Carl Sandburg)

To my fellow sojourners in faith,

New Testament scholars believe *The Letter to the Hebrews* was written for 1st Century Christians who faced persecution for confessing Jesus Christ as their Savior. The authors encouraged the believers to persevere in faith, trusting in God’s gift of grace as the source of saving relationships—with God and others.

Grace, of course, is the blessing of divine favor and *unmerited forgiveness* that is poured upon us because of God’s undying love for humanity. This is not a gift we can earn, but a gift we receive by the hand of a providential Lord who invites us to share in our knowledge of God’s saving acts through Jesus Christ.

Presbyterian pastor Marjorie Thompson describes forgiveness as “the healing stream flowing out from the crucified Christ over a world that does not know how desperately it needs the healing.”

Our Lenten Soup & Bread discussions this year will focus on the theme of forgiveness. Using a study guide written by Thompson, we will talk about what forgiveness means to us. We will look at the nature of forgiveness and whether forgiveness is only a personal matter or if it is also meaningful in the context of community. This is a timely book for a nation and a people fractured by partisan politics, blaming, ugly speech and minds set on getting our own way.

Christians have long trusted that God’s purpose is not to divide us but to unite us. And God grants us grace as a means of: fostering that unity, growing us in faith and giving us reason to hold fast to hope.

God also grants us grace as a way of encouraging us to dream the dreams of a new day and a new way of life. It was the great poet and longtime Christian, Carl Sandburg, who said that “Nothing happens unless first we dream.” And it was Luke’s confession in the Acts of the Apostles that it is God who invites our young men to see visions and our old men to dream dreams. (Acts 2:17)

We all have hopes and dreams for a living faith that unites rather than divides God's children. Trusting that "faith is the assurance of this hoped for," what is it that you hope for in this divided world?

As we did at Thanksgiving, I invite you to join me in the faith practice of sharing a bit of ourselves with the church community. I hope to compile a devotional booklet for Lent. But I can only do it with your help.

Using the theme of *faith as the assurance of things hoped for*, and trusting in God's grace as a means to saving relationships that unify rather than divide, I invite you to share a few words about *what your faith encourages you to hope for*. You might use one or more of the following bullets as talking points, but you are certainly not limited to these:

- The God revealed in Jesus Christ encourages me to hope for....
- This same God invites me to dream the dream of....
- The body of Christ (the church) can help heal a fractured society through....
- The Springfield Presbyterian Church can exhibit God's grace to the community by....
- My dream for this church is....

You may include a scripture verse and/or a prayer with your entry, or not. I will make sure to include these before publication. Please get your entry to me by February 17th—electronically, if possible—and I will try to have the devotional booklet ready by Ash Wednesday. My email address is: revrhon@aol.com

Many of you said you enjoyed sharing in the Thanksgiving devotional—I hope you will participate again.

Pastor Rhonda



OUTREACH AND MEMBERSHIP

Welcome our New Members

Brian, Barbara and Kyle Drum have been received into the membership of our church by action of the Session and will be received as new members on Sunday, February 9th at our 10:15am worship service. Please make it a point to introduce yourself to the Drums and welcome them into the life of the church.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School

Please welcome our new Sunday School teacher, Dylan Ringwood. Dylan is a child of the Presbyterian Church in Roselle, where his grandmother serves as Clerk of Session and where his family have been members for generations. Dylan comes with a passion for Christ and a love for children. He team-taught with Michele Faraone for two Sundays in January and will take over the class on February 2nd. Dylan is a musician and hopes to bring music and singing to Sunday School.

Michele has stepped down from teaching Sunday School because her job at Overlook Hospital now requires her to work 3 weekends a month. Please take some time to thank Michele for her hard work and her leadership as an important part of our Christian Education team.

Welcome Dylan! And thank you, Michele!

Family Fun Nights

The Christian Education team will be starting a program of Family Fun Nights this winter and spring. The first of those events will be a Valentine Sweetheart Movie Night, to be held on Friday, February 7th @ 6pm with a Pizza dinner, a Valentine's Day craft, and the very funny and family-friendly movie by Director Rob Reiner, *The Princess Bride*. Everyone is invited. But we ask that you register by February 5th so we know how much pizza to order! You can register by calling the church office at 973-379-4320 or Lisa Guida at 908-447-7399.



LENTEN SOUP AND BREAD SUPPERS AND BIBLE STUDY

Our annual Soup and Bread events will be hosted again by various groups within the church, including our Session committees, Deacons and Presbyterian Women. A supper of soup and bread will be offered at 6:00pm followed by a study on *Forgiveness* led by Pastor Rhonda at 6:30pm. More information on the study will follow in our March newsletter. You may purchase a copy of the study guide for \$8 from the designated box in the Chapel before Ash Wednesday or from the church office after that date. You don't need the study guide to participate in the weekly discussions but you will find it helpful.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



The next meeting of the Presbyterian Women will be on Wednesday, **March 18th at 4:00pm in the Chapel** for our business meeting, then set up for the Lenten Soup & Bread supper, for which we are hosts. (be sure to sign up at info table!)

Annual Dues of \$3 can be brought to this meeting, or mailed to Janice Bongiovanni, 133 Short Hills Avenue, Springfield, NJ 07081. All program ideas are welcome and appreciated, and all women of the church are welcome to attend/join.



MISSION -Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

PDA remains committed to assisting our siblings in Puerto Rico in recovery from Hurricane Maria in 2017 and the January 2020 earthquakes. Thus far, PDA has sent more than \$2.48 million in grants to Puerto Rico. And more than 3,000 PDA volunteers have worked to rebuild the island. If you would like to make a financial gift to support recovery efforts, you may do so online @ www.pcusa.org or through the Treasurer of our church. If you choose to contribute locally, please designate your special gift to DR000194 for Hurricane Maria Recovery or DR000015 for Earthquake Recovery and we will make certain your gift is properly earmarked. Thank you for bringing hope to the many Puerto Ricans who long to know they are not forgotten.

 <p>Feb 1 - Lynn Doll Feb 2 - Clarence Davis Feb 3 - Linda Amiano Ken Guida Jean Sim Feb 5 - Eileen Clark Heather Hecking Feb 6 - Chase Werner Feb 7 - Ryan Doremus</p>	<p>Feb11 - Megan Dauser Bickel Feb 14 - Donald Hartman Lore Ullrich Feb 15 - Patricia Gahm Feb 16 - Alyssa Williams Feb 20 - Yolanda Rueda Feb 23 - Mekenzie Doherty Feb 24 - Scott Jones Feb 26 - Melissa Guida Bliss Feb 28 - John Bunnell Walter Peterson</p>  <p><i>If you don't see your birthday listed, please provide month and date to the office. We are happy to celebrate with all of our members!</i></p>
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LOOKING AHEAD

The Annual Congregational Meeting of the First Presbyterian Congregation at Springfield will be held following worship on Sunday, March 8th following the 10:15am worship service for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of the various entities within the church, hearing an update from the Trustees and Session about the status of the church during this time of transition and voting to approve proposed new By-Laws for the congregation. The annual report booklets and proposed new By-Laws will be distributed ahead of time for your review. (Note: 3/8/20 is also the Sunday that Daylight Savings Time returns.)



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family and friends of Ralph DeFino, who died on December 22, 2019. His funeral was held in our sanctuary on December 27, 2019. Ralph was a devoted father and grandfather. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Gail (2014) and his son, Joseph (2018). He is survived by daughter Kathy and Frank DiProfio, daughter Theresa and Tom Gorgia, daughter-in-law Christine DeFino, and seven grandchildren.

And

Former member Ronald Maguire, who died on January 22, 2020 at home after a seven year illness. Ronald was installed as a Deacon in 1986 and 1997 and was one of the original calligraphers for the Book of Remembrance that is in the sanctuary. Notes of sympathy may be sent to his wife, Virginia, who lovingly took care of him throughout his illness. 223 Ashmont Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28081-7139



Please note that the Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 17th in honor of Presidents' Day. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, February 18th.

IN THE COMMUNITY



Photo and article by Matt Kass – TapInto Springfield

Pastor Rhonda was one of several members of the Springfield Clergy Association that participated in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day vigil at Town Hall on Monday, January 20th. Here's an excerpt from the TapInto Springfield article:

SPRINGFIELD, NJ — As part of the annual marking of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in town, the Springfield Township Committee hosted a vigil for peace to give residents a forum to discuss King's life and legacy.

Sitting in a circle around the room, attendees sat side by side with local government and religious leaders, as they shared their thoughts about the holiday, how far the country has come in realizing King's dream, and how far it still has to go.

At the end of the event, Springfield Mayor Chris Capodice read the town's proclamation for the holiday. The group then joined hands to sing "We Shall Overcome" a song traditionally associated with the Civil Rights Movement.

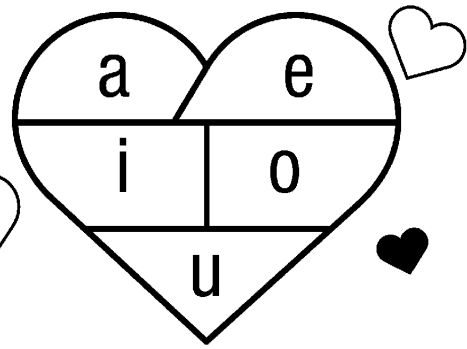


A friend in Jesus

In the Bible, Jesus shares what it means to be a true friend.



Directions: Use the heart key to fill in the missing vowels from John 15:14, 17, NIV.



“Y _ _ r _ my fr _ _ nds _ f

y _ _ d _ wh _ t _ c _ mm _ nd. ...

Th _ s _ s my c _ mm _ nd:

L _ v _ _ _ ch _ th _ r.”

JOHN 15:14, 17, NIV

Answer: “You are my friends if you do what I command. ... This is my command: Love each other.” John 15:14, 17, NIV



February 2020

A Welcoming Church for 275 years



Sanctuary/Chapel: 210 Morris Avenue
Office/Parish House: 37 Church Mall
Springfield, NJ 07081

First Presbyterian Church of Springfield

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Phone: 973-379-4320 Fax: 973-379-8883 E-mail: FirstPCOffice@verizon.net Website: www.SpringfieldPresbyterian.org						1 SCCC concert in PH -3pm
2 <i>Soup-or bowl of Caring</i> Confm. Class 9am-PH Communion Worship-10:15am Fellowship 11:15am	3 SCCC 4-5pm Joint meeting of Session and Trustees 7pm-PH	4	5 SCCC 4-6:30pm	6 Choir 7:30pm	7 Sweetheart Movie Night (pizza, craft and movie: The Princess Bride) 6pm-PH	8 Equipping the Saints Leader- ship training in Metuchen.
9 Confm. Class 9am-PH Worship Service-10:15am Fellowship 11:15am	10 SCCC 4-5pm 	11	12 SCCC 4-6:30pm	13 Choir 7:30pm	14 	15
16 Confm. Class 9am-PH Worship Service-10:15am Fellowship 11:15am	17 Office closed	18	19 SCCC 4-6:30pm	20 Choir 7:30pm	21	22
23 Confm. Class 9am-PH Worship Service-10:15am Fellowship 11:15am	24 SCCC 4-5pm	25	26 Ash Wednesday Soup&Bread 6pm Service 6:45pm SCCC 4-6:30pm	27 Choir 7:30pm	28	29 Leap Day

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

Place
Stamp
here

PLACE ADDRESS
LABEL HERE



MARCH DATES TO REMEMBER

- Lenten Bible Study – Each Wednesday evening March 4-April 1st.
- Sunday, March 8th – Daylight Savings time begins. (turn clocks **ahead** one hour Saturday night, March 7th, so you won't be late for church!)
- Annual Congregational Meeting immediately following the March 8th Worship Service.