



May 2026

The Presbyterian

Church Office
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THE VIEW FROM THE PEW**IS EASTER A TALL TALE?**

Back when I was in the Boy Scouts, one time we went on a winter campout. It was a long 5-mile hike up into the mountains along the Appalachian Trail in Virginia to our campsite, and it was a miserably cold weekend. After digging down in the snow to the hard ground to put up our pup tents, we eventually got a fire going. We huddled around it and could barely warm our dinner over it.

Later that evening it was so cold that as we sat around the fire, we saw that *the fire froze!!!* I'd never seen anything like it. Frozen orange flames! Well, I tell you, we were all amazed!

Someone said no one at home would ever believe such a thing could happen, so we all broke off pieces to take home and show them. I put mine in my pocket for later, and when I crawled into my thermal sleeping bag for the night, still in my clothes for warmth, I unfortunately forgot about the piece of frozen fire in my pocket. Later that night it thawed out - and burned down my tent!

Well, that is a tall tale I've told since I was in the Boy Scouts, which I heard back then from an older and "wiser" scout. I really enjoy a tale like that, where it *almost* sounds plausible, and the results are unexpected and fun.

But what do we say to those who look at us as if we have just told a tall tale when we tell them the Good News of Easter? A professor

once said to me, "I would like to believe the Christian message, but I just can't quite buy it." The miracles Jesus performed, the resurrection from the grave, the ascension into heaven... to some out there it all sounds just a little too fairy-tale-ish to be believed.

I guess my bottom line is this: either Christ was who he said he was, or he was a totally deranged lunatic. Some want to give him a nod as a holy man, who spoke wise sayings even if he really didn't rise from the dead. But how could you believe that a person was actually wise who claims to be the God of the universe come down to earth? How could anyone who says that he is "in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11) be anything other than nuts - or, exactly who he said he was? Those seem to be the only two real choices.

I guess it comes down to faith, which is not the same thing as certainty. By faith I accept Jesus as Lord of us all. The Good News is that Christ says we are saved by faith and not by our works, so that takes a huge weight off of my shoulders. I don't know if that professor will ever accept the gift of faith that God offers each of us, but that is my hope.

"He is risen! He is risen indeed!" I proclaim by faith. May the blessings of this Easter season continue to strengthen your faith, and I hope that as we go through this process of looking for an Interim Pastor, and then a called Pastor, we may encourage each other regularly on Sundays at worship. See you there!

Pastor Jeff Hatch

CALENDAR NOTES

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31					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

Sunday School Calendar: There will be no Sunday School on Mother's Day, May 10th.

The last day of Sunday School for the current 2025-2026 program year will be Pentecost Sunday, May 24th. The new program year will start in September.



Freehold Borough-Wide Yard Sale
Saturday, May 9th
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

On Saturday, May 9th, we will participate in the Freehold Borough town-wide yard sale. Tables are provided. Come between 7:00 and 9:00 AM on May 9th to set your table up. Kindly note that any unsold items will need to be removed at the conclusion of the yard sale. You may either take them home or they can be disposed of. If it rains, FPC will not be participating in the yard sale.



Sunday School – May 3, 2026



Coffee Hour: Please note that since Sunday, May 10th is Mother's Day, we won't be holding a Coffee Hour so that you'll have more time for visiting with family.

Freehold Twp High School Spring Concert:
Wednesday, May 13, 2026
7:00 PM in the sanctuary



THE ORCHESTRA OF ST. PETER BY THE SEA

Saturday, May 16, 2026
7:00 PM in the FPC Sanctuary



This event is presented by the Freehold Memorial Day Parade Committee. For more information regarding this event, including ticket information, please visit the Freehold Memorial Day Parade Committee website: <http://www.freeholdmemorialdayparade.com>

Church Office: The church office will be closed Monday, May 25th for Memorial Day.



Communion & Casa Sundays:

We'll be collecting non-perishable food items for Casa Freehold on the first Sunday of the month. Bring what you can for our neighbors in need. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot! Thank you for your generosity and support.

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				



75 and Over Luncheon: On Sunday, June 7th, the Deacons will be hosting a luncheon for our members who are 75 years and older. The luncheon will be held in the auditorium following worship. If you turned 75 years old in the past year and would like to attend the luncheon, please contact Robin Fox at beachwalker127@yahoo.com or the church office so we can add you to the invitation list.



On Sunday, June 14th, we will hold our **Annual Congregational Meeting** in the sanctuary following worship. At that meeting, we will elect new officers, receive the annual budget, and approve amendments to the FPC by-laws.

After the meeting, please join us for a pot luck luncheon and our **Capital Campaign Kickoff**. More to come regarding this event. We look forward to seeing you there!



Sunday, June 14th has been designated as "**Music Sunday.**" This is a Sunday that is set aside so that anyone from our church who wants to share their musical talent with the congregation does so by participating in this special worship service. Please see John Cavicchio or Kay Hatch to sign up. We're all looking forward to a great Music Sunday!

PASTORAL SEARCH
STEERING COMMITTEE

Seeking Pulpit Supply Volunteers

The Pastoral Search Steering Committee continues to meet weekly to support our congregation's pulpit and pastoral needs. We have begun the careful, prayerful process of calling an Interim Minister to help guide us towards our next Permanent Minister. This lengthy process requires creating job requirements and expectations, posting the position, candidate review, and interviews. We will continue to share updates in the months ahead.

During these past four months, we've been blessed by a wonderful variety of guest preachers who have shared their many gifts with us. This summer, we hope to supplement our guest preachers by inviting volunteers from within our own congregation to serve as pulpit supply by planning and leading worship (including preaching). In order to be considered, you must be (or have been) ordained as an elder at FPC Freehold and approved by our Session.

If you feel called to share your gifts in this way, please contact our Church Secretary, Diane Canning, at the church office to discuss availability, scheduling, and worship-planning details. Thank you for considering this important ministry.

If you have questions, please feel free to speak with any member of the Steering Committee:

- Berwin Guttormsen
- Sandra Whitehill
- Sue Stoia
- Sue Craig
- Julie Heinsohn
- Tammy Ciok

*Blessings,
Pastoral Search Steering Committee*



*Tammy Ciok and Guest Elder Linwood Bagby
April 12, 2026*



*Julie Heinsohn and Guest Elder Charles Versfelt
April 19, 2026*

SESSION

The Session continues to meet monthly during our Interim Pastor search. The next session meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20th. We are grateful to Reverend Robin Palmer-Burton, pastor at Old Tennent Presbyterian Church, for serving as our temporary moderator for our meetings. If you have any questions, please see an elder. You can also reach out to the church office for assistance.

PRAYER REQUESTS



Your prayer requests are important. Please call or email the church office during the week to let us know of any requests for prayer you have. If you have a prayer request on Sunday morning, please use the Prayer Cards in the narthex to write out your requests. A greeter or usher can assist you with any questions you may have. Thank you for helping us stay on top of your prayer requests.

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. The current amount is \$40 per FPC member. To our members who have already made an extra contribution to cover their per capita for our current budget year (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.

BALCONY IMPROVEMENT

Thank you to Scott Fox and Berwin Guttormsen for the work they did up in the balcony. They created a table for Susan Pascullo that allowed her to move the audio/visual equipment further back in the balcony, improving the location of the live-streaming equipment. Thank you to Larry Moran for sharing this story and photos.



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Preserving Our Past, Securing Our Future

For nearly two centuries, the sanctuary building of the First Presbyterian Church of Freehold has stood as a place of worship, comfort, and community—a spiritual home for generations. These walls have witnessed baptisms, weddings, funerals, celebrations, and countless moments of grace. Now, as we look toward the future, we are called to ensure that this sacred space remains strong for those who will come after us.

To meet that responsibility, we are launching a **one-year Capital Campaign with a fundraising goal of \$150,000**. These funds will be dedicated exclusively to the maintenance and repair needs of our beautiful, historic church building as well as our nearly 60-year-old Christian Education building. As with any aging structure, thoughtful care is essential. Roofs age, masonry shifts, systems wear down, and preservation becomes both a privilege and a necessity.



This campaign is not simply about bricks and beams—it is about mission. By investing in

our buildings today, we help safeguard the ability of future generations to worship, learn, serve, and gather within these cherished walls. We also strengthen our role as a welcoming presence in the wider community, ensuring that First Presbyterian Church continues to be a place where faith is nurtured and lives are touched.



For nearly 200 years this church has continued to thrive because of the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and because of the love, hard work and financial support of its congregants. Together, we can honor the past, care for the present, and build a foundation for the future. Every gift, large or small, moves us closer to securing the legacy entrusted to us.

Come join us on June 14th for a potluck luncheon to kick off our capital fundraising campaign and to learn more about this important project.

May God bless each and every one of you for all that you do to keep God's love alive, and for keeping this beautiful house of worship in working order and a welcoming place to all.

FPC Finance Commission

SPRING CLEAN-UP



At our Annual Spring Clean-up on April 18th, members raked, trimmed, and really spruced up the grounds around our church. A big **THANK YOU** to all who helped make our church look great!



*And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of
the Lord Jesus, giving thanks
to God the Father through him.
Colossians 3:17*



EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 5, 2026



Easter Sunday was a joyful day with 129 in attendance as we celebrated the Easter Sunday worship service. ***He is risen indeed!***



Pastor Jeff Hatch and liturgist Sean Fox



Pastor Jeff Hatch



Thank you to Pastor Jeff for continuing to serve as our *First-Sunday-of-the-Month* pulpit supply, while our Interim Pastor search continues.

COFFEE HOUR SNAPSHOTS

April 12, 2026



JOY
FELLOWSHIP





MUSIC MINISTRY AT FPC

Many Voices. Many Gifts. One Shared Song.

As we move further into the season, music continues to shape the life of our church in quiet and powerful ways. Each week, voices, bells, and instruments come together—not only to support worship, but to deepen connection and create something shared.

This is a ministry that continues to grow—thoughtfully, steadily, and with purpose—reaching beyond Sunday mornings into the rhythm of daily life.

Current Projects

Weekly Devotional Recordings **Expanding the Journey**

Our year-long devotional series is now well underway, with **24 recordings completed and scheduled for release.**

Each devotion offers a brief moment of pause—pairing scripture with music to create space for reflection, encouragement, and renewal during the week.

A dedicated page is now available where you can access each published devotion:

 <https://scriptureandsong.com/freehold-presbyterian-church>

With 52 readings in total, there are still many opportunities to participate.

- **Next recording session:** Sunday, June 7th, immediately following the worship service
- All materials are provided
- No prior experience is needed
- Guidance is offered throughout

Whether you've participated before or are simply curious, this is an easy and meaningful way to lend your voice to something that continues to grow and reach others.

Please see Sandra Whitehill or me if you'd like to take part.

Music Sunday – June 14th at 10:00 AM

We are trying something new and different on June 14th and we need your help. "**Music Sunday**" is a Sunday in which anyone from our church who wants to share their musical talent with the congregation can do so by participating in this special worship service.

You do not need to be an accomplished musician to participate.

- Do you play a musical instrument?
- Are you taking lessons?
- Are you thinking about taking lessons?
- Do you play in a school band?
- Do you like to sing?

We would love to hear from you and all are welcome. Please see John Cavicchio or Kay Hatch to sign up, and to share your talents and time with your church family as we worship together on June 14th.



*Make a joyful noise to the Lord,
all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
Psalm 100:1-2*

An Invitation

Music ministry at FPC is made up of many moving parts—singing, ringing, reading, organizing, and supporting behind the scenes. Each contribution, no matter how visible or quiet, plays a role in shaping a shared offering of music, reflection, and community.

If you feel drawn to be part of this work, I would be glad to help you find a place that fits.

John Cavicchio
 Director of Music
 Telephone: 732-558-7525
 Email: cavicchiojohn@gmail.com

WOMEN'S RETREAT

A group of our women members and friends were away the first weekend in May for their annual spiritual retreat in the Poconos. A time for fellowship. A time to *relax, recharge and reflect.*



May 2026 Women's Retreat

We look forward to hearing about their retreat experience and their retreat plans for 2027!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Stay Connected with **First Presbyterian Church of Freehold!**

Want to stay up to date with the life of our church? "Liking" our Facebook page is a simple way to stay informed, inspired, and connected all week long! When you follow us on Facebook, you'll enjoy:

- ✓ **Photos** from recent church events and activities
- ✓ **Reminders** about upcoming services and special programs
- ✓ **Clips** from worship services and sermons
- ✓ **Music highlights** from our talented musicians
- ✓ A chance to **connect** with your church family throughout the week

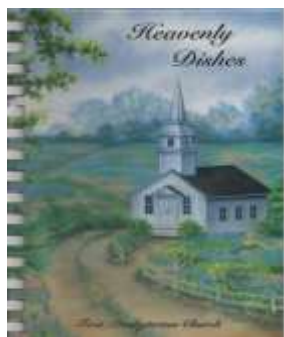
👍 How to Like Our Page:

1. **Open Facebook** on your phone or computer
2. **Search for:** *First Presbyterian Church of Freehold*
3. **Click on our church's name** in the search results
4. Click the **"Like"** button (thumbs up icon) near the top of the page
5. Click **"Follow"** to see our updates in your News Feed

Let's continue to grow our online community and to share the love and life of our church with each other.

Like us today!

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 **Oatmeal Cookies**. Enjoy!

OATMEAL COOKIES

- 1 c. butter
- 1½ c. brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ c. milk
- 1½ c. all-purpose flour, sifted
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 3 c. quick-cooking rolled oats
- ½ c. chopped pecans
- ½ c. raisins

Cream together shortening, brown sugar, and eggs until light and fluffy. Stir in milk. Sift together dry ingredients; stir into creamed mixture. Stir in rolled oats, pecans, and raisins. Drop from tablespoon 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheet. Bake in hot oven 400° for about 8 minutes. Cool slightly; remove from pan.

Susan Beaton



April 2026 – Word Search Puzzle Solution

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

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!

Romans 15:13

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

- GOD
- FILL
- PEACE
- ABOUND
- YOU
- HOPE
- JOY
- BELIEVING
- POWER
- HOLY SPIRIT



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREEHOLD

SESSION

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Tammy Ciok

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Berwin Gutformsen

Clerk of Session

Julie Heinsohn

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