



Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

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

March 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

As we enter the month of March I'm tempted to comment on what a mild winter we had . . . but I'm afraid to say that just yet. After all, it's not unheard of to get a snowstorm in early March. But rogue snowstorms aside, we have had unseasonably warm weather of late and very little snow (much to my kids dismay!). And probably because we haven't had much snow, I've been particularly tuned into how gray our weather has been. In fact, if I had to characterize our weather this year, I would call it "Lent weather." Why "Lent weather?" Well, with predominantly gray, overcast skies it just feels kinda gloomy, very much like the season of Lent.

Lent is the gloomy, gray season in the life of our faith. For as the weather changes seasons, we acknowledge that the seasons of our faith change also. As we go from winter to spring, liturgically, we too are now in a time of transition. We will begin moving from the joys of Christmas to the somberness of Lent. The season of Lent is a season of preparation and self-reflection, as we contemplate the sacrifices that God made for us on the cross. It is not necessarily an easy process. We want to be a church of joy—a church that praises and sings of God's grace in all that we do. And yet we are reminded in Lent that God's grace comes at a price. And so we are all called to look ahead to the cross and remember that Jesus died for us. In this process of self-reflection we have several opportunities to grow in our faith. The first is to join a Lenten Bible Study and work through "A World Worth Saving" by George Donigian. Secondly there will be an Ash Wednesday Service on March 1 at 7:00 p.m., when we will gather together for short service that marks the beginning of Lent. During the Ash Wednesday service we will begin our Lenten journey as we celebrate communion together and then come forward for the imposition of ashes. At the Ash Wednesday service you will also have the opportunity to pick up a Lenten devotional. These devotionals are great to read as a family at the dinner table or perhaps by yourself during the quiet moments of your day.

Our Lenten journey will then continue in worship for the next 6 Sundays, when we read the stories of Jesus' last days on earth and contemplate together that our Lord died for our salvation.

I hope to see you in worship each Sunday during Lent, and that you will take the time to engage in this season of reflection. Because just as the gray skies will eventually disappear, Christ will indeed rise again. But before the glory of Easter morning arrives, let's first remember and give thanks for the sacrifices that were made on our behalf.

Peace,

Pastor Nick

Tending the Flock

New Church Email Addresses

Please make a note of new email addresses for Nick and Jerry: nhatch@alexpres.org and jphelps@alexpres.org respectively. Messages will be forwarded from the old addresses for a short time, but it would be best to start using the new addresses immediately. Be sure to update your address book now.

Memorial Fund

A meaningful way to remember/honor loved ones and friends is to make contributions to the Memorial Fund of Alexandria Church. Memorial gifts may be sent to:

The Memorial Committee
 Alexandria First Presbyterian Church
 141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
 Milford, New Jersey 08848

Scout Sunday

February 5, 2017

Scout Sunday was a big day for many at Alexandria Church. It gave our church community a chance to recognize Scouting and gave Scouts the opportunity to show their appreciation for the support they receive from us. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Scout leaders helped with the service from greeting and reading to ushering and serving snacks during fellowship. Scout Sunday reminded us all that Scouting is a ministry of our congregation, not just an outside group that meets in the building.



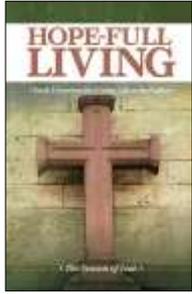
Front: Tyler Unkert, Nora Hatch
Middle: Jason Czerna, Emily Norgard,
 Audriana Stagg, Isabella Stagg, John McDowall
Top: Charlie Tiedeman, John McDowall, Troy Stagg, Jack
 Skibinski, Joey Kiernan, Chris Stagg, Jack Bender, Jim Kiernan



Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 1 | 7 p.m.

Join your Presbyterian family for this solemn and meaningful hour of worship. The choir will offer music and song under the direction of our Music Director Jerry Phelps. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated and the imposition of ashes will be received. Ash Wednesday marks the start of the Lenten Season. Come and begin this time of reflection with us!



Lenten Devotionals

The Lenten devotional *Hope-Full Living* is available to you and your family in the narthex. We may not be in school anymore but we are still students of our Master Teacher Jesus, especially during Lent. Lent is a time to turn around, to recall the many steps Jesus took on our behalf on the way to Jerusalem, and to meditate on the meaning behind the events of Christ's last days on earth. Please help yourself to a copy of this wonderful Lenten resource. If you cannot get to the church for your copy, please call us and we'll make a copy available for you.

Small Groups Meet for Lent

Sundays at 11:15 a.m.

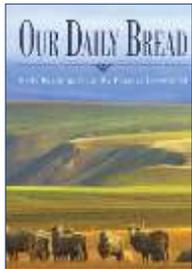
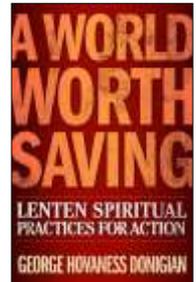
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Wednesdays at 6:00 a.m. for men

Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. for women

Our annual Lenten Bible study begins March 1st and you can still be a part of it! Please jump in and join any of the groups shown on the left. Each group meets for about an hour and if your schedule is irregular, you can drop in on any group on any day. Please see Jim Bush for the Lenten study material.



Our Daily Bread

The new quarterly issue of the daily personal devotional guide *Our Daily Bread* is available in the narthex for each family. Please stop by the table or check the brochure rack and take a copy home with you to study.

The daily devotional can also be found on line at www.odb.org. Both versions are available at no cost to you.

February Flowers

February 5 given to the glory of God by Brownie Troop 80994 in celebration of Scout Sunday

February 12 given to the glory of God

February 19 given to the glory of God

February 26 given to the glory of God by Oscar Philkill in loving memory of Doris Philkill



Youth Sunday

March 5, 2017 | 10 a.m.

Join us on Sunday, March 5 for a spirit-filled hour of worship as the children and youth of our church lead us in this annual and much anticipated service. The students will usher, collect the offering, lead prayers, and host the children's sermon. It's a meaningful time in the lives of both our youth and our congregation. Come on out and support the youth in the Spirit of Christ!

Sunday School Rock Climbing

March 19, 2017 | 1:45 p.m.

Let's go on a rock climbing adventure full of fun and fellowship! Join our Sunday schoolers from kindergarten through 6th grade at Doylestown Rock Gym on the 19th from 1:45 to 3:45 p.m. where we'll climb and play. Pizza and refreshments will be served. Parents are required to attend for the duration of the party and siblings are welcome.

The cost is \$25/climber which includes the pizza. Please rsvp to Julie Lyons by March 10 to save your spot. If anyone wishes to carpool, we will leave the church parking lot at 1:10 p.m. sharp. Directions and more information will be provided.



♪ 'Notes' from Jerry ♪

Junior and Youth Choirs Begin

Good news! Our new Director of Music Ministry Jerry Phelps would like to start rehearsals with the Junior Choir and Youth Choir. He will hold rehearsals with the Junior Choir at 6:00 p.m. and the Youth Choir at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 16. The Junior and Youth choirs will sing at the Sunday service on March 19.

These choirs will also meet for rehearsal on Thursday, April 20 with the Junior Choir at 6:00 p.m. and the Youth Choir at 6:30 p.m. Both choirs will sing at the Sunday service on April 23.

So, please stop by and speak with Jerry on Sunday morning or email him at jphelps@alexpres.org.

March Birthdays

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

4 Lee Smith	8 John Pulsinelle	12 Jenn Schaefer	20 Danica Doyle
5 Christina Heilig	9 Robert Fennell	14 Meaghan Serrone	21 Jillian Soos
6 Gianna Cascio	Donna Neighbour	15 Helen Grundmann	23 Cheryl Iannacone
Lauren Koeller	11 Luke Bercaw	17 Kevin Scheier	24 Rylan Koeller
7 Debbie Cortelyou	Jenna Schostkewitz	Sharon Solomon	25 Alexander Wardach
8 Marty Gunderman	Keira Vogel	19 Jason Abelman	30 Jeanne Cole
			31 Richard Brunkus

Care-to-Share

Care-to-Share

Thursday, April 13 | 7 p.m.

In America, hunger affects people of all walks of life, with 1 in 7 Americans using the Feeding America Food Bank Network for food assistance. According to Feeding America, food insecurity—the lack of or limited access to enough food to lead an active, healthy life—exists in every county in the U.S. Hunger and poverty often go hand in hand, but poverty is only one of many factors associated with food insecurity. Unemployment, underemployment, and medical and mobility challenges can all lead to a lack of adequate nutritious food. Thankfully, food banks across our nation help families get the support they need to find nutritious food to eat.

The Care-to-Share Lenten Project is a long-standing tradition here at AFPC where we seek to meet the needs of families in our community. Each year on Maundy Thursday, members of our church and Colalillo ShopRite generously assemble 350 bagged lunches to go to NORWESCAP Food Bank in Phillipsburg. NORWESCAP is a subsidiary of the Feeding America Food Bank Network which distributes food to shelters, soup kitchens, and needy feeding organizations serving Hunterdon, Sussex, and Warren counties. They are not federally funded and exist solely on the generosity of fund raising efforts, grants, and donations.

On April 9, Palm Sunday, the children will decorate lunch bags and color prayer cards during Sunday school. These items are a personalized touch that we hope will help the recipient of that lunch to feel our prayers and support. If you wish to support this Lenten project, look for the cross in Fellowship Hall with the needed items. Each bag includes one protein meal, one fruit snack, one juice box, and one treat. Pull top cans and plastic containers are recommended as they are easy to carry and will not spoil. Please take as many tags as you wish. You may drop off your donations in Fellowship Hall by Sunday, April 9, then join us on Maundy Thursday, April 13, at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall to assemble the bags. With God's help, we will end hunger.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat”

Matthew 25:35



News from PCUSA

Each new year brings us forward in time. 2017 also takes us back.

The calendar for the next twelve months presents an impressive number of historic celebrations and significant remembrances closely linked to Presbyterianism in America and around the world. The Presbyterian Historical Society will be connecting these commemorations to the Society's service ministry using the 2017 theme *Celebrate, Remember, Share*.

The word “anniversary” was first used for Catholic feasts commemorating saints. Ironically—and yet ecumenically fitting—is that the world's Reformed churches will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and Martin Luther's 95 Theses in 2017. Other major anniversaries Presbyterians will celebrate include the 300th of the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Philadelphia, the 300th of the Board of Pensions, the 50th of the Presbyterian Historical Society at 425 Lombard Street, and the 50th of the Confession of 1967. These milestones relate to each other like ripples in a pond. Without the Reformation there would be no Protestantism as we know it, no American Presbyterianism, no first presbytery, no 1967 General Assembly. And without the significant role Philadelphia played in the early history of the Church, the Historical Society would not have been founded in the “Cradle of Liberty” in 1852.

Memos from the Mission Team

**“YOU MUST BE THE
CHANGE
YOU WISH TO SEE IN THE
WORLD”**

**“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others”
Phillipians 2:3**

Caring Hands Crafters

Sunday, March 19 | 11:15 a.m.

Alexandria’s own Caring Hands Crafters—a dedicated group of knitters, knotters and crocheters—has been busy stitching hats, PICC line covers, limb covers, and blankets for cancer patients in need. Since their inception, the CHCers have created and sent out 168 items to Knots of Love to be distributed nationwide.

They’ve even stitched up a surprise guest to speak to the group (and guests) in the near future. Whether you already know your way around a skein of yarn or are just learning, please stay tuned for more information to come. If you or anyone you know is even slightly interested in learning a new craft, this group is a loving community in which to hone your skills and to provide for a good cause.

For more information feel free to reach out to Alice Hansen, Pati Tiedeman, or visit our website at www.alexpres.org click on “About Us” and scroll to “Opportunities to Serve” and you’ll find our group!



Our February shipment

Souper Bowl Drive

We’d like to extend a tremendous thank you to all of you who supported our 2017 Souper Bowl canned soup drive recently! We are happy to report NORWESCAP (Northwest Community Action Partnership) of New Jersey received **over 100 pounds** of canned soup from this drive! The folks at NORWESCAP were very grateful to receive your donations and—as they are not a federally funded service organization but rely solely on expansive fund raising, grants and community donations—they see every can as a gift. It’s good to know that your generosity will help feed those in need (for at least a week as we’ve learned that’s how quickly such a contribution can be depleted). With that in mind, your Mission Team will continue to seek and offer you other ways to help serve locally, nationally, and globally in the near future . . . *stay tuned!!*

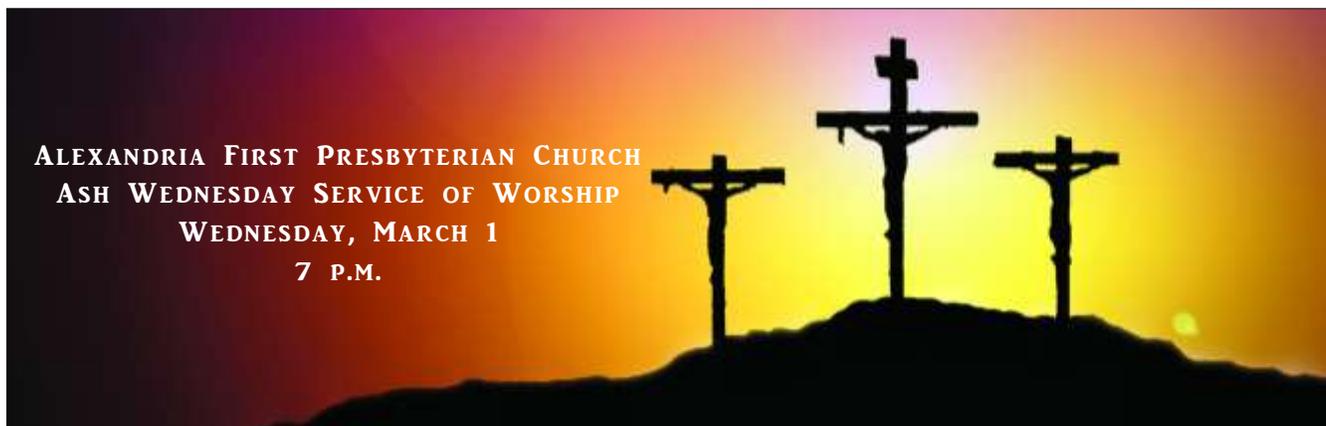




Session Highlights

Regular Meeting | February 8, 2017

- Elder Denis Goldman led devotions with a reading on finding great wealth in your own backyard and thankfulness for all God has given us. He offered comments and prayer
- The Mission Interpretation 2017 budget has been revised to a lower figure which will be included in the minutes for March
- Deacon Pat Keefe commented on the continuing good works of the deacons with updates on those in need in the congregation as well as the preparation of two military boxes for our members in the service. He also announced the collection of cans of soup during Souper Bowl Week was a great success and that one week remains in the collection drive
- A draft of the annual Statistical and Financial Reports for 2016 (previously distributed) was approved on motion and by voice vote authorizing submission by the Clerk
- A time of study and discussion was held using the book *Transformational Leaders*, Session 2 (Isaiah 40:21-33, Psalm 148). Transformational leaders do not have to make up good news for worship (it is always there in the worshipping of the Lord). How do we as leaders make newcomers feel especially welcome and help them to overcome any uncertainty or confusion about our facilities or service? What can we do as transformational leaders to draw newcomers in and share with them the joy of praising and worshipping the Lord? We ended our study period with an Affirmation of Faith in unison from the PCUSA Brief Statement of Faith
- The following recommendations were approved:
 - Troy Stagg's Eagle Scout service project to refresh and paint the purple room on the lower level of the annex and to include door repairs, the installation of a white board, and replacement of the clock with an anticipated date of completion by Easter
 - Elementary grades' outing for indoor rock climbing at Doylestown Rock Gym, Doylestown, PA, originally scheduled for Sunday March 26, 2017 changed to Sunday March 19, 2017 from 1:45-3:45 p.m. due to a scheduling conflict
 - Vacation Bible School will be hosted by AFPC in collaboration with Milford and Frenchtown Presbyterian churches the week of 7/31-8/4. Curriculum is "Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God"
- Building and Property Team noted the energy audit is pending due to a new installer whose credentials we wish to review before considering further
- Evangelism and Membership Team announced Game Day for all on February 26 from 2-4 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
- Worship and Music Team reported that Jerry Phelps is working out very well



Deacons Highlights



Regular Meeting | February 7, 2017

- Deacon Cathy Torrey read a selection entitled “Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love”
- The concerns of the congregation were shared. Several members are dealing with medical concerns
- The ministry teams reported:
 - Christian Education: Rock climbing for the kids; adult bible studies will be starting soon
 - Evangelism and Membership: Game Day with children in February; dinner at the Warrenside Tavern in March; Easter Egg Hunt in April; balloon decorations for Pentecost in June
 - Building and Property: an Eagle Scout candidate proposed painting the purple room; looking into replacing the vacuum cleaner
 - Mission Interpretation: The Souper Bowl event was successful; working with local merchants to get the help/food to people in need in the community
 - Worship and Music: AED training on March 4; two services for Easter with communion by intinction; Capital Campaign will be launched soon
- Servicemen boxes will be sent shortly

Restaurant Night

Saturday, March 25
6 p.m.

Warrenside Tavern
Stewartsville, NJ

It's time to chase away the *Winter CHILL* with warm friendships and hot food!

Join us at the Warrenside Tavern and let them pamper you with a great meal!

(Each person pays their own way)

RSVP to Lois Bondor before March 19th

Worship Assistants

- March 1** Jim Morris
March 5 Youth
March 12 Lee Smith
March 19 Robin Pulsinelle
March 26 Lois Bondor

Ushers

- March 1** Evelyn Cameron
March 5 Youth
March 12 Karl Nielsen, Nancy Smith
March 19 Pati Tiedeman, Charlie Tiedeman
March 26 Deb Heinbach, Jessica Doyle

Communion Servers

- March 1** Robin Pulsinelle, Tammy Sassaman
March 5 Alicia Apgar, Dave Heinbach,
 Brad Bondor, Meredith Oliver



Special Dates

Also see the main calendar on page 10

- March 1** Ash Wednesday worship
March 5 Youth Sunday
March 25 “Dinner Out” Night

Coming Up

- April 9** Palm Sunday
April 13 Maundy Thursday
April 14 Good Friday
April 13 Maundy Thursday
April 16 Easter



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

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 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)**
 141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
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 Web: www.alexpres.org
 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: nhatch@alexpres.org

Alexandria Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Ash Wednesday 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Worship service	2 6:00 Boy Scouts	3	1 8:30-12 AED/CPR Training
5 1st Sunday in Lent Youth Sunday 10:00 Worship, communion 11:00 Fellowship and Refreshments 11:15 Bible study 11:15 Confirmation	6 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:30 Bible study	7 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:00 Deacons	8 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:00 Session materials due 9:30 Bible study	9 3:00 Staff 4:15 Worship and Music 7:00 Chancel Choir 7:30 Boy Scouts	10	11 10:00 Boy Scouts
12 2nd Sunday in Lent Daylight Saving Begins 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship and Refreshments 11:15 Bible study 11:15 Confirmation 1:00 Boy Scouts	13 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Bible study	14 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	15 6:00 Men's Bible Study 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Session	16 9:00 <i>April</i> Branches deadline 6:00 Junior Choir 6:30 Boy Scouts 6:30 Youth Choir 7:00 Chancel Choir	17	18
19 3rd Sunday in Lent 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship and Refreshments 11:15 Bible study 11:15 Caring Hands 11:15 Confirmation 1:45 Sunday school outing 2:00 Boy Scouts	20 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:30 Bible study	21 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts	22 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study 5:30 Girl Scouts	23 3:00 Staff 7:00 Chancel Choir	24	25 6:00 Dinner Out Night at Warrenside Tavern, see p. 8
26 4th Sunday in Lent 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Fellowship and Refreshments 11:15 Bible study 11:15 Confirmation	27 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Bible study	28 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Building and Property 7:00 Mission Interpretation	29 6:00 Men's Bible study 9:30 Bible study	30 7:00 Chancel Choir	31	<div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Deacon of the Week</u></p> <p>Mar 5 Evelyn Cameron Mar 12 Cathy Torrey Mar 19 Carol Van Norman Mar 26 Steve Cameron</p> </div>