# News Bits



First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown, NJ

#### Pastor's Message



say, when "March comes in like a lion, she'll exit like a lamb"; or when it comes in like a lamb, March will exit like a lion!" Whichever, we shall soon see how the month plays out. Meanwhile, this month (and April) offers a multitude of activities taking place that hopefully will offer spiritual refreshment and personal fulfillment for those who participate. I hope that you will take advantage of a few of these opportunities.

On Tuesday evenings during our Lent, church intern, Melanie Williams, is leading a half hour meditation and discussion titled 'Encounters with Jesus.' Melanie is exploring New Testament figures who encountered Jesus and found their lives profoundly challenged and changed. She is considering how those stories speak to and are relevant for us today. These thirtyminute meditations offer us opportunity to hear and discuss how an encounter with Jesus might alter, renew or redefine one's life, how such an encounter enhances one's belief and practice of the Christian life. Please join us either by Zoom or in person

at the Outreach Center on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:00 PM and be engaged by this spiritually energizing experience.

Also, during March, a Sunday sermon series with the same theme, "Encountering Jesus" will be heard from the pulpit. This sermon series, based on the Gospel of John, will focus on individuals whose lives were reframed and refocused as a result of their encounter with Jesus. The topics and scriptural texts for their respective Sunday is offered below, so that by reading the text in advance hopefully the text may come alive and engage you in a deeper way. The first message on March 3 will focus on Jesus feeding the five thousand, specifically, the unknown and unnamed young boy who offered Jesus five loaves of barley bread and two fish. Consider reading the scriptural account and see what the Spirit is saying to the church today.

- Mar. 3: Jesus and the Little Boy, John 6: 1–14
- Mar. 10: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman, John 4: 1–26/30
- Mar. 17: Jesus and the Man Born Blind, John 9:1–12, 29–41
- Mar. 24: Jesus with Mary, Martha and Lazarus and the Triumphant Entry, John 11: 38–14, 12: 12–19

 Mar. 31: Jesus and Mary Magdalene, John 20: 1–18

For those who love rock painting, do not miss church on March 17. After worship, the Presbyterian Women will host a rock painting extravaganza, similar to the one we held last Spring, 2023. It is great fun and a great opportunity to enjoy the company of our congregants. The week following is Palm Sunday, and during Holy Week, at this writing, we will observe Maundy Thursday and Good Friday on Maundy Thursday at 7:00 PM in our Sanctuary. Our traditional Easter sunrise worship service will be held at Blair Lake at 7:00 AM, with our regular Easter service conclude our church's Holy Week celebration at 10:00 AM. All of these services, however, simply prompt us to remember Jesus' saving' death on the cross, God's power over the grave, and the miracle of God's saving grace through the wondrous resurrection. We are recipients of that mystery and miracle.

I hope March comes in and leaves like a lamb. Meanwhile, may the Lion of Judah breathe new life into and be present to us all. I bid you peace, joy, love and hope as we remember and celebrate all that God has done for us.

See you worship,

Pastor David



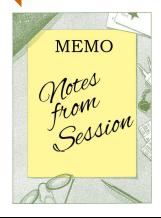


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#### **SESSION**

Clerk of Session: Deb Albrecht President: Chester Topolski Vice-President: Lisa Besser Treasurer: Erika Wulster Assistant Treasurer: Zach Burke Secretary: Deb Albrecht Financial Secretary: Don Nicholls

#### **CLASS OF 2025**

Zach Burke Pete Peterson Chester Topolski

#### **CLASS OF 2026**

Mark Nelke Elizabeth Topolski Gail Weber

#### **CLASS OF 2027**

Jennifer McElroy Donald Nicholls Lisa Besser

#### Session News

Excerpts from the Session meeting held on Thursday, February 15, 2024:

- Session voted to elect Deb Albrecht as Clerk of Session for a term of 1 year, ending in February 2025.
- Session voted to elect the following church officers for terms of 1 year, ending in February 2025:

President: Chester TopolskiVice-President: Lisa Besser

➤ Treasurer: Erika Wulster

➤ Assistant Treasurer: Zach Burke

➤ Secretary: Deb Albrecht

Financial Secretary: Don Nicholls

Session welcomed new Ruling Elders: Lisa Besser, Jennifer McElroy, Don Nicholls, and Elizabeth Topolski. The composition of Session for 2024:

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027		
Zach Burke*	Mark Nelke	Jennifer McElroy		
Pete Peterson	Elizabeth Topolski	Don Nicholls		
Chester Topolski*	Gail Weber*	Lisa Besser		

<sup>\*</sup>Indicates second term

The next Stated Meeting of Session will be on March 21, 2024 at 7:00PM at the Outreach Center and via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Deb Albrecht, Clerk of Session

#### **BOARD OF DEACONS**

Moderator: Judy Trigg Vice Moderator: Betsy Gervasi Secretary: Teri Harvey Treasurer: Joan Cameron

#### CLASS OF 2025

Emily Arena Derek Cameron David Conrad Teri Harvey

#### **CLASS OF 2026**

Kelly McElroy Judy Trigg Maggie Wilson Open

#### **CLASS OF 2027**

Kelly McElroy Judy Trigg Maggie Wilson Open

# Mission Ministry

#### **One Great Hour of Sharing**

Your gift to the Special Mission offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed. We will receive the OGHS Special Offering through Easter,

March 31. You may contribute to OGHS electronically on the church website: fpcb-nj.org or by sending your offering to the church.



# **Deacon Ministry & Food Pantry News**

The following Deacons were nominated and elected to serve as Deacon officers at the March 5 reorganization meeting:

➤ Moderator: Judy Trigg
➤ Vice Moderator: Betsy Gervasi
➤ Secretary: Teri Harvey
➤ Treasurer: Joan Cameron

#### **Dates to Remember:**

March 16: Our church will be providing lunch for Habitat for Humanity. A sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall.

March 24: TruckStop Ministry cookies, Donations gladly accepted, they would need to arrive by 9 AM 3/24. or drop off at the Outreach Center on Friday.

**April 13:** Garden Party: hosted by PW. Fix Betsy's

garden and BBQ ( Pastor Dave - chief cook)

> Judy Trigg Deacon Moderator

#### **Food Pantry News**

Even though we had four inches+ of snow on the ground on Saturday morning, our regular patrons were there when I arrived at 8 AM. Gary Albrecht and Kelly McElroy shoveled the front sidewalk (luckily the one alongside the building was free of snow)!

Overall we did not have as many families; 26 in total but only 3 families with children. (I think a "snow day" was responsible.)

Norwescap supplied us with avocados, pears, cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, apples, and the Foodshed Alliance added peppers, carrots, and potatoes. Judy Trigg assembled 30 fruit and vegetable bags so it would not be "so hectic" on Saturday morning. Acme provided five boxes with baked goods. One of the biggest cakes went to a Sunday school class that one of our patrons teaches—everything was distributed and we made three home deliveries.

Thanks to all our helpers; everything went smooth and at 12 noon we locked our doors.

Hoping everybody is enjoying the spring-like weather!

God's Blessing,

Erika Wulster, Food Pantry Coordinator



A Joint Deacon & Session
Meeting is scheduled for Sunday,
April 14, after church at the Outreach Center. A light lunch will be
provided.



#### 

Maundy Thursday, March 28 · · · · · ·	· Erika Wulster
Easter Sunday, March 31:	· Erika Wulster / Betsy Gervasi
April 7 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	-
May 5: · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	-
June 2:	· David Conrad / Betsy Gervasi
July 7	· Joan Cameron
August 4 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	· Kelly McElroy / Jennifer McElroy
September 1: · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	· Joan Cameron / David Conrad
October 6: · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	· Kelly McElroy
October 20 (Anniversary Sunday): · ·	•
November 3:····	· Teri Harvey
December 31 ·····	· Teri Harvey
January 5, 2025	•
February 2, 2025: · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	

#### Food Pantry Sign-Ups (2 Deacons preferred each date)

March 16: · · · · · Erika Wulster / Judy Trigg	
April 20····· Betsy Gervasi	
May 18:···· David Conrad	
June 15 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
July 20: Joan Cameron	
August 17 ····· Kelly McElroy	
September 21 · · · · Joan Cameron	
October 19····· David Conrad	
November 16 · · · · · Teri Harvey (Giving Tree)	
December 21 · · · · · Teri Harvey (Giving Tree)	
January 18	
February 17 ·····	

#### Committees of Deacons:

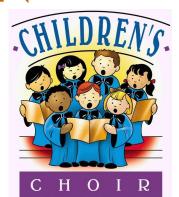
Sunshine · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	···Joan Cameron
Communion/Kitchen supplies · · · ·	····Joan Cameron
Christmas Giving Tree · · · · · · · · ·	····Teri Harvey
Shoebox Ministry	····Kelly McElroy
Food Pantry · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	····Erika Wulster
Special Cases ·····	
······	···Erika Wulster / David Harvey
Habitat for Humanity · · · · · ·	····Joan Cameron

#### **Representatives to Session Committees**

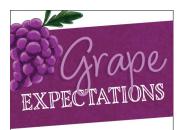
Audit	_
Christian Education	Joan Cameron
Enduring Gifts	Erika Wulster
Membership/ Fellowship	Joan Cameron
Mission	Judy Trigg
Music & Worship	Joan Cameron
Nominating	Erika Wulster
Presbyterian Women	Teri Harvey
Property/ Grounds	Erika Wulster
Stewardship/ Finance	Erika Wulster



Each Sunday after worship we enjoy each other's company and some delicious refreshments. If you can bring baked goods and set up the coffee pot, we ask that you sign-up in Fellowship Hall or online. Thank you for helping make fellowship hour a special time and for helping our Deacons!



All children are welcome to participate in the children's choir! Practice is held for 15 minutes on Sundays following the worship service.



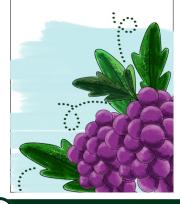
Try this chilly new take on a healthy snack.

#### What you need:

- 30 grapes, washed and dried
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 4 graham crackers, crushed
- Toothpicks
- Parchment paper

#### What you do:

- 1. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, arrange grapes in a single layer. Freeze for two hours.
- 2. Insert a toothpick into each grape.
- 3. Dip each grape into the yogurt, coating half of it.
- 4. Roll each dipped grape in the crushed crackers. Place back on the parchment.
- 5. Freeze for two more hours. Enjoy!



# Christian Education / Music & Worship Ministries



Worship Leaders, Greeters and Ushers Needed

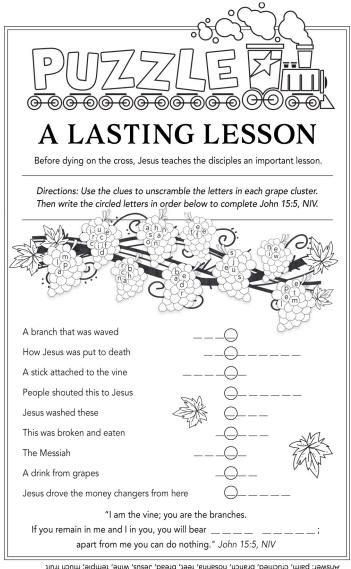
#### **Worship Helpers:**

You are invited to sign up online through Sign-Up Genius pick a date that works for you! Visit fpcb-nj.org for the sian-up link.



The Lenten Reflections are 30 -minute chapel-meets-Bible Study reflections on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 PM (at the OC or via Zoom through the Lenten season, led by Church Intern, Melanie Williams.

Lent is a time when we prepare for the death and resurrection of Jesus, but sometimes we forget that Jesus had an earthly ministry too. Join us as we meet some of the people who encountered Jesus and what their stories mean for us today.



Answer: palm, crucified, branch, hosanna, feet, bread, Jesus, wine, temple; much fruit

#### Presbyterian Women

As I sit looking out at my yard, I'm enjoying the fact that spring is right around the corner, however, my daffodils are just as confused about the weather as I am. The ones in the back of the house are up out of the ground by about 5 inches and it's only February!

Spring is also a time to think about Camp Johnsonburg. Camp scholarships are available to all children/teens who would like to attend camp this summer. Please submit a letter by April 30, telling us why you want to attend camp.

Betsy's Garden in the rear of the church. Work was started on the garden last year and will continue this spring. Our first attempt to welcome spring will be on Sunday. March 17 during Coffee Hour when we paint Kindness Rocks. For those of you who painted rocks last year, we're going to add to our quantity.

In April, we will host Betsy's Garden Party. It's a Saturday and a day to clean up outside the church, plant flowers, and distribute our Kindness Rocks. We're planning a picnic to follow and hope all of you mark your calendars to join us.

Thanks for all you do!! Presbyterian Women Gail Weber, Moderator

We're also going to revisit

Did you know that anyone can donate flowers to honor/ remember/celebrate a person or occasion? Altar flowers can be cut or potted; from your garden, a store, or even delivered from a local florist! Please let the church office or the flower lady of the month know if you'd like to provide flowers by signing up in Fellowship Hall or through SignUpGenius

which can be accessed through

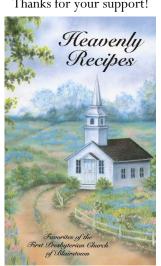
our website at https://fpcb-

nj.org/altar-flowers/



First Presbyterian Church Heavenly Recipes cook books are available at church or at the Outreach Center for only \$5.00! (Please make check(s) payable to Presbyterian Women.)

Thanks for your support!





ALL ARE INVITED TO JOIN US THIS SUNDAY DURING OUR ST. PATRICK'S DAY THEMED COFFEE HOUR AND HELP US PAINT ROCKS WITH INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGES OR PICTURES. ALL AGES ARE INVITED!

A SIGN-UP SHEET IS AVAILABLE IN FELLOWSHIP HALL OR THROUGH SIGN-UP GENIUS FROM OUR CHURCH WEBSITE AT FPCB-NJ,ORG/PW-CALENDAR/ ( OR JUST SCAN THE QR CODE TO GO DIRECTLY TO SIGN-UP GENIUS).



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS. PLEASE SPEAK WITH HOSTESSES. AMANDA MACCHIA OR DEB ALBRECHT, THANK YOU!



Hosted by Presbyterian Women



shows what God (

can do with a drab and dirty world.

Virgil A. Kraft

#### EASTER FLOWERS

Continuing with the tradition of placing Easter flower dedications in memory of or in celebration of, you may do so through March 24. The cost of each plant this year will be \$12, and donations should be made to Presbyterian Women. Visit our website fpcb-nj.org/pw/ and in the weekly bulletin for more information!



The "Christ hymn" in Philippians 2 proclaims that after Jesus humbled himself even to the point of death, God exalted him, and that eventually all will worship him. What two body parts are named as part of that worship?

> A. knee; tongue B. hands; feet

C. arms; lips

D. heart; mouth



Answer: A (See Philippians 2:10-11.)

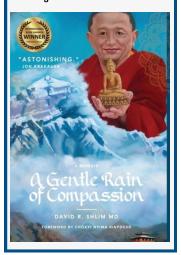




## FPCB BOOK CLUB

The next meeting will now be held at 7:00 PM on Wed., Mar. 20, hosted by Chris McGrath. We will discuss the book, <u>A Gentle Rain of Compassion by David R. Shlim.</u>

The Book Club meets every 6—8 weeks, and we read a variety of titles: fiction and nonfiction; mysteries and suspense. New members are always welcome. If you have any questions or would like a copy of our reading list, please speak with Teri Harvey or Kaye Evans. Happy Reading!



## Stewardship & Finance

As some of you know, I belong to a book club and our book for February was The Man I Knew by Jean Becker. She wrote about President George H.W. Bush (1989-1993) and his life after his presidency. Did you know that during his presidency he created the Points of Life program which recognized individuals who do good things which benefit other people? President Bush once wrote of his program, "I think of Points of Light as the soul of America. They are ordinary people who reach beyond themselves to touch the lives of those in need, bringing hope and opportunity, care and friendship. By giving generously of themselves, these remarkable individuals show us not only what is best in our heritage, but what all of us are called to become."

Our Stewardship Campaign this year is about belonging to church, to others, and to God. The Bible says that "to



belong to God is to belong to others. The Children of God belong to his family forever (John 8:35). In Christ, we form one body and every member belongs to all the others (Romans 12:5).

How do those two ideas relate to each other? On Sunday we all gather to pray, to listen to scripture, to hear and sing hymns. We gather for coffee hour to share our happiness and our woes. It

makes us feel better to share and to offer our concern and prayers for others. Some of the things we also do include sending cards, flowers and plates of cookies to those unable to attend church and supporting our food pantry. Currently we collected items for a care package to send to Dylan Kasprenski. We were pleasantly surprised by the number of items donated. Thank you to all who contribute and give of themselves to help others.

Thank you to all who contribute and give of themselves to help others.

Let's continue thinking about we can help others and belong to each other and to God. We are "Blessed to Belong."

Gail Weber, Chair

# Other Bits of Interest

ATTENTION KIDS! Check out the Johnsonburg Camp Summer Schedule!

Register for Camp Johnsonburg 2024 at

https://www.campjburg.org/summer-camp/





Tuesdays at 10:00 AM at the Outreach Center or via Zoom Meeting ID: 851 8394 1364 Passcode: 699382







# Rotary Club of Blairstown **50/50 Raffle 2024**

License: RA: 23-12 ID: 041-8-28622

Drawing Date: Friday 4/26/2024 @ 6 PM - Blairstown Hose Company, 5 Stillwater Road

Proceeds to be used for our NWR High School Scholarship Fund and our many community services

1st Prize: \$10,000 (or 33.3%)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: \$5,000 (or 16.7%)
3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: \$2,500 (or 8.3%)
4<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$2,000 (or 6.7%)
5<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$1,500 (or 5.0%)
6<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$100 x 50 (or 0.33% ea)
11<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$100 x 50 (or 0.33% ea)
60 chances to win on each ticket!

Maximum of 600 Tickets Will Be Sold @ \$100 each

Drawing will be held at the Blairstown Hose Company, 5 Stillwater Road, Blairstown N 07825 at 6 PM on 4/26/2024. Winner does not need to be present to win. Ticket price includes entry for one person to the drawing event and dinner. Prites are 50% of total sales. Values are based on 600 tickets sold. If less than 600 tickets are sold, prizes will be the listed percentage of 50% of actual sales. Winner is responsible for all applicable tizes. Must be 18 years of age to purchase ticket.

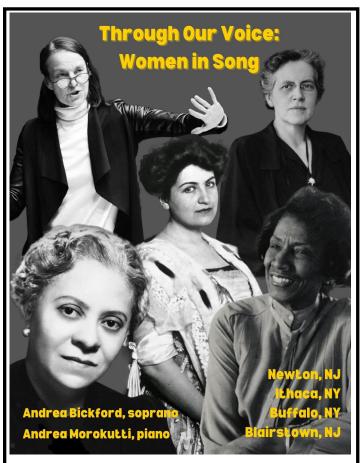
Visit blairstownrotary.org or speak with Jen Plut for raffle tickets! Can even split the cost of a ticket with family members or friends! Proceeds are used for NWR scholarship fund and local community services. Drawing: April 26 at 6 PM.

# Birthdays & Anniversaries \*\*\*MARCH Birthdays Anniversaries

- 5 Annelise Fisher
- 7 Robin Kasprenski
- 9 Jerret Belcher
- 15 Susanne Zwarych
- 18 Ethan Lynch
- 22 Erika Wulster
- 24 David Conrad
- 25 Jason Sliver
- 28 Lorelei Oelschlager
- 29 Bridgett Scheer
- 29 Renee Scheer

11 Peter Porzio & Lydia Timcenko 18 Renee & Robert Scheer

March 2024						
S	М	Т	W	Т	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



A recital by church member, Andrea Morokutti, pianist and Andrea Bickford, soprano — showcasing the brilliant minds of Nadia Boulanger, Florence Price, Alma Mahler, Undine Smith Moore, and Libby Larsen — will perform in our Sanctuary on Mar. 13 at 6:30 PM.

# **Our Daily Prayer List**

The Human Family: Persons and individuals who struggle with food insecurity and homelessness, the people in the Ukraine and the Middle East; families and communities impacted by gun violence; those impacted by severe weather.

Men & Women Serving in the Armed Forces & America's Veterans

Those in elected office: The President, the Congress, State Assembly, Municipality officials

**Healing for Friends & Families:** 

Cancer: Judy Dales, Gordon Dugan, Samantha Elwell, Olivia Hollis, Adam Hubble, Tracy Lance, Troy Lutz, Caitlyn McMorrow and her family, Bill Salvadore, Andrew Shan, Abbi Sparkman, Robert Talmadge, Molly Grace Young, Audrey, Eva, Gail, Liza

Illness & Injuries: Robert Benz, Sue Bonkowski, George Burke, Derek Cameron, Elaine Canonico, Kyle Canonico, Lucy Cuipa, Noah Haiduc-Dale, Ashley Farhat, Anna Nagyhetenyi, Peter Porzio, Jan Smith, Margaret Stephens, Betty Ann Weir, Ann, Carter, Demares, Tracy, Valerie



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN, NJ

Post Office Box 385, 1 Main Street Blairstown, NJ 07825

Phone: (908) 362-5254 Fax: (908) 362-8060 Food Pantry: (908) 362-5254 Children's Center: (908) 362-7887 E-mail: fpcb@ptd.net fpcb-nj.org ¦ facebook.com/FPCBNJ





# FPCB Calendar of Events — March 2024

(schedule is subject to change)

- Worship: Sundays at 10 AM in the Sanctuary (Easter Sunday: Sunrise Service at 10 AM @Blair Lake; 10 AM Service in the Sanctuary) Combined Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Worship: Mar. 28 at 7 PM
- > Tuesday Morning Bible Study: 10:00 AM @OC/Zoom (Meeting ID: 851 8394 1364 | Passcode: 699382)
- > Tuesday Evening Lenten Reflections: 6:30 PM @0Z/Zoom
- Music & Worship and Christian Education: Tuesday, Mar. 5 at 7 PM @OC/Zoom
- NW Garden Club: Tuesday, Mar. 12 at 6:00 PM @ OC
- Blair Woman's Club Exec. Board: Wed., Mar. 13 at 1:15 PM @OC
- > Women in Song Concert with Andrea Morokutti: Wed., Mar. 13 at 6:30 PM in the Sanctuary
- Food Pantry: Saturday, Mar. 16 at 9:30 AM
- Habitat for Humanity: Saturday, Mar. 16—donations to OC by 10 AM.
- Kindness Rocks! Sunday, Mar. 17 following worship
- > Stewardship & Finance: 2:30 PM on Wednesday, Mar. 20
- Administration Ministry: Wednesday, Mar. 22 at 2:00 PM
- Session: Thursday, Mar. 21 at 7:00 PM @ OC/Zoom
- > 4-H Club: Friday evenings at 6:30 PM @ OC
- Guidance Committee Meeting: Tuesday, Mar. 26 at 7:00 PM @OC/Zoom
- April News Bits Articles Due: Tuesday, Mar. 26