



# Branches

**Alexandria First Presbyterian Church**

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

**January 2017**

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

**908-996-4333**

**Web: [www.alexpres.org](http://www.alexpres.org)**

**Facebook: Alexandria First Presbyterian Church of Mount Pleasant**

Dear Friends,

## A Note from Nick

As I reflect on the New Year I'm reminded of all of the New Year's resolutions that many of us will be making. Did you make a New Year's resolution? Will you? Many of us will make the same resolution . . . to eat better or exercise more . . . or both! As some of you know, my wife Gayle works at the Riegel Ridge Community Center as a fitness instructor, and before that she worked at a large gym in central Jersey. What her 13 years of experience in the health and fitness industry has taught her, is that January is the busiest month of the year. More people join health clubs in January than any other month of the year. There is something about the beginning of the New Year that makes us want to start fresh and make changes in our lives. It could be the fact that a New Year has begun, but I'd like to think that it is more than just the date on our calendars. You see, during Advent we light our Advent candles as a reminder that Christ's birth brings hope, peace, joy and love into our world. Celebrating the birth of our Savior is a reminder of God's redeeming presence in our lives. The arrival of a Savior is inspiring and hopeful!

During Advent this year, my sermons focused on the idea that love is on the way. I took this line from the hymn *People Look East* where it says at the end, "Love, the Lord, is on the way!" And to me, that is what Christmas reminds us: that love has arrived. God's love has arrived in our lives in the form of a Savior. How will you choose to live out that love this year? Might you make changes? Is there room to grow in God's love? Live differently? Be hopeful in new ways?

I hope that you might think of a way to let Christ's love shine through you this year. It is my prayer that each of us will find new hope in the good news of God's love for 2017, not because of the calendar changing, but because on Christmas morning, love, the Lord, has arrived!

May God bless you in the New Year!

In Christ,

*Pastor Nick*

## Tending the Flock

### Baptisms

We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary. It was in January that Ariana Scurti, Rebecca Erin McKinnon, Luke Edward Bender, Tyler Craig Bender, and Patricia Kathleen McGuire Bender became children of God through the sacrament of baptism. Congratulations and blessings!

## Just a Little Christmas

On Christmas Eve, the children and youth of our church told the wonderful story of Jesus' birth by performing the play *Just a Little Christmas*. Complete with a narrator, Mary, Joseph, an angel, shepherds, Emperor Caesar Augustus, King Herod, soldiers, wise men and animals, the children brought to life the nativity story with joy and enthusiasm. The Christian Education and Youth Ministry Team is grateful to the parents who helped their children prepare and brought them to rehearsals, the children and youth who brought the story to life with their heartfelt performances, Pati Tiedeman for the fabulous Bible times costumes as well as Jessica Doyle for the adorable chicken costumes, our behind the scenes helpers, and everyone who was there to enjoy the play. May we continue to rejoice at Jesus' birth and feel the wonders of His love every day of the year!



## Bible Sunday

### January 8 | 10 a.m.

An exciting day in the life of our church family is coming up—the day our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders receive their own personal Bibles! Join us Sunday, January 8, 2017 as we give Bibles to our youngest Christian scholars.

## Scout Sunday

### February 5 | 10 a.m.

A Scout is reverent. Scouting provides fun, fellowship and training to our youth while emphasizing honesty, self-reliance and respect. These values strengthen a Scout's character in family, community and faith. Alexandria Church will celebrate Scout Sunday on February 5, 2017 during our family worship service beginning at 10:00 a.m. The Scout Sunday tradition was started to spread awareness through the community and to allow Scouts to live out their duty to God. All Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and Scout leaders are invited to wear their Scout uniform or other Scout-friendly apparel for this special celebration. Come share your Scout spirit while doing your duty to God with Alexandria First!



## Christmastide and Epiphany

The twelve days of Christmas don't exist just in a song, but are in fact a season in the Church calendar. Christmas Day marks the beginning of the season of Christmastide. It lasts twelve days through January 5. While Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, Christmastide focuses on the significance of the Incarnation. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on the awesome fact that the Son of God Himself, Lord of

Heaven and earth, became a man and lived the same sort of life as us.

January 6 marks Epiphany (meaning "manifestation"). It takes the visit of the magi to Jesus as the beginning of Christ being revealed to the world. Epiphany focuses on the beginnings of Jesus' earthly ministry. Christmastide and Epiphany are linked because the former celebrates the arrival of God as a man in the world he created, and the latter explores the meaning of that event. They give us the opportunity as Christians to consider the supernatural and awesome reality of our Gospel. Not only did the infinite God become a finite man in the most humble of circumstances, he did so in order to save us from our sins and lift us up into the heavenly glory which is rightfully only his, but ours by his grace and mercy.

*Rev. Matthew W. Kingsbury, Park Hill Presbyterian Church*

## Something New

Our church has a new email address: [churchoffice@alexpres.com](mailto:churchoffice@alexpres.com). The former email address will be active for a while, but please take note of the change and update your records.

## Yankee Swap & Gift Exchange

**January 7 | 6:30 p.m.**

This long time church tradition was brought back last year. It is an adults-only gathering and attendees will each bring a wrapped gift that can be a gag gift, re-gift, nice gift, or white elephant along with an hors d'oeuvre or dessert to share. Non-alcoholic beverages will be provided, but feel free to BYOB if you want wine or beer. This will be held at the home of Cyndi and John McDowall.

## December Flowers

- December 4** given to the glory of God by the Strangfeld family
- December 11** given to the glory of God in celebration of Julie and Johnny Lyons' 17<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary
- December 18** given to the glory of God by Cathy Torrey in loving memory of her mother Janet Lockman whose birthday was December 16
- December 25** given to the glory of God in celebration of Tammy and Tim Sassaman's 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary





## News from our Presbytery

Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) Research Fellowships provide students, scholars, and independent researchers a \$2,500 travel stipend to explore the rich history of American Presbyterianism in our archival holdings. All research topic applications are considered. The 2016 Fellow projects included “Presbyterian Women Missionaries and the Development of Korean Christianity” and “Champions of Faith: Cold War America and the Rise of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.” A former research fellow says, “I can attest to the program’s significant impact—on fellows themselves, on other historians who will build on their work, and on all of us as the way in which we understand everything from women’s roles in society, Native American history, to the U.S. and globalization or the role religion played in college athletics has shifted or enlarged thanks to studies based on records held at PHS.”

## January Birthdays

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

<b>2</b> Pat Gendek-Sutton	<b>8</b> Craig Bender	<b>14</b> Allison Lessig	<b>26</b> John Lentine
<b>3</b> Richard Erlandson	Shirley Krautwald	<b>16</b> Howard Thomas	Claire Parsons
<b>5</b> Will Fritsche	<b>9</b> Alaina Fennell	<b>17</b> Lisa Schneider	<b>27</b> Ryan Abelman
<b>6</b> Kyle Ferdinando	<b>10</b> Joe Bercaw	<b>18</b> Irene Fennell	Sarah Wardach
Isabel Navarro	<b>11</b> Alexa MacKinnon	<b>21</b> Dean Erlandson	<b>29</b> Maureen Sutton
Carol Pfeifferle	<b>12</b> Alyssa Schuetz	<b>22</b> Martha Harrison	<b>31</b> Scott Schuetz
<b>7</b> Sara Matthews	<b>13</b> Isa Knapp	Nancy Schumann	
Tyler Unkert	<b>14</b> Lu Branson	<b>25</b> Karl Nielsen	

## Leadership Training

**“Equipping the Saints” | January 21, 2017**

**Princeton Theological Seminary**

Equipping the Saints is a day of workshops, worship, resources, and fellowship planned especially to support and equip church members in their ministries. This day is for new and ongoing church officers, pastors, worship leaders, educators, and any interested others. All are welcome to attend! The event is free; cost for hot buffet lunch \$10. Walk-ins are welcome—just bring your own lunch. For course descriptions please visit their website.

If you have questions or want to register

email [coned@ptsem.edu](mailto:coned@ptsem.edu),

call 609-497-7990,

or visit <http://www.ptsem.edu/equippingthesaints>



## Session Highlights

**Regular Meeting | December 14, 2016**

· Moderator Nick Hatch opened with prayer

- Deacon Pat Keefe commented on the continued good works of the deacons and especially the ministry for food collection for Thanksgiving. He commended on the outstanding generosity of the congregation in the success of this effort.
- Elder Karl Nielsen provided the financial status of the church as of November 30, 2016. There is a projected budgeted income shortfall of \$12,156.03 for the year.
- Clerk Lee Smith reported Liz Mahon, Larry Reinfield, and Tom Santangelo were received on affirmation of faith into membership of the congregation with joy and thanksgiving on November 13, 2016. He also advised the annual review of Session and congregational minutes as well as the church register took place on December 1 and they were found to be in good order with “no exceptions noted.”
- A time of study was held on Isaiah 35:1-10. These verses were studied and discussed. As elders we are leaders and seen as a sign of hope. Wait for the Lord and he will save you. The study time concluded with a reading of Psalm 27.
- Discussion and comments on the Feasibility Study and Capital Campaign centered around three questions:
  - Do we want to proceed?
  - Do we wish to continue the utilization of the services of Rev. Scott McKenzie as our Capital Campaign Advisor/Coordinator?
  - What should be the priorities in any capital improvements undertaken?
- Approved the following motions and recommendations:
  - to proceed with and undertake a capital campaign
  - to continue utilizing the services of Rev. Scott McKenzie pursuant to the terms of his contract
  - to approve the recommended pastoral salary considerations for 2017 to be made a part of the “Terms of Call” for the discussion and approval of the congregation at the congregational meeting in January
  - to approve the 2017 budget for \$232,778.00
  - to hold a weeklong “Souper Bowl” canned soup food drive to benefit Phillipsburg’s NORWESCAP in its ongoing food pantry needs from February 5-12, 2017
  - to revise the cost of upgrading interior lighting in various areas of the church building at an additional cost of \$142.01
  - to hold a “game day” on February 26 at church
  - to approve the call for the winter congregational meeting as follows: The 2017 winter congregational meeting will be held Sunday, January 29 at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. The purpose of the meeting will be to receive statistical and financial reports for 2016, to act on changes in the pastor’s terms of call for 2017, to nominate and elect financial officers and a new member to the auditing team, and to address matters of the corporation.
    - to move communion from January 1, 2017 to January 8, 2017
- Elder Karl Nielsen addressed a concern as to members we had not seen in church lately and suggested contacting them with an invitation to attend one of the Christmas Eve services
- The Personnel Team reported they’ve identified a potential candidate for Director of Music Ministry and will report as developments unfold

## Deacons Highlights



### Regular Meeting | December 6, 2016

- Deacon Pat Keefe led devotions which was a selection reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas
- The concerns of the congregation were lifted up and included those who are recovering, grieving, and house-bound
- The various ministry teams reported:
  - Christian Education: preparing for the Sunday school play
  - Evangelism/Membership: Bowling was a small group but those who went had a good time
    - “Mary Rejoices” Prometheus Chamber Orchestra: 13 people are going. Will meet in church parking lot at 2:15
    - Yankee Swap: January 7
    - Christmas caroling: December 18 for all ages
  - Building and Property: Clean-up day was well attended. Several Eagle projects were completed. Working on recommendations for capital improvements
  - Mission Interpretation: Working to promote service projects, better interaction with Norwescap. Minute for Mission may ask different organizations to present their purpose
  - Personnel: Budget was prepared and submitted to Session
  - Stewardship/Finance: Gratitude campaign was successful. Everyone now aware of per capita costs
  - Worship/Music: Next quarter of ushers and worship assistants will be distributed soon. Session decorated the church on the Saturday after Christmas. Orders are being taken for Christmas poinsettias
- Turkey boxes for Frenchtown Food Pantry: The boxes were appreciated and 6 were left over for Christmas
- Christmas family: all the requests for gifts have been distributed
- Congregational meeting: January 29, 2017. Elders to bring 6 sandwiches each cut in half diagonally. Deacons to bring desserts. Evangelism to take care of drinks and paper products
- Christmas Day: There will not be communion on Christmas Day
- Veterans’ boxes: There are 2 congregational members in the military service. To be discussed at the next meeting
- Christmas cards can be sent to Walter Reed Hospital.

## Remember to Contact the Church When . . .

- . . . you change your name
- . . . there is a death in your family
- . . . a member of your family is admitted to the hospital or is ill
- . . . you feel the pastor, staff, or church can assist you in any way
- . . . either your home or business phone number or address is changed
- . . . a new baby arrives in your family or in the family of another member
- . . . your class or group plans to use the church facilities for a meeting or function
- . . . a member of your family leaves for college, marries, or establishes a separate residence

The logo for "keepintouch" features the word "keepintouch" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "i" and "n" are highlighted in yellow, while the rest of the letters are blue.

## It's What We Do!

It'll soon be the "Super" Bowl season and time to rally around your favorite NFL teams! To get "in the game," your AFPC Mission Interpretation Team will be holding a "Souper" Bowl canned soup drive just in time for the NFL's February 5, 2017 Super Bowl! Please bring in cans of soup (preferably low sodium) starting Sunday, February 5, 2017 through Sunday, the 12<sup>th</sup>. Labeled boxes will be in the narthex and the Fellowship Hall for your contributions. Please see the NORWESCAP flyer below for more details. If you have any questions please see any member of your Mission Interpretation Team or contact Lainey Johns.



to benefit the **NORWESCAP Food Bank**  
**Mission Team**  
**Souper-Bowl Soup Can Drive**



**February 5 - February 12, 2017**

We will be collecting cans of soup for the NORWESCAP Food Bank located in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. The Food Bank distributes over 2 million pounds of food annually to

120 charitable feeding agencies in  
 Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren counties.



## Worship Assistants

<b>Jan 1</b>	Charlie Tiedeman
<b>Jan 8</b>	Nancy Schumann
<b>Jan 15</b>	Shari Norgard
<b>Jan 22</b>	Flora Nielsen
<b>Jan 29</b>	Howard Jones

## Ushers

<b>Jan 1</b>	Jeanne Cole, Martha Harrison
<b>Jan 8</b>	Smith family
<b>Jan 15</b>	Bender family
<b>Jan 22</b>	Carroll family
<b>Jan 29</b>	Cameron family

## Communion Servers

<b>Jan 8</b>	Helen Jones, Flora Nielsen, Karl Nielsen, Charlie Tiedeman
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## Special Dates

*Also see the main calendar on page 9*

<b>Jan 8</b>	Communion
<b>Jan 21</b>	Presbytery sponsored leadership training
<b>Jan 29</b>	Congregational meeting and luncheon

## Coming Up

<b>Feb 5</b>	Scout Sunday
<b>Feb 26</b>	Membership Team's Game Day



## Our Ministry Team Officers

**Building and Property** Doug Bondor (D), Marty Gunderman (E), Jim Hansen (E)

**Christian Education** Jim Bush (E), Barbara Pederson (E), Alicia Scurti (D)

**Evangelism/Membership** Lois Bondor (E), Cyndi McDowall (E), Cathy Torrey (D), Carol Van Norman (D)

**Mission Interpretation** Brad Bondor (E), Steve Cameron (D), Lainey Johns (E), Alice Hansen (D)

**Nominating** Jim Bush (E), Joan Carroll (E)

**Personnel** Joan Carroll (E), Helen Jones (D), Laura Navarro (E)

**Stewardship and Finance** Pat Keefe (D), Denis Goldman (E), Karl Nielsen (E), Eric Strangfeld (D)

**Worship and Music** Jeri Bone (E), Evelyn Cameron (D), Howard Jones (E), Tammy Sassaman (D) *(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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.alexpres.org).

Editor: [churchoffice@alexpres.org](mailto:churchoffice@alexpres.org)

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**THE STAFF of ALEXANDRIA CHURCH**  
Reverend Nicholas C. Hatch  
*Pastor*  
  
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](http://www.alexpres.org)
- Via his email: [pastornickhatch@gmail.com](mailto:pastornickhatch@gmail.com)

# Alexandria Presbyterian Church

# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <b>New Year's Day</b>	2 Church office closed 7:30 Bible study	3 9:00 Bulletin deadline 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:00 Deacons 7:30 Bible study	4 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:00 Session materials due 9:30 Bible study	5 4:15 Worship and Music 7:30 Boy Scouts	6 <b>Epiphany</b>	7 6:30 Yankee Swap, McDowall home
8 <b>Baptism of the Lord</b> 9:00 Christian Ed meets 10:00 Worship, Communion, Bible presentation 11:00 Fellowship and refreshments 2:00 Boy Scouts	9 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:30 Boy Scouts	10 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:30 Boy Scouts	11 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Session	12	13	14
15 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship and refreshments 11:15 Caring Hands Crafters	16 <b>MKL Day</b> 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Bible study	17 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	18 6:00 Men's Bible Study 9:30 Bible study 5:30 Girl Scouts	19 9:00 <i>February</i> Branches deadline	20 7:00 Pack meeting	21 Equipping the Saints - Leadership Training see p. 4
22 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship and refreshments 11:00 Confirmation parents' meeting tbd Youth group	23 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:30 Boy Scouts	24 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Mission Interpretation	25 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study	26	27	28
29 10:00 Worship 11:30 Congregational meeting and luncheon	30	31 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Deacon of the Week</u></p> <p>Jan 1 Steve Cameron Jan 8 Pat Keefe Jan 15 Eric Strangfeld Jan 22 Doug Bondor Jan 29 Helen Jones</p> </div>			