



Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

“I am the vine, you are the branches.”

June 2016

**141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, New Jersey 08848**

908-996-4333

Web: www.alexpres.org

Facebook: Alexandria First Presbyterian Church of Mount Pleasant

Dear Friends,

As some of you might have heard, I was nominated and elected by the Presbytery of New Brunswick to be a commissioner at the 2016 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA. This means I will be traveling to Portland, Oregon to serve our church and our presbytery from June 17-26.

Some of you may not be familiar with General Assembly or the role of a commissioner, so let me briefly explain it to you. Biennially (every two years) our denomination has a national gathering called General Assembly. The location of the meeting changes each time to ensure that all areas get a chance to host—and as luck would have it, that means I have to travel all the way across the country (I’m being sarcastic, in case you can’t tell)!

Every presbytery in our denomination nominates and elects a specified amount of commissioners to send to General Assembly. Our presbytery is responsible for sending two elders and two ministers to be commissioners. Each commissioner is then responsible for serving on a committee and reviewing and recommending overtures that have come from various presbyteries throughout our denomination. In addition, each commissioner then participates in the “plenary” session when those overtures coming from committees are voted on. It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to make changes to our *Book of Order* and *Book of Confessions* and set policy for our denomination. In addition commissioners will vote to select a Moderator and a Stated Clerk to serve the Presbyterian Church for the next two years.

I feel extremely honored that I was selected to be one of two ministers that our presbytery will send to General Assembly. As a commissioner I have been assigned to serve on the committee for *Peacemaking and International Issues*. Between working on that committee and the work of the entire General Assembly, I will have my hands full. The schedule has us beginning each day at 8:30 a.m. and most days the plenary sessions are slated to go till 10:30 p.m. (and I’ve been told it can go much later)!

I would ask for your prayers while I’m away, and that the Spirit will guide me in my thoughtfulness and discernment. I’d also ask for prayers for my wife Gayle as she cares for our children in my absence.

I plan to do my best to keep you informed of my experience through Facebook updates and pictures—so please check in on our church’s Facebook page for updates on my trip. I’ll also look forward to sharing more about my experience in person when I return.

In Christ,

Pastor Nick



A Note from Nick

Tending the Flock

Baptisms

We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary. It was in June that Abby Ferdinando, Kaylee Gunderman, Jackson Davis Koeller, Cole Kenneth Kramer, Victoria Grace Kramer, Lainey Marie Johns, Brayden Marshall Schneider, Timothy K. Unkert, and Ryan Unkert became children of God through the sacrament of baptism. Congratulations and blessings!

New Members

It is with great joy that we welcome our newest members into the life and ministry of Alexandria Church: The Confirmation Class of 2016! Warmest welcome is extended to Kyle Kunich, Brandon Scott Schuetz, Isabella Anna Stagg, and Rachel McKinnon. A time to meet and greet our new members was offered during the fellowship hour following the service.



Arthur Carl Pfefferle, a long-time friend of Alexandria Church, passed away peacefully on May 14, 2016 at the Hunterdon Medical Center. He was 84. Art was born on September 20, 1931 and lived all his life in Alexandria Township. He attended a one room school house in Little York and went on to graduate from Frenchtown High School in 1948. Art had a passion for music, played the saxophone and clarinet, and was a member of the band *Rhythm Aires* in the 1950s and 60s. Art was a poultry farmer and met his wife Carol while selling eggs. In 1973, he left the farming life and went to work for American Cyanamid until 1997. While his children were attending school, Art became active in the school board and served a total of 23 years on the board. He was recognized by the school for his many years of service with the library at Lester D. Wilson School and the addition at Alexandria Middle School being named in his honor.

During retirement Art resumed playing saxophone, enjoyed participating with the musical group *Frustrated Maestros*, and played at various locations while motor homing across the country. When he was not traveling, he enjoyed singing in the choir at Alexandria First Presbyterian Church and occasionally performing with his saxophone during services.

Arthur is survived by his beloved wife Carol, four children, 10 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Alexandria First Presbyterian and/or Hunterdon Hospice. Our Christian sympathy is extended to Art's family and to all his loved ones.

Annual Spring Congregational Meeting

Sunday, June 5 | 10 a.m.

The annual spring congregational meeting will be on Sunday, June 5 beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary at which time we will hear reports from the ministry teams. The meeting continues after the service at 11 a.m. in the sanctuary where we will receive the reports of the Nominating and Auditing committees and process any such other business as may be deemed appropriate.



Thank You

The Pfefferle family would like to thank the congregation for all of your prayers, visits, calls, meals, cards, encouraging messages, during these past times during Arthur's illness. Thank you to Pastor Hatch for his visits and encouragement. Arthur appreciated all of these things so much. Thank you to Pastor Hatch for the funeral homily, to Nerva for playing the organ, the choir for coming in to sing, to Brad for playing the saxophone during the service. Thank you to the deacons for setting up the reception after the funeral service. This truly is a blessed congregation so appreciated by Arthur and me.

Thank you,
Carol Pfefferle



This Is a Busy Month!

Sunday, June 5

- 10 a.m. Ministry Appreciation will be recognized during worship with special music presented by the choirs and brief presentations by all our ministry teams
- This also is Nerva's last day with us as our Director of Music Ministry
- 11 a.m. A short meeting of the congregation will be held in the sanctuary. Please plan to attend

Wednesday, June 8

- 7 p.m. Session meets with both the current and new elders

Saturday, June 11

- 10 a.m. Presbytery meets at Covenant Presbyterian Church

Sunday, June 12

- 10 a.m. New officers will be ordained and installed
- Summer Sunday school series begins

Sunday, June 19

- Father's Day



PCUSA News

PCUSA Mission Agency's Budget Cut by 15% for 2017: \$11 Million Less Than 2016

Leadership for the Presbyterian Church's Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) has approved a 15% budget cut for 2017 and 2018. PMA's board approved the 2017-2018 budget last month and will allocate about \$63.5 million for 2017 and 2018, which is about \$11 million less than this year.

The interim executive director for PMA said the budget decrease was part of an overall restructuring of the nation's largest Presbyterian denomination. "This budget allows us to live within our means and operate programs that our constituents will support both prayerfully and financially."

This is not the only area where the denomination is experiencing decline. According to a joint PMA and PCUSA Office of the General Assembly meeting held in February, the denomination expects to lose an estimated 400,000 members between 2015 and 2020. This would include a loss of as many as 100,000 members during the present calendar year.

“Blessings in Action” Update

As most of you know, online giving is now available. The link is on our webpage which can be reached via computer or smart phone. You can use a credit or debit card or link a donation with your checking or savings account. If you need help or have questions, please contact Karl Nielsen.

Our web page was recently updated to provide online giving for these categories:

- Donations to the memorial fund
 - Please identify the person in memoriam
- Donation for pledges
 - Please enter your pledge number or name
- Donation to per capita
 - Please identify the name of the member or members
- Donation for youth activities
 - Please identify the project and person

We are
Blessed

Credit or debit cards can be used for donations online during special events as well.

Blessings to all,

Karl Nielsen for the Stewardship and Finance Ministry Team

Denis Goldman, Alice Hansen, Pat Keefe, Karl Nielsen, and Craig Norgard

New Church Officers

We joyfully welcome our new slate of officers to three-year terms. Ordination and installation will take place Sunday, June 12 at our 10:00 a.m. service. We thank them all for their dedication to our church and our God!



*There are different gifts,
but it is the same Spirit who gives them.
There are different ways of serving God,
but it is the same Lord who is served.
God works through different people in different ways,
but it is the same God who achieves God's
purpose through them all.
Each one is given a gift by the Spirit,
to use it for the common good.
Together we are the body of Christ,
and individually members of him.*

Remember Our Food Pantry

Typically, donations to the food pantry decrease during the summer months. Please remember our food pantry all year long as the need never slows or stops. All non-perishable foods are greatly appreciated, but single serve meals are requested the most and are easy to pick up when you do your regular shopping. Thank you on behalf of all the deacons for your support.

Caring Hands Crafters

So Long for Now

The Caring Hands Crafters of Alexandria Church will not meet over the summer months. But that doesn't mean you have to stop your creative and worthy work! Please continue to make those caps, PICC line covers, stump covers, and baby blankets over the summer and hang them on the bulletin board when each one is finished. Please contact Alice Hansen or the church office with any questions.



A Simple Way to Help

Alexandria Church's Caring Hands Crafters are in search of gently used plastic shipping bags that things—like mail-order clothing comes in—to reuse for mailing our Knots of Love donations. Before we reuse them, we make sure to remove the original shipping labels and cover any product names. Thank you for your loving support. Please call Alice Hansen or the church office with any questions.

June Birthdays

May God's awesome blessings be upon you this day and in the year ahead

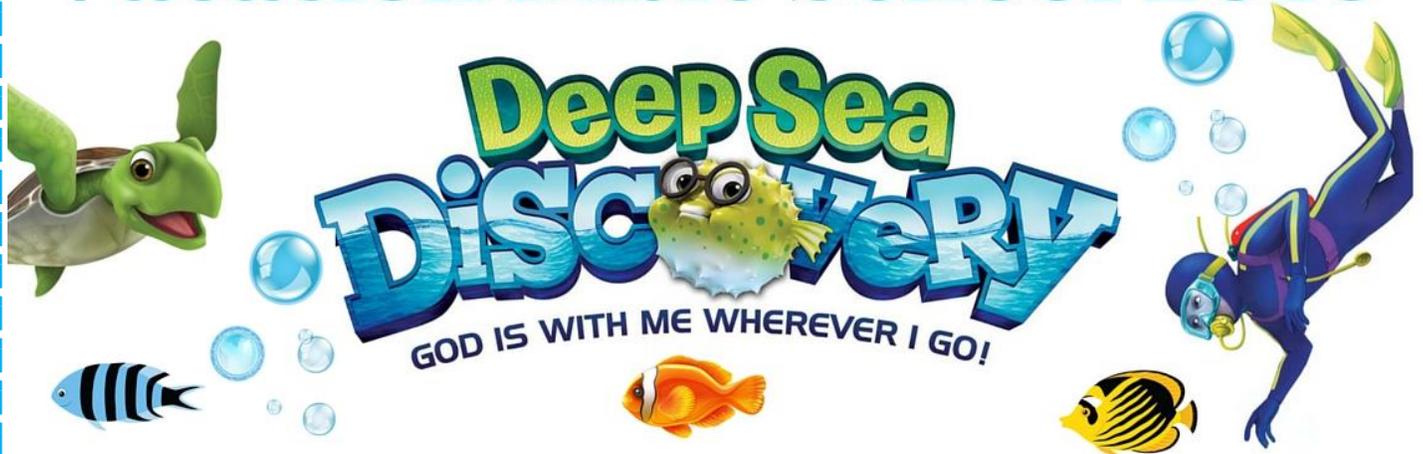
2	Ryan Unkert	6	Michael Folmar	11	Chris Scheier	18	Dave Heinbach
5	Chris Andreychak		Ben Giuliano	12	Shannon Fritsche	20	Robin Schostkewitz
	Jack Skibinski	9	Howard Jones	13	Cathy Rosswaag	22	Heather Pardonner
	Rebecca Sutton	10	Janet Silliman	14	Julie Lyons	25	Jenny Scheier
6	Gail Ferdinando	11	Jim Bush	18	Luke Bender	30	Troy Stagg

May Flowers

May 1	given to the glory of God in honor of our dedicated elders and deacons
May 8	given to the glory of God by Steve Cameron in celebration of Evelyn's birthday
May 15	given to the glory of God by the Bondor family in celebration of Marian Schick's birthday
May 22	given to the glory of God by the Bondor family in loving memory of Art Pfefferle
May 29	given to the glory of God by Nancy Schumann in memory of loved ones who have gone home to the Lord



Vacation Bible School 2016



Milford Presbyterian Church | July 18 - 22 | 9 - 11:30 a.m.

Children in grades Pre K-5th (based on what grade your child will be entering in September) are invited
The cost is \$10/child with a \$30/family maximum to cover expenses

Want to make new friends and have a fun summer camp experience? Want to grow in your faith and share it with others? Want to come on a Deep Sea Discovery? Join us at VBS this summer!

Alexandria First Presbyterian is joining forces with Frenchtown and Milford Presbyterian churches to provide a lively, fun, exciting summer program. Students will enjoy crafts, songs, Bible stories, snacks, and games while learning about the love of Jesus Christ.

Teen and adult volunteers are needed. Registration forms are on Alexandria Church's website.

Please call Julie Lyons for more information.

Remember Dr. Jeremy Hewens

As most of you know Jeremy Hewens is now home and is improving slowly. He still requires much assistance with activities of daily living and he receives services at the Good Shepherd Out Patient Unit in Allentown three days per week. His wife Jeannie has had tremendous help from her family and the local community and she has the help of a health aid 20 hours per week.

There are three main avenues for helping the Hewens family at this time:

- You can sign up to help with transportation needs by going to vsambob@gmail.com and asking to be placed on the Friends of Jeremy sign up site
- You can contribute to the Thank You Jeremy Fund. Make your check payable to the Thank You Jeremy Fund and mail them to Riegel Federal Credit Union, 515 Milford Warren Glen Road, Milford, NJ 08848-1881
- You can keep Jeremy and his family in your prayers. It will be a long journey and the medical expenses are overwhelming.

Thank you for your support,
 Howard Jones

Summer Sunday School

Attention parents! We are once again offering summer Sunday school for children in grades PreK-5th on most Sundays in the summer. Teen and adult volunteers are welcomed to lead or assist in this rewarding part of our worship. Kids will enjoy songs, games, crafts, and go outside to learn to “Listen for God’s Word” in our everyday lives. See the church calendar for all dates, and Julie Lyons if you are interested in helping out.

Congratulations!

We join together as a church family to share in the joy and celebration of the graduation of the following high school seniors: Jennifer Bercaw, Gabrielle Cascio, Alexis Gunderman, Kelsey Kunich, Grant MacWilliam, Athena McDowall, Kevin Moran, and Jenna Schostkewitz. May God bless them all as they continue on their journey.



Deacons Highlights

May 3, 2016

- Pat Keefe opened with devotions, describing various descriptions of the role of deacons, and closed with a touching prayer that had special meaning for the deacons
- The cares and concerns of the congregation were shared including updates on church members, transportation, and news on Jeremy Hewens’ progress
- The Ministry Teams reported:
 - Christian Education and Youth Ministry reminded us that May is “healthy food” month so healthy items for the food pantry are needed. 75 items have been taken to the food pantry, but there is always a need for more items. Volunteers are needed for VBS
 - Evangelism and Membership is working on a pot luck dinner for Sunday, May 22. Renee is coordinating an art sale to be held at this event. May 15 is Pentecost Sunday and people are encouraged to wear red
 - Building and Property will sponsor church clean-up day on May 14. Several Eagle Scouts are looking for appropriate service projects
 - Mission Interpretation has organized a team to put up steps for a church member as commercial steps are expensive
 - Personnel is requesting feedback about Nick and Pati as their yearly evaluations are being prepared. “Notes for Nerva” are being collected for a memory notebook. There will be coffee and cake after the service on Nerva’s last day
- Julie, Meredith, Carol, Evelyn’s terms of office as deacons are completed this year. Carol will continue to serve as a deacon
- Pati is looking for pictures of any deacon activities to use on the church’s website
- Communion prep servers will be scheduled for the summer months as well as lemonade and cookies on communion Sundays
- Sunday, June 5, 2016 will include Ministry Appreciation Sunday, the spring annual meeting, and Nerva’s last day
- Lemonade and cookies will be served on communion Sundays during the summer

Session Highlights

Regular Meeting | May 11, 2016

- Deacon Eric Strangfeld spoke of the good works of the deacons and specifically the continuing concern for the recovery of Dr. Jeremy Hewens from a bicycle/auto accident in December of 2015
- Elder Karl Nielsen submitted the current financial status of the church as of April 30, 2016. Letters will soon be sent to all pledging members of the congregation to advise them of the status of their pledges YTD. Also members are encouraged to contribute their own “per capita” in an effort to reduce the deficit
- The following recommendations were approved:
 - the resignation of Elder Karen Pardonner due to family/work issues and her concern that she no longer had the time to fulfill her duties as an active elder
 - move communion from June 5 to June 12 as recommended by the Worship and Music Ministry Team
 - increase the deacon budget from \$100 to \$300
 - budget \$500 for the use of the Music Ministry Search Committee in their search
 - Eagle Scout Candidate Jake Norgard’s Eagle project which includes improvements to the grove
 - receive into membership the following:

Confirmand

Kyle Kunich
Brandon Schuetz
Isabella Stagg
Rachel McKinnon

Mentor

Karl Nielsen
Barbara Pederson
Laura Navarro
Flora Nielsen

- A period of study continued with a reading from scripture “Sealed in the Holy Spirit”- Ephesians 1:3-14, a discussion of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the seal which is upon us as Christians. The various symbols which comprise the Presbyterian Seal were illustrated by the confirmands
- A light hearted sample motion was presented by Christian Education/Youth Ministry as a way to demonstrate the workings of the Session to the confirmands
- Elder Jim Hansen of the Capital Campaign Leadership Team reported a consultant has been interviewed and a decision whether to retain one will be made shortly. The team is moving forward to obtain plans and costs for various renovations to the church. There are questions as to code requirements which make these tasks somewhat more involved
- The Music Ministry Search Committee has placed an advertisement seeking applicants, is eager to conclude their search, and present a candidate as soon as possible
- Rev. Hatch reported that George Erlandson had recently appeared before the Committee of Preparation for Ministry and was approved to be an Inquirer. He is progressing nicely as he continues his studies in preparation for a career in the ministry
- Treasurer and Elder Karl Nielsen updated the Session on the church’s property and casualty insurance for the coming year. We are part of a 27 church pool in the presbytery which is insured together resulting in a reduction of costs
- Ministry Appreciation Sunday is June 5 with the spring congregational following immediately after the service in the sanctuary, which will then be followed by our celebration of Nerva’s music ministry as we wish him farewell in his new career endeavor in Fellowship Hall
- Both incoming and outgoing elders will be attending the June Session meeting

Worship Assistants

June 5	Angela Maglio
June 12	Glynn Skibinski
June 19	Emily Norgard
June 26	Karl Nielsen

Ushers

June 5	Pardonner family
June 12	Barb McLaren, Mary Schuetz
June 19	Solomon family
June 26	Hansen family

Communion Servers

June 12	Evelyn and Steve Cameron, Flora and Karl Nielsen
----------------	---



Special Dates

Also see the main calendar on page 10

June 5	Appreciation Sunday, congregation meeting, Nerva's last day
June 12	Communion, officers ordained, summer Sunday school begins

Coming Up

July 3	Communion, commissioning, high school seniors recognized
July 9	Youth mission trip
July 18	VBS at Milford Presbyterian



Our Ministry Team Officers

Building and Property Craig Bender (E), Marty Gunderman (E), Jim Hansen (E), Doug Bondor (D), Eric Strangfeld

Christian Education/Youth Ministry Julie Lyons (D), Shari Norgard (E), Karen Pardonner (E), Barbara Pederson (E)

Evangelism/Membership Lois Bondor (E), Debbie Cortelyou (D), Carol Moran (E), Cathy Torrey (D), Carol Van Norman (D)

Mission Interpretation Brad Bondor (E), Jim Bush (E), Steve Cameron (D)

Nominating Jim Hansen (D), Karl Nielsen (E)

Personnel Helen Jones (D), Laura Navarro (E)

Stewardship and Finance Denis Goldman (E), Alice Hansen (D), Pat Keefe (D), Karl Nielsen (E)

Worship and Music Evelyn Cameron (D), Howard Jones (E), Meredith Oliver (D), Ken Wieder (E) *(E: Elder, D: Deacon)*



The vision of Alexandria First Presbyterian Church is to gather in God's grace and to be led by the Holy Spirit. We joyfully worship, prayerfully seek, and gratefully share as a loving family growing in Jesus Christ.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF BRANCHES IS THE 3rd THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

Branches is a publication of Alexandria First Presbyterian Church (USA), 141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road, Milford, NJ 08848. The newsletter is published monthly—except during August—to inform members and friends of church programs, news, and events. *Branches* is online in the "News/Our Newsletter" tab at

www.alexpres.org

Editor: alexpres@embarqmail.com

 Alexandria First Presbyterian Church of Mount Pleasant

ALEXANDRIA FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, NJ 08848
Web: www.alexpres.org
Office: 908-996-4333

THE STAFF of ALEXANDRIA CHURCH
Reverend Nicholas C. Hatch
Pastor

Nerva Altino
Director of Music Ministry

Pati Tiedeman
Administrative Assistant



How to Reach the Pastor

Rev. Nick Hatch

- Through the church office Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **908-996-4333**
- By the church's website on the "contact us" link: www.alexpres.org
- Via his email: pastornickhatch@gmail.com

Alexandria Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:00 Bible study 9:00 Session materials due 9:30 Bible study	2 2:30 Staff 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:30 Boy Scouts	3	4
5 Ministry Appreciation 10:00 Worship 11:00 Congregational meeting	6 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Bible study	7 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Deacons	8 6:00 Bible study 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Session	9	10	11 10:00 Presbytery, Covenant Presbyterian
12 10:00 Worship, communion, officers ordained & installed 10:15 Summer Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship	13	14 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	15 6:00 Bible study 9:30 Bible study 5:00 Boy Scouts	16 9:00 July/August Branches deadline	17	18
19 Father's Day 10:00 Worship 10:15 Summer Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship	20 7:30 Bible study	21 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	22 6:00 Bible study 9:30 Bible study	23	24	25
26 10:00 Worship 10:15 Summer Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship	27	28 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Building and Property	29 6:00 Bible study 9:30 Bible study	30	Deacon of the Week June 5 Alice Hansen June 12 Eric Strangfeld June 19 Pat Keefe June 26 Cathy Torrey	

