



December 2025

# The Presbyterian

Church Office  
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## TRANSITIONS

In the last few weeks I've received lots of heartfelt compliments from you folks. Thank you so very much! I truly appreciate all your words of kindness. A number of you have said things like, "I'm really sorry to see you're leaving, but I understand—and I'm really happy for you." It makes me feel loved and valued.

After I announced that I was leaving, one member of the congregation said to me: "I think you're a really good storyteller and I'm going to miss the way you weave stories into your sermons." This came from one of our quieter members and it touched me deeply. I knew I had connected with that person, as I believe I've connected with so many of you. It's tough for me to say goodbye, too. This is bittersweet.

Having said all that, I imagine that many of you have questions. Lots and lots of questions. Let me tell you a little bit more about the transition process.

The first thing I can tell you is that this process takes time. A lot of people have asked me, "When will the church get its next pastor?"

I have no blessed idea.

This process takes time.

Most likely, this church will seek the services of an interim pastor. The interim pastor will guide the congregation through a process of self-examination, while providing all of the typical duties of a pastor, such as leading worship and preaching, moderating session meetings and committee meetings, making pastoral visits, etc. In short, an interim pastor would do most of the things that I do, but there would

be an added focus of getting the congregation through the period of self-examination as you prepare to call your next installed pastor.

I'm sure that some of you are wondering: Why can't we just go out and look for our next pastor now? Why do we have to get an interim and do all this self-examination stuff?

The short answer is change: every congregation changes over time. The congregation we have today is not the same as it was in 2017 when I applied to be your pastor. What you need in a pastor now is different from what you thought you needed eight years ago. What's more, the world outside of the church has changed a great deal in that time. The process of self-examination allows you folks to take a careful look at all of those things and make prudent decisions. Having an interim pastor also helps you to make those decisions from a place of confidence, rather than a place of anxiety.

We have a healthy congregation and I expect that the Presbytery of the Coastlands will encourage FPC to seek an interim pastor. That's what healthy congregations do. Remember, this process takes time.

How much time? Typically an interim pastor who comes to a healthy church serves between one and two years, with more interim pastorates lasting closer to two years. Rev. Nancy Conklin served FPC for over three years, between 2014-2017. However, this congregation was far from healthy when Pastor Nancy arrived. She had a lot of work to do to get you folks to the point of being ready to call me.

Still, it's likely that it will take FPC a few months to find an interim pastor. Ten years ago, there were lots of pastors who specialized in transitional ministry. There aren't as many folks who are willing and able to take on interim work. We will have guest preachers to fill the pulpit until an interim is in place. Some of those guest preachers are familiar faces.

Jeff Hatch has graciously agreed to fill the pulpit on the first Sunday of every month until you folks find an interim. That means that you will receive the Lord's Supper from a person who knows you. Jeff has also agreed to handle pastoral emergencies during that time.

On February 8, my dear friend, Rev. Molly Dykstra will fill the pulpit. She's preached here before and I think you'll remember her. You may also remember the Rev. Dr. Mary Westfall. Mary is the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of the Coastlands (and also a very good friend of mine). Please engage with these folks after they preach. Molly and Mary understand the transition process well and they will be happy to take your questions.

I have also pulled together an informal transition team to manage worship and pulpit supply, as well as communications with the Presbytery of the Coastlands during the interval between my departure and the arrival of an interim pastor. The transition team includes Sue Craig, Berwin Guttormsen, Julie Heinsohn, and Sandra Whitehill. Please feel free to ask them questions during this time.

I'm sure this article raises as many questions as it answers. There's a lot more to know, but this is more than enough information for one

newsletter article. Please, please, please feel free to ask me any questions that come to mind. I served two interim pastorates before I came to Freehold, I understand the process. And I know you. This is a healthy congregation and I believe we have excellent lay leadership here at FPC. Trust that Berwin, Julie, Sandra, and Sue will manage this transition effectively. And remember, this takes time.

Grace & Peace,



Pastor Alan

### **One More Thing**

Did any of you watch the TV show Columbo back in the day? Peter Falk would grill a suspect, and then after the interview was over he'd say, "One more thing..." Then he'd ask the person something that they didn't expect, and usually it was the key to solving the case.

Well, after that looooooong article about the transition process, I have one more thing! I have a lot on my plate these last few weeks, but there is nothing on my agenda that is more important than you folks. If any of you would like one more visit, a conversation, a cup of coffee, or even lunch, please reach out. Please let me know. I'd be honored if you want to spend a little more time with me. Thanks!

Alan

*For everything there is a season and a time  
for every matter under heaven:*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

**CALENDAR NOTES**



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	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			



On **Saturday, December 6th at 7:30 PM**, the renowned Westminster Handbell Choir will be performing their traditional Christmas concert program in our sanctuary. To purchase tickets, please visit the FPC website at [fpcfreehold.org/events](http://fpcfreehold.org/events) or scan the QR code.



*Share the songs of the season with family and friends this Christmas!*



Please join us on **Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**, following worship for our next Coffee Hour.



Presbyterian Women is sponsoring a **Cookie Sale on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>** following worship in Room A/B. Bakers are needed!

**Cookie drop-off will be on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>** between 9 AM and 10 AM in Room A/B. If you have any questions regarding the cookie sale, please speak with Marie Schlechtweg.



There will be a **Christmas Eve worship service** on Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM in our sanctuary.

**The church office** will be closed Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup> for Christmas and Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup> for New Year's Day. Church staff will be working remotely 12/26, 12/29 to 12/31 and 01/02/26.

**Sunday School Calendar:** There will be no Sunday School held on December 28<sup>th</sup> and January 4<sup>th</sup> for Christmas recess. Class will resume on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

There will be a **Congregational Meeting** on Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup> following worship. At this meeting we will dissolve Pastor Alan's terms of call for FPC. A **Farewell Coffee Hour** will follow as we wish Pastor Alan all the best as he starts the next chapter in his ministry.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS



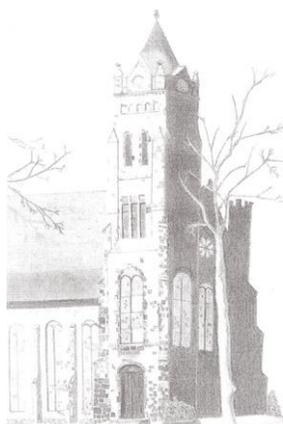
Poinsettias will decorate our sanctuary and remain on display through the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

If you wish to remember or honor loved ones, you may purchase a poinsettia or make a contribution to the Building Preservation Fund in their name. The cost of a poinsettia is \$10.

If paying by check, please make your check payable to *First Presbyterian Church of Freehold* and indicate *Christmas Memorials* on the memo line.

Please put your order/donation in the offering plate during Sunday worship or send it to the church office at 118 West Main Street, Freehold, NJ, 07728.

The deadline for poinsettia orders and Memorial Fund donations is **Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD

Purchase of Poinsettias

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the purchase of \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettia(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ I will take it home after the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will leave it for a shut-in.

My poinsettia memorial should read as follows:

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Memorial Fund Donation

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the Building Preservation Fund.

My Memorial Fund donation should read as follows:

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SEASON'S GREETINGS 2025



*"For God so loved the world  
that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may  
not perish  
but may have eternal life.*

*Indeed, God did not send the Son into the  
world to condemn the world,  
but in order that the world  
might be saved through him."*

*John 3:16-17*



Thank you to all who helped out on November 23<sup>rd</sup> with decorating the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas.

Thank you for volunteering your talents and your time. It is so very much appreciated!



## PER CAPITA

Every Presbyterian Church is asked to make an annual contribution to its local presbytery, based on the number of members in the congregation. This donation is called a per capita offering and the amount is currently \$40 per member.

To our members who have already made an extra contribution to cover their per capita for our current budget year (which runs from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026), thank you! If you haven't yet made a contribution to cover your per capita, we urge you to consider doing so.

Per capita contributions may be made during the offering at Sunday worship, mailed to the church office, or online through the FPC website. Please indicate that your contribution is for per capita.

## YEAR END GIVING

As we approach the end of 2025, please remember any year end contributions need to be received in the church office or submitted online by December 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be included for charitable contribution tax deductions for 2025.

The 2025 Giving Statements will be mailed out prior to January 31, 2026.

For those of you who donate using the online service, you can obtain your 2025 contribution statement by logging into your account on the Vanco website at:

[www.vancopayments.com](http://www.vancopayments.com)

If you have any questions regarding year end giving or 2025 contribution statements, please reach out to Bill Canning or the church office.

## PARKING LOT UPDATE

The construction phase of the parking lot project is complete. However, we do need final approval from the Freehold Borough engineer to open the parking lot for use. FPC submitted the required documents for review and approval on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. We will provide updates as they become available. Thank you for your continued patience and support.



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The capital campaign was officially kicked off with a slide presentation to the congregation following coffee hour on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

The presentation focused on the projects and repairs overseen by the FPC Property Commission for the period 2020 – 2025 and the associated costs. The slides can be viewed using the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1KcUDiGS2S9gcGgCRxHXpf0FXdldQhWYRw2o9G8nzFIQ/edit?usp=sharing>

A list of the projects and repairs completed between 2020 and 2025, as well as potential future projects, is provided on the next page. More to come regarding the capital campaign in our January 2026 newsletter.

**Property Commission Projects & Repairs  
2020 – 2025**

Project/Repair	Cost
1. New Boilers	\$96,000
2. Boiler Pumps	\$11,000
3. Water Heater	Free
4. New LED Lighting	\$21,300
5. A/C Unit Repairs	\$4,500
6. Windows/Bell Tower/Stone Facade Repairs	\$71,000
7. Balcony Repairs	\$8,900
8. Gravel Driveway & Parking Area	\$3,600
9. New Brinckerhoff Sidewalks	\$7,500
10. Tree Removal	\$3,700
11. Repointing Of Steps	Covered
12. New Cement Between Buildings	Covered
13. New Pipework & Pipe Repair Between Bldgs.	\$3,650
14. New Cement Pad For Dumpster	Covered
15. New Roof On Auditorium	\$25,000
16. New Parking Lot	\$95,300
17. Legal Fees For Parking Lot	\$32,000

**GRAND TOTAL FOR EXPENSES : \$383,450**

**Possible Upcoming Future Projects**

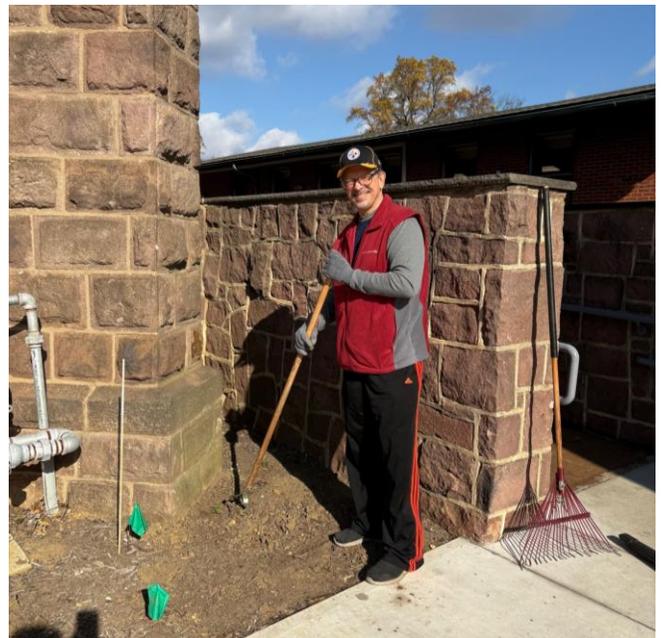
1. A new roof over the C.E. Building.
2. Improvements to the safety and security of our 2 buildings.
3. Additional A/C units needed in the CE Bldg classrooms.
4. A new roof on the Sanctuary around 2032. The last roof cost us \$122,500. That will be close to \$200,000 in 7 years.
5. Concrete work on handicap ramp.
6. Replace remaining windows in C.E. Building.
7. More masonry work on the front of the church.

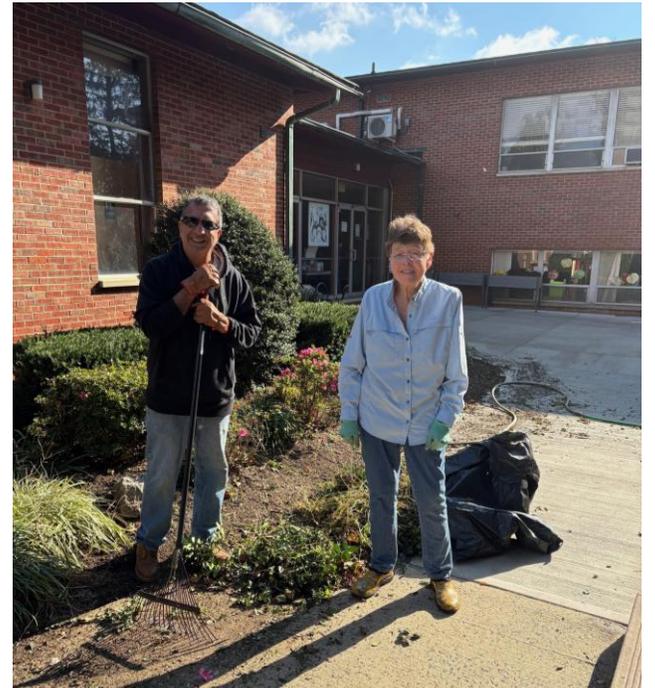
FALL CLEAN UP 2025



Thank you to all who helped out with the Fall Clean-up on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Leaves were raked, brush was cleaned up and indoor tidying was done.

Thank you for volunteering your talents and your time. It is so very much appreciated!





**JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL  
AT 10:00 AM!**

**Ages 3 through High School  
Class is held in Rooms A/B and the nursery.**

Children are invited to begin the Sunday worship service in the sanctuary, and then they will be dismissed to Sunday School after the Time for Children message.



And check out the nursery! A new book shelf has been added!

**FPC Sunday School Team**

**Samantha Daesener (732-547-2551)**

**Vera Musser (732-685-3125)**

**Carol Matino**

**Bob Musser**

**Nursery Attendant**

**Hannah Koch**

Please let Vera Musser or Samantha Daesener know when your children will be in Sunday School. We look forward to seeing you and your children on Sunday mornings!



**ADOPT-A-BILL FOR VIDEO CAMERA  
EQUIPMENT – FULLY FUNDED**



We've reached our goal! We have received the \$1,500 needed to purchase the new video camera and accessories. Thank you for your generosity and support. They are so very much appreciated!

**VISITING WITH ED CHAN**



Marie Schlechtweg shared this picture of Ed receiving the flowers from the November 2<sup>nd</sup> worship service.



And Pastor Alan shared this picture from his visit with Ed on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

## A NEW SEASON OF MUSIC AT FPC

As we enter December and step into the beauty of Advent, our music ministry at FPC is coming alive in every corner of the church. If you've felt even the slightest nudge to sing, ring, or create—this is the perfect moment to join us.



### **🎵 Chancel Choir – Come Sing With Us!** **Rehearsals: Sundays at 8:45 AM**

Our Chancel Choir welcomes new voices at any time. Whether you've sung for years or it's been a while, you'll find encouragement, community, and music that lifts the spirit. Advent and Christmas are full of gorgeous anthems—you're invited to be part of them.

### **🔔 Youth Bells**

#### **A Great Beginning for Young Musicians** **Rehearsals: Sundays at 11:15 AM**

Our young ringers are growing every week, and new members are always welcome. If your child enjoys rhythm, movement, or teamwork, Youth Bells offers a fun and meaningful way to join the music ministry.

### **🔔 Kirk Ringers – Adults & Seniors** **Rehearsals: Mondays at 1:00 PM**

This weekday bell choir is a warm, joyful group that welcomes anyone eager to learn or return to ringing. No experience necessary—we'll guide you every step.

**🎥 Recording Sessions on Thursdays**  
**Every Thursday from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM**, I hold open recording sessions in the sanctuary. If you lead a ministry group, need a video for a mission project, or would like to record a musical piece, I'd love to help you bring that vision to life. See me if you're interested.

### **📺 Lectionary Hymn Video Series**

Every week I release a new playlist of pipe-organ hymns crafted specifically for the upcoming Sunday's Revised Common Lectionary readings.

These videos are designed for worship planners, choir members, and anyone who finds strength in sacred song.

👉 [Watch and subscribe here](#)

### **🎄 New Christmas Album – Now Available**

Judi and I are excited to share our new Christmas album—a collection of carols and sacred music recorded with great love and joy. You'll be able to listen and share it through **HearNow**. It's a wonderful way to bring Christmas spirit into your home and support our music ministry.

👉 [Click to Listen:](#)

### **Welcome to Our New Sound Tech** **Justine Mundo**

We welcome Justine Mundo as our new sanctuary sound technician. Justine brings skill, enthusiasm, and a deep commitment to excellence—please join me in making her feel at home!

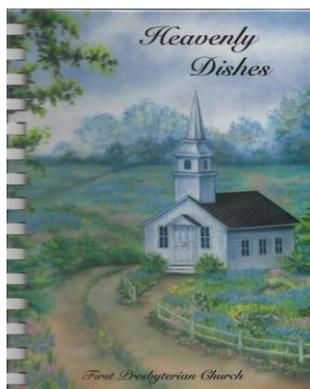


**Remember, we're always taking music and hymn requests.**

Blessings,

John Cavicchio  
Director of Music  
Telephone: 732-558-7525  
Email: [cavicchiojohn@gmail.com](mailto:cavicchiojohn@gmail.com)

**RECIPE CORNER**



In 2011, Presbyterian Women published **Heavenly Dishes**, a cookbook dedicated to all FPC members past and present who so generously supported PW over the years.

Here, we'll look to share a recipe or two from that cookbook. This month we shine the recipe spotlight on *Pepsi Pork*. Enjoy!

**PEPSI PORK**

5 lbs. pork roast                      1 can mushroom soup  
 ½ pkg. dry onion soup mix        12 oz. Pepsi

Place pork roast in Crock pot. Sprinkle with dry soup mix. Stir together the mushroom soup and Pepsi and pour over the pork. Cook on low for 6 to 7 hours. The gravy is good served over potatoes, rice, or noodles.

*Martha Rebh*



**WORD SEARCH PUZZLE**



Welcome to our word search puzzle! Take a moment to read and reflect on the passage and then find the words on the list below the puzzle. The solution will be in the next newsletter. Enjoy!

**Luke 2:9-11**

*9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

A	E	B	U	F	C	H	O	S	D	I	D
N	G	D	A	V	I	D	J	A	M	T	R
G	Z	I	Y	Y	A	L	E	V	T	H	O
E	N	A	T	M	F	J	O	I	R	E	L
L	P	R	S	E	B	P	E	O	P	L	E
O	L	F	D	S	E	B	I	R	M	O	H
F	T	A	A	S	C	H	E	A	L	R	Y
T	I	E	B	I	W	R	T	H	O	D	F
H	N	B	K	A	M	E	A	S	C	E	O
E	X	T	A	H	C	I	N	L	E	P	Y
L	B	O	R	N	A	S	O	D	T	X	R
O	Q	N	M	S	E	L	V	D	O	R	O
R	E	O	U	S	E	E	L	I	W	O	L
D	A	D	R	Z	O	J	T	A	E	R	G

- ANGEL OF THE LORD
- GLORY OF THE LORD
- DO NOT BE AFRAID
- GOOD NEWS
- GREAT JOY
- ALL
- PEOPLE
- BORN
- DAVID
- SAVIOR
- MESSIAH
- THE LORD

**November 2025 Word Search Puzzle Solution**

W	H	A	T	E	V	E	R	A	G	B	D
O	H	N	H	O	R	V	Q	I	I	P	M
R	E	V	R	W	A	E	E	Y	V	R	O
D	G	Q	O	I	U	R	Y	A	I	U	S
L	I	I	U	B	G	Y	K	N	N	D	U
N	K	E	G	D	I	T	G	E	G	K	S
A	Z	P	H	M	R	H	R	O	T	S	E
M	J	L	H	E	U	I	S	T	H	L	J
E	H	O	I	N	T	N	T	F	A	E	D
O	F	I	M	I	X	G	E	U	N	I	R
F	X	D	O	A	O	A	M	P	K	V	O
S	B	E	D	Y	O	U	D	O	S	T	L
C	E	E	J	U	Y	A	C	Z	W	L	F
G	O	D	T	H	E	F	A	T	H	E	R



# Christmas



## Cookie Sale



Sunday, December 21, 2025

11 - 12:30 in Room A/B

Everyone is welcome



cash and carry \$15/plate  
sponsored by Presbyterian Women

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD

SESSION

**Bill Canning**

Finance Commission

**Tammy Ciok**

Worship Commission

**Berwin Gutformsen**

Clerk of Session

**Julie Heinsohn**

Personnel Commission

**Vera Musser**

Christian Education

**Susan Pascullo**

Worship Commission

**Chris Pilla**

Property Commission

**Chuck Stapp**

Mission/Outreach Commission

**Sandra Whitehill**

Mission/Outreach Commission



BOARD OF DEACONS

**Judi Cavicchio**

**Lenora Chu**

**Robin Fox**

**Barbara Jean Keune**

**Debbie Moran**

**Nicole Reese**

**Linda Schmidt**

**Michele Williams**