

Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

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

February 2017

**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,

A Note from Nick

With Christmas a month behind us and Easter a couple of months away . . . you may wonder, "what now?" In fact, in some instances this down time between seasons can be somewhat of a slow time in the life a church. We may even find ourselves reminding one another that yes, the church is still open between Christmas and Easter (see picture).

That might be how some churches are feeling . . . but here at AFPC, that is not at all the case! There is lots of exciting stuff happening at Alexandria Pres. right now. Two weeks ago we welcomed our new Director of Music Ministry, Jerry Phelps and the choir is already singing together under his direction. And they sound great - and are having fun doing it! We are all very excited to get to know Jerry better and to see what ways his ministry will further enrich our lives together.

Also, in December, the Session voted unanimously to move ahead with a capital campaign this spring. In the coming weeks you will be hearing more about this, and I hope that you will be as excited as I am to see the possibilities of what we can do together!

In addition to these two big happenings, we have lots of other fun stuff to look forward to:

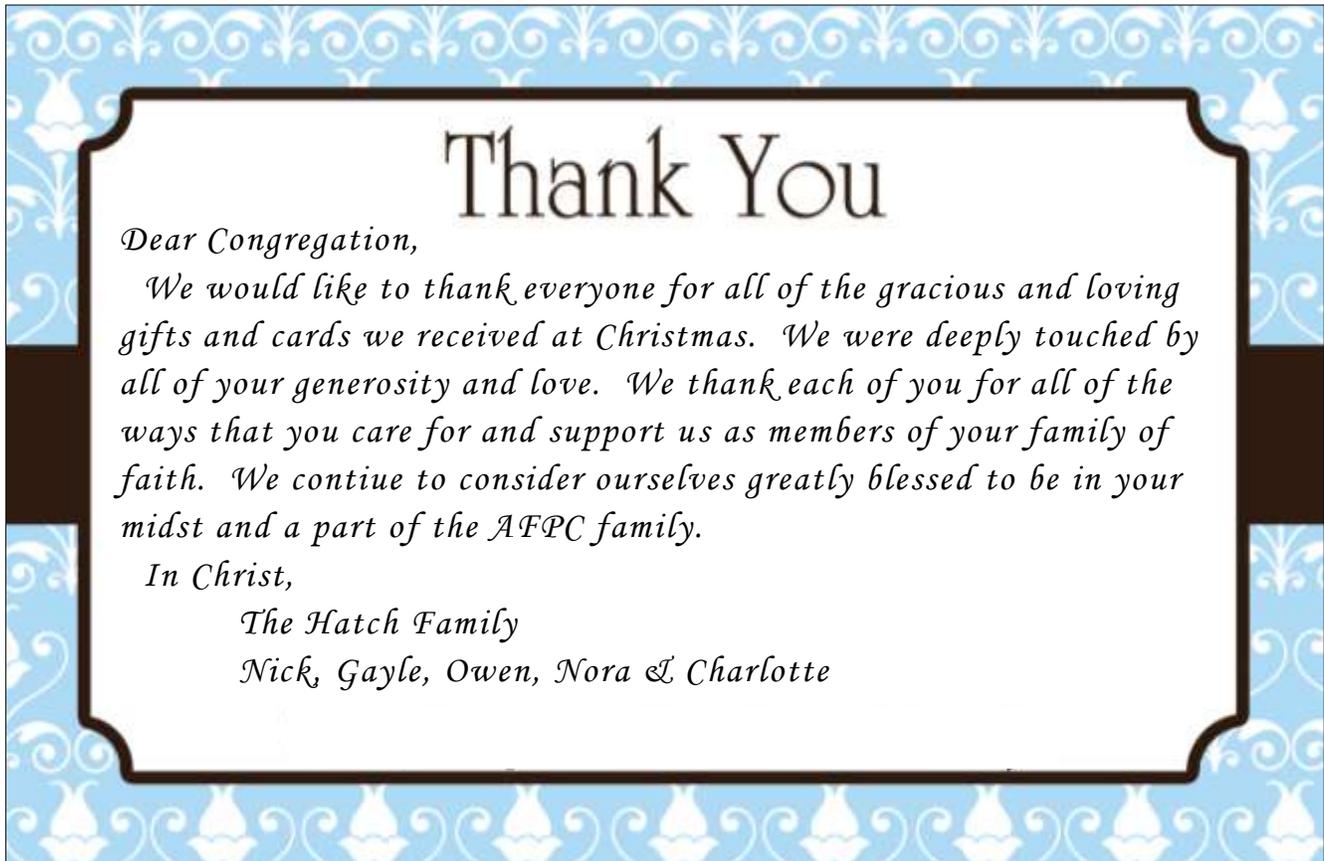
- Scout Sunday is this week (2/ 5)
- A new confirmation class starts in February (2/12)
- Churchwide game day (2/26)
- Youth Sunday is the first Sunday of March (3/5)
- The Lenten Bible Study is getting ready to begin
- plus much, much more . . . fellowship, worship, mission, etc!



I hope you will mark down some of these special dates and plan to attend. There will be many opportunities to get involved and participate at AFPC this winter/spring . . . because yes, we are very much open between Christmas and Easter ;)

Your friend in Christ,

Pastor Nick



Tending the Flock

Baptisms

We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary. It was in February that Nicholas Mahlon became a child of God through the sacrament of baptism. Congratulations and blessings!

Giving Envelopes

Those of you who have requested giving envelopes for 2017 may pick them up from the Fellowship Hall table.

Remember also that you can give online in regular intervals or a one-time donation. Online giving may be designated for general giving, memorials, youth ministry, or per capita. Please speak with Karl Nielsen if you have any questions or suggestions.

Welcome!

A huge welcome is extended to our new staff member Jerry Phelps. Jerry is our new Director of Music Ministry. He started with us on Sunday, January 22 where he was welcomed with open arms and warmest wishes at an informal gathering after the worship service. We are excited to see what special gifts he will bring to our worship services and our church community. Welcome Jerry!



Jerry Phelps
Director of Music Ministry

Born and raised in Louisiana, Jerry has a unique and dynamic vocal styling that clearly reflects the varied, eclectic musical environment of his youth which includes rhythm and blues, zydeco, and gospel to name a few. After honing his skills in performance, piano, voice, and earning Bachelor and Master of Music Education degrees, he has become a sought-after classroom and private music educator within the New York City community where he currently resides and continues to develop school music programs full time for NYC public and public charter schools.

Past accolades include Jerry being named quarter finalist for the Grammy Music Educator Award by the Recording Academy and The Grammy Foundation out of over 30,000 nominations, along with obtaining a Carnegie Hall Choral Fellowship from 2012-2013. He has served as accompanist, voice teacher, musical director,

and vocal coach to a variety of churches, organizations, and private clients.

We are excited and feel blessed that Jerry's journey has led him to Alexandria First Presbyterian.



Sermon Series Continues

Have you heard sayings like *God Helps Those Who Help Themselves* or *Everything Happens for a Reason*? Have you also wondered if those sayings are actually rooted in our scripture or our faith? Pastor Nick concludes his 5 part Half Truths Sermon Series this month. It looks at 5 of these sayings, examines what truths can be found in them, and what they do or don't mean to us as Christians.

If you've missed any of the series, you can listen to it on our website under the "sermons" tab.

January Flowers



- January 1** given to the glory of God
- January 8** given to the glory of God by the Evangelism and Membership Team with blessings for a happy new year
- January 15** given to the glory of God
- January 22** given to the glory of God
- January 29** given to the glory of God by Nancy Schumann in celebration of the life of her brother Bill

The flowers which grace our sanctuary for Sunday worship are given in memory of or in honor of loved ones, or in celebration of a special event or milestone. If you would like to donate flowers, please place your name on the 2017 Flower Chart in the Fellowship Hall or call Lois Bondor.

The Transfiguration of the Lord

The Sunday immediately prior to Ash Wednesday is an appropriate time to celebrate the Transfiguration of the Lord, because this event marked a transition in Jesus' ministry in which he "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51), where he would die.

In Jesus' transfiguration, we are assured that Jesus is the hope of the ages. Jesus is the One who fulfilled the Law given through Moses, the one dreamed of by the prophets, of whom Elijah is the greatest.

In celebrating this event, we rejoice in the divine majesty of Christ, whose glory shone even when confronted with the cross. It is given us for our journey through Lent toward the agony of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb. We celebrate this mystery in order that our faith may be renewed. We are transformed into the new being in Christ as we join Christ in his death and resurrection in Lent and Easter.

www.presbyterianmission.org



Caring Hands Crafters

Next meeting: Sunday, February 19 | 11:15 a.m.

In mid-January, the CHCrafters sent 13 soft knitted and crocheted caps to the Knots of Love charity. They were sent with our loving thoughts and prayers for people who are battling cancer. Our next meeting is February 19, immediately after church. All are welcome!

Everything by Prayer

be anxious for nothing,

but in everything by prayer and supplication,

with thanksgiving,

let your requests be made known to God;

and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.



News from PCUSA

During recent installation of new brick pavers at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, masons removed from inside a sundial in their front lawn a metal cylinder 2' high and 8" in circumference. Many there had forgotten they had a time capsule; the institution is 154 years old and it continues to disgorge secrets!

The capsule was placed on site in 1989 to commemorate the 201st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church held in Philadelphia, site of the first General Assembly in 1789. Their director and board chair led the ceremony, placing printed materials into the canister.

The capsule was intended to be opened on the denomination's 250th anniversary at the 251st General Assembly. Now that there are biennial rather than annual assemblies, the anniversary year will not necessarily coincide with an Assembly year, so they have scheduled the capsule's opening for 2039, in accordance with what they think the Assembly's wishes might well have been.

For now, it has been added to PHS's database of temporary records and shelved on one of their mobile compact shelving units.



February Birthdays

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

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 Ken Gregory | 9 Alice Muztafago | 15 Scott Heilig | 22 Larry Reinfeld |
| Brayden Schneider | 10 Jimmy Hansen | 16 Chris Fennell | 24 Kyle Kunich |
| 3 Avery Brunkus | Emilie Serrone | 17 Gabriele Cascio | 27 Owen Hatch |
| Alexander MacWilliam | 12 Jamie Maglio | 18 Jim Hansen | Rachel McKinnon |
| 4 Jackson Koeller | 13 LeighAnne Cascio | 19 Barbara Sherwood | 28 Jessica Doyle |



Session Highlights

Regular Meeting | January 11, 2017

- Deacon Doug Bondor commented on the continuing good works of the deacons with updates on visits of comfort to those in need, preparation of caring boxes for our service members, and the success of providing Christmas gifts for a needy family in the area
- Elder Karl Nielsen provided the financial status of the church. Income for 2016 totaled \$225,302.99 and expenditures \$212,139.75 with a budgeted income shortfall of \$3,635.01
- Approved the following:
 - The revised 2017 budget with the final per capita subject to minor revision. This revision represents a reduction of projected income of \$6,118.00 and expenses of \$5,000.00 *cont'd p. 6*

Session Highlights *continued from p. 5*

- The hiring of Jerry Phelps as an independent contractor to fill the position of Director of Music Ministry with a weekly payment of \$475.00 and a start date of January 22, 2017
- The elementary grades in our Sunday school to attend indoor rock climbing at Doylestown Rock Gym on March 26, 2017 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. following a pizza lunch at AFPC at 11:30 a.m. Parents will provide transportation/supervision and to pay for their own children
- A draft of the annual Statistical and Financial Report for 2016 will be distributed to session members prior to its February meeting
- A time of study and reflection was centered on Session 1 (Ephesians 4:4-7, 11-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:4) from the book *Transformational Leaders*. At the conclusion, the Apostles' Creed was said in unison
- The Order of the Day was focused on refining the Capital Campaign's priority list. Much discussion revolved around the manse and various options and its costs. The findings of the Manse Task Force compiled in 2007-2008 were reviewed. The church is committed to raising \$300,000.00 in a capital campaign for building/grounds improvements. Nick will contact members concerning leadership roles in the campaign
- Elder Karl Nielsen spoke of contacting members who do not attend service regularly and several of them did respond by attending one of the Christmas Eve services
- Elders Lainey Johns and Steve Cameron will attend a local mission program and will advise
- Elder Laura Navarro spoke to the difficulties in recruiting a seminarian and we will attempt to fill this position in the coming year

Confirmation

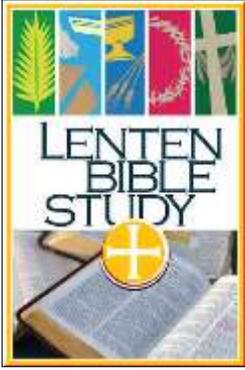
February 12 | 11:15 a.m.

The first meeting of this year's confirmation class will be February 12 after the worship service for all 8th graders. The meeting will be in the purple room. Classes will be every Sunday between February 12 and May 7 except for Easter. Please see Pastor Nick with any questions.

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!



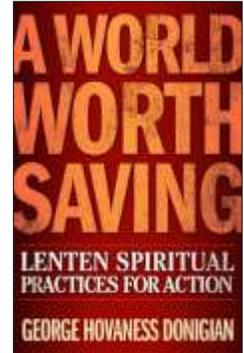
Tenth Annual Churchwide Lenten Study

Come share the blessing that this special Lenten experience provides

Moving along in the liturgical calendar, we are now looking forward to the Lenten season. This year Ash Wednesday falls on March 1, followed by Palm Sunday April 9 and Easter April 16. Members of the Christian Ed team are gearing up for our 10th (!!!) annual church-wide Lenten study. The selected source is *A World Worth Saving, Lenten Spiritual Practices for Action* by George Havaness Donigian. We encourage you to participate in the Lenten Bible study during the period leading up to Easter. Participation provides the unique opportunity to be in the Word with fellow Christians. This is a 6-week study beginning the week of March 5th and ending during the

week following Palm Sunday.

- Five study groups have been scheduled with the following leaders:
 - Sun. 11:00 a.m. Nancy Schumann
 - Mon. 7:30 p.m. Renee Skibinski
 - Tues. 9:30 a.m. Nancy Smith
 - Wed. 6:00 a.m. Charlie Tiedeman (a group for men)
 - Wed. 9:30 a.m. Shared leadership (a group for women)
- Another option will be to follow the study independently
- **Sign-up for those planning to participate will take place between January 29 and February 5**
- If you will not be present on either of those Sundays, please contact Jim Bush via phone (996-2812) or via e-mail (mail@jamesbush.net)
- Participants are asked to cover the cost, payable upon receipt of the book when it is distributed on Sunday, February 26



Troop 112 Eagle Scouts in 2016

Alexandria Church has held the charter for Boy Scout Troop 112 of Alexandria Township since 1958 and provides space for their regular meetings. We enjoy seeing how their members have grown into responsible young men. Many have been in the program since their earliest days and have advanced through the ranks to the prestigious rank of the Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable through the Boy Scouts of America. A Scout who attains this rank is called an Eagle Scout or Eagle. Since the beginning of the Scout program, on average only 2% of all members achieve this rank. Requirements include earning at least 21 merit badges and demonstrating Scout spirit through the Boy Scout Oath, Scout Law, service, and leadership. This includes an extensive service project that the Scout plans, organizes, leads, and manages. In the year 2016, five Scouts from Troop 112 have attained the rank of Eagle:



- ✪ Nick Brown
- ✪ Harrison Cortilessi
- ✪ Joe Franzo
- ✪ Ben Urmston
- ✪ Pierce Wemann

Congratulations to the Scouts and their families for such dedication and perseverance!

It's What We Do!

It'll soon be "Super" Bowl season and time to rally around your favorite NFL teams!

To get in the game, the Mission Interpretation Team is holding a **"Souper" Bowl Canned Soup Drive** just in time for the NFL's February 5, 2017 big game! Please bring in cans of soup (preferably low sodium) starting Sunday February 5, 2017 through Sunday the 12th.

Labeled boxes are in the narthex and the Fellowship Hall for your contributions. The NORWESCAP* flyer to the right has 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.



*Northwest Community Action Partnership

Where's Your Ebenezer?

The words of the well-known hymn *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* were written in 1757. While most of the lines resonate with today's singers and listeners, the reference to "Ebenezer" may be confusing: "Here I raise my Ebenezer; here by thy great help I've come." In Samuel 7:12, Ebenezer (Hebrew for "stone of help") is what Samuel names a stone memorial he erects to God after Israel wins a battle against the Philistines.

If you were to rise your Ebenezer in memory of a place where God helped you, where might it stand? Maybe it's at the scene of a car accident you survived or on a college campus where your faith was challenged or molded. Maybe it's a peaceful spot in nature where you sensed the Spirit's presence. Or maybe it's simply in your heart where a figurative Ebenezer monument can remind you of the Lord's constant care and love.



The Evangelism and Membership Team has been hard at work setting up the

Church's Social Calendar

Here are just a few fun things coming up in the near future.

Plan now to be a part of it!

Let's have a
Get Together
get - to - geth - er : an informal social gathering

Game Day February 26 2 - 4 p.m.

We brought this event back from last year since everyone had so much fun in 2016. What a great, casual way to spend the early afternoon! You're welcome to bring whatever card- or board-game you like and we'll throw in some others and the refreshments too. This is an all-generations time together.

Restaurant Night March 25 6 p.m.

Come and let us do the cooking for you. Well, we'll have the good folks at Warrenside Tavern do the cooking since they do it so well! This is a fun night for everyone where we'll have our own special dining space to chat, laugh, and get caught up with each other. Each person will pay their own way. Isn't it nice not to have to do dishes? Check out the menu on their Facebook and save the date.

As Fun as Ever!

It was clear that all who attended January's Yankee Swap just didn't want the Christmas season to end. The McDowall home was filled very quickly with many people, great food, holiday spirit, and lots of laughs as everyone enjoyed an evening of fellowship. The highlight was the swap where gifts of all sorts were given, swapped, and swapped again.

Thank you to everyone who participated in creating such a fun-filled evening. Look for more fellowship opportunities in the upcoming months.



Deacons Highlights



Regular Meeting | January 3, 2017

- Deacon Doug Bondor read from Samuel. “For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart”
- The cares and concerns of the congregation were shared
- The ministry teams reported on their various works:
 - Christian Ed: Bibles will be presented this Sunday
 - Evangelism: The Yankee Swap will be this Saturday
 - Game Day on February 26 is from 2 to 4
 - Dinner Out Night on March 25 is at 6 p.m. at the Warrenside Tavern
 - Easter egg hunt is on April 16
 - Confirmation Sunday is June 4
 - Building and Property: the capital campaign is moving along
 - Mission Interpretation: Souper Bowl collection begins the week before the Super Bowl
 - Worship and Music: Jim is no longer serving as organist
- Christmas family: the box was dropped off at Alexandria School containing 5 large gift bags and a few additional gifts
- Elders will bring sandwiches and deacons will bring desserts for the annual winter congregational meeting on January 29
- Collection for the service men and women will begin soon
- Updated and clarified the communion prep and serving schedule
- Four turkeys were left over from the Thanksgiving drive and were given to Flemington Food Pantry along with a bin of stuffing, soup, and 20 cans of cranberry sauce
- Deacon Doug Bondor closed with prayer



Remember Our On-Going Collections

Clothes for the Cause

Old clothing that is still in good condition supports our youth’s summer mission trip. Donations are old at SAFE in Hunterdon Consignments where the youth receive 50% of the selling price. Items can be brought to church at your convenience and placed in the bin in the Fellowship Hall labeled “Youth Group Clothes for the Cause.”

Food Pantry

All non-perishable foods and full-size personal products are needed to replenish our food pantry shelves. If you are able to pick up a few extras while doing your weekly grocery shopping we would be very grateful. Why not take advantage of the various canned good sales and plentiful coupons that are available this time of year? Collection bins are in Fellowship Hall and outside the church offices.

Sample Size Personal Products

You pay for them anyway when you stay in a hotel, so why not bring home those unopened personal products the hotels provide? The collection bin is in Fellowship Hall. These pint-sized products are perfect for the clients of the Trenton Rescue Mission and are deeply appreciated.

Worship Assistants

- Feb 5** Scouts
Feb 12 Lainey Johns
Feb 19 Jim Hansen
Feb 26 Craig Bender

Ushers

- Feb 5** Scouts
Feb 12 Jane Pursell, Meredith Oliver
Feb 19 Schuetz family
Feb 26 Kunich family

Communion Servers

- Feb 5** Evelyn Cameron, Steve Cameron,
Howard Jones, Shari Norgard



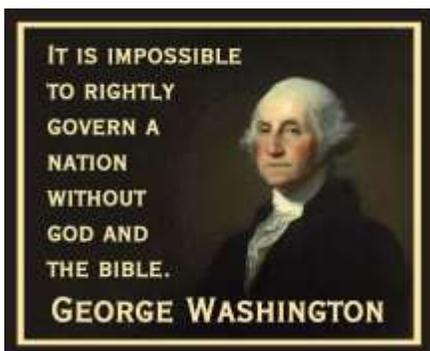
Special Dates

Also see the main calendar on page 12

- Feb 5** Scout Sunday, communion
Feb 12 Confirmation begins
Feb 20 Office closed
Feb 26 Churchwide game day

Coming Up

- Mar 1** Ash Wednesday worship
Mar 5 Youth Sunday
Mar 25 Dinner out night



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 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: churchoffice@alexpres.org

 Alexandria First Presbyterian Church of Mount Pleasant

ALEXANDRIA FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
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 Office: 908-996-4333

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
- Via his email: pastornickhatch@gmail.com

Alexandria Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #f0d0d0;"> <p><u>Deacon of the Week</u></p> <p>Feb 5 Cathy Torrey</p> <p>Feb 12 Alice Hansen</p> <p>Feb 19 Tammy Sassaman</p> <p>Feb 26 Alicia Apgar</p> </div>			1	2	3	4
			6:00 Men's Bible study 9:00 Session materials due 9:30 Bible study	7:00 Chancel Choir 4:15 Worship and Music 7:30 Boy Scouts		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Scout Sunday 9:00 Christian Ed meets 10:00 Worship, communion 11:00 Fellowship and refreshments	6:30 Boy Scouts 7:30 Bible study	9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:00 Deacons	6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Session			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship and refreshments 11:15 Confirmation	6:00 Boy Scouts 6:30 Boy Scouts	9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study	6:00 Men's Bible Study 9:30 Bible study 5:30 Girl Scouts	9:00 March <i>Branches</i> deadline	7:00 Pack meeting	8:00 Girl Scouts
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday School 11:00 Fellowship and refreshments 11:15 Confirmation 11:15 Caring Hands Crafters	Presidents' Day Office Closed 7:30 Bible study	9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study	7:00 Chancel Choir		
26	27	28	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 20px; background-color: #f0d0d0;">  <h2 style="font-family: cursive; color: #800000;">February</h2> </div>			
Transfiguration of the Lord 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:15 Confirmation 2:00 Game Day	6:00 Boy Scouts	9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Building and Property 7:00 Mission Interpretation				

