

Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

October 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

A Note from Nick

Dear Friends,

I have some exciting news to share . . . our church was awarded a *Clergy Renewal Grant* from the Lily Endowment! As stated by the Lily Endowment, "the *Clergy Renewal Program* allows congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from ministerial duties and responsibilities for reflection and renewal. Pastors use the respite from congregational leadership to engage in renewal experiences that often include travel, scholarly research and immersive experiences with different cultures and traditions."

Let me tell you about how this came about, and how it will take shape here at Alexandria First Presbyterian. About a year ago the Personnel Team reminded me that my terms of call included a sabbatical every seventh year . . . and in November I will begin my 8th year as your pastor. So I began to think about what a sabbatical would look like, when it would happen, and how it could be accomplished. After some thought, I decided to apply for a grant through the Lily Endowment to not only help pay for the expenses of a pastoral sabbatical but also provide for some exciting opportunities for both myself and the congregation.

Working with the Personnel Team we decided that the theme of "connections" would help shape my sabbatical time and we began outlining different ways that we would accomplish this goal. The focus of this theme will look to strengthening connections -- with God, with self, and with others, both for myself and for the congregation. And with the award of the Lily Grant we will be able to do some exciting things! During my time away I will attend two out of state professional conferences as well as an extended trip out west with the family to attend a family retreat at the *Ghost Ranch Retreat Center* in New Mexico, followed by a camping trip through our National Parks. While I'm away there will be an onsite retreat at Alexandria led by an outside speaker, a summer study course, and other fun opportunities.

And of course while I'm away we will have a pastor leading worship and providing some pastoral care for the congregation (paid for by the Lily Grant). So, when will this take place? Not until the summer of 2018 . . . which means I have lots of time to share with you more of the exciting details of this opportunity . . . and lots of time for us to prepare together for my absence.

I'm so incredibly thankful for the support of the Personnel Team, the congregation, and the Lily Endowment . . . it is an incredible gift and a tremendous blessing to have this opportunity.

I truly hope that this sabbatical will not only be a time of renewal, but also a time for all of us to strengthen our connections . . . with each other, and with God!

Your friend in Christ,

Pastor Nick

Tending the Flock

Baptisms

We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary. It was in October that Michael Warren Folmar, Ryan Koeller, Tayler McGuire, and Claire Allen Parsons became children of God through the sacrament of baptism. Congratulations and blessings!

Sympathy

Prayers and Christian sympathy are extended to the family of Sue Kunich. Sue's father Bill Hall passed away September 17, 2017. During this difficult time we pray for comfort for the family and all who loved Bill.

Bible Studies

Tuesdays: Bible study for women, led by Stacy Butz, meets at the church every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. We're a gathering of 7 - 8 ladies and sometimes we have the study at Stacy's home with coffee and muffins. It's a fun group. The study material is *Joseph: The Journey to Forgiveness* by Melissa Spoelstra.

Wednesdays: Join us on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Skibinski home. We continue to study *Be Daring* by Warren Wiersbe.

Wednesdays: Co-leaders LuAnn Keefe, Lainey Johns, Jeri Bone, and Flora Nielsen welcome you to our Wednesday gathering at 9:30 a.m. at the church. We are studying *Believe* by Randy Frazee.



September Flowers Given to the Glory of God

September 3 The Cameron family

September 10 The Evangelism and Membership Team in celebration of our new program year

September 17 Carol Pfefferle in loving memory of her husband Art on his September 20th birthday

September 24 MacWilliam family in celebration of Grant's birthday

October Birthdays

1	Kaylee Gunderman	5	Jillian Moran	12	Keith Erwin	23	Betty Macaulay
	Kevin Scheier	7	Tina Fontana	15	Marie Giuliano	25	Rene Navarro
2	Steve Cameron	10	Lolita Navarro		Karen Santangelo	31	Conor Goldman
	Charlie Tiedeman		Melinda Parsons	16	Bruce Hunt		Meghan Kunich
4	Max Andreychak	11	Helen Jones	18	Nora Hatch		
	Jesse Neighbour		Pat Keefe	19	Mark Fontana		

Exploring Membership

September 24, October 1, October 8 | 11:15 a.m.

Exploring Membership classes are an opportunity to meet with other potential new members. Classes are being offered in the lower meeting room on 3 consecutive Sundays this autumn, running from 11:15 to 12:15 each session. We warmly invite you to find out more about the life and ministry of this congregation through these gatherings. Please call the church office or speak with Reverend Hatch if you are interested, are in need of childcare, or have questions regarding the process.

The class is comprised of 3 meetings, which began September 24. The group continues to meet on the following two Sundays, October 1 and October 8. At the conclusion of the third session there will be an opportunity to meet with members of Session and prayerfully consider whether you feel called to become a member of Alexandria First Presbyterian. Refreshments will be served.

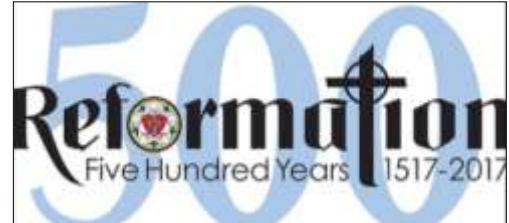
The class will be received into membership on Sunday, October 15.

This is an excellent opportunity to share and learn more about our church. All are welcome, so please consider coming and “explore” with us!

Reformation Sunday

October 29, 2017

Reformation Sunday is the annual remembrance of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, when Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to a church door in Wittenberg, located in present day Germany on October 31, 1517. This act, calling for debate on issues of corruption in the Catholic Church, is traditionally viewed as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. On this day reformed Christians like us celebrate God’s work in reviving and restoring his church in all generations when it goes astray. We also mourn the divisions and schisms in the “one true holy and catholic church,” and pray that God’s people everywhere will be united in Christ and in God’s Word.



Making Friends and Having Fun

October 8 | 2 p.m.

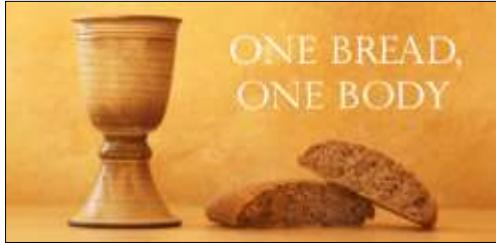
Our Evangelism and Membership Team will sponsor a hayride and pumpkin picking event at Trauger’s Farm Stand in Kintnersville, Pennsylvania on Sunday, October 8. Look for all the details on page 7 and in the meantime, please be sure to sign up in the narthex or Fellowship Hall so we can plan accordingly. The rain date is October 15.



New Church Directory

Please respond by October 15

The church directory will be published and distributed next month. If you have given up your land line, changed email addresses, changed cell numbers, or moved we ask that you contact the church office so revisions can be made. We look forward to hearing from you before October 15.



World Communion Sunday

October 1, 2017

On Sunday, October 1 congregations around the globe will celebrate World Communion Sunday. World Communion Sunday began in 1936 in the Presbyterian Church and was adopted by the Federal Council of Churches in 1940. Since then the celebration has grown into an international

ecumenical celebration of Christian unity.

The key word for World Communion Sunday is communion, or unity. It is a day when we mark the almost universal Christian practice of breaking bread with one another and remembering both the night of Jesus' betrayal—when Jesus instituted what we now call the Lord's Supper as a lasting remembrance—and of Jesus' sacrifice. Accounts of the last supper feature prominently, by virtue of World Communion Sunday being a celebration of the Eucharist. But there is a flavor of Pentecost as well, when people from around the Mediterranean world came together in mutual understanding and inspiration by the power of the Holy Spirit. World Communion Sunday is a time for remembering that around the globe—in different languages, with different traditions and customs, and in various forms of liturgy—the Lord's Supper is celebrated throughout Christendom. World Communion Sunday serves two purposes: it is a joyous and meaningful partaking in Jesus' sacred meal with his friends, and a mind-opening exposure to different Christian traditions from around the world.

World Communion Sunday is on the Christian calendar for a reason: it can and should be a time of profound Christian unity, marked by our shared celebration of the Lord's Supper. Jesus instituted the first such meal, and World Communion Sunday is a helpful way to celebrate the liturgy “in remembrance of me.”



Session Highlights

Regular Meeting | September 13, 2017

- Elder Cindy McDowall led opening devotions based on a saying “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass, it’s learning to dance in the rain.” She read from 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- Rev. Hatch recommended moving elder training to the October 2017 Session meeting
- Deacon Cathy Torrey reported on the continued good works of the deacons
- October Session will be a joint meeting of deacons and elders beginning at 6 p.m.
- We will have only 8 deacons this year and three have health concerns
- Tags are on the cross in Fellowship Hall for college package items
- The fall stewardship campaign is coming up
- Choir Christmas music “boot camp” is scheduled for Saturday, September 30 from 10-2 p.m. to introduce the pieces for the Christmas concert
- A new clerk has not been named at this time. Nick continues to work on finding a replacement
- The Wednesday 6 a.m. Bible study has concluded
- Elder Karl Nielsen reported that \$3,054.40 is projected as deficit if spending and giving remain the same. Giving letters will be sent to pledging members in mid-October
- The Buildings and Property Team selected Eric Trepkau, Architect of Clinton, NJ for the Capital Campaign interior building work. They have also requested working drawings from Trepkau so that bids may be solicited

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Session Highlights Continued

from general contractors. Session will then be able to decide how to proceed with work after bids come in from contractors

- Capital Campaign fundraising has resulted in \$298,360 in pledges to date; \$92,001 has been collected so far

- \$32,000 was paid to the Capital Campaign consultant from savings

- The following recommendations were approved:

- In an effort to reinforce the voucher system, the administrative assistant will attach vouchers to incoming invoices before distributing them to team leader's mailbox for signature. Team leader will sign the voucher, print their name, and place invoice with voucher into finance mailbox for payment

- Request by Brownie Troop to use building for regular meetings for the 2017-2018 school year

- Finance Team will now begin the process of loan application from Presbyterian Loan organization

- Fellowship outing to Trauger's Farm Market in Pennsylvania on October 8 at 2 p.m. with a rain date of October 15 at 2 p.m. \$5 per person for hay rides

- Fellowship outing to West Hunterdon Lanes for bowling on November 19

- Rev. Hatch led a Lectio Divina prayer which is traditional slow contemplative praying

- An Affirmation of Faith was shared

- Thanks and gratitude were expressed to the Buildings and Property Team and Finance Team for their diligence on the Capital Campaign

- The Personnel Team announced the joyful news that Rev. Hatch was awarded a grant for his sabbatical study and travel by the Lilly Foundation. The award of \$33,597.00 will cover his and the church's expenses during the sabbatical period. The sabbatical is scheduled for a 12-week duration in June, July, and August of 2018. The theme of Nick's sabbatical study is "Connections" and activities are planned for the congregation before, during, and after the sabbatical including books and reading groups, retreats, and children's activities. Nick is working to confirm coverage by another pastor or pastors in his absence. Nick plans communications in the coming days via *Branches* and announcements from the pulpit. Applying for the grant is a very competitive program and the Session gave hearty congratulations to Nick on his hard work and resulting award

- Nursery care givers are rotating to cover the schedule since Evelyn has stepped down

- Mission trip plans for 2018 are under discussion and a location has been selected. It will be announced to the youth on Sunday, September 17

- Sunday school teachers are the same for this year with 3 leaving for personal reasons. Athena McDowell is a Sunday school helper

- Gifts for Ministry forms are being tabulated. The results will be distributed shortly





Peace & Global Witness Offering

What you've known for years as the Peacemaking Offering has been renamed the Peace and Global Witness Offering. This new offering has a greater global reach and more significant impact while continuing to bring peace to people through Christ. The Peace and

Global Witness Offering will be received on World Communion Sunday which is October 1 this year. A gift to the Peace and Global Witness Offering enables us to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice across the world. Here at Alexandria Church, we will retain 25% of this offering for our local peacemaking ministries. Last year, our 25% helped to fund our successful Little Dresses for Africa program.

You Can Help

<http://pda.pcusa.org/situation/tropical-storm-harvey/>

If you are interested in donating to the recovery of those affected by the recent hurricanes through the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, you may do so in a number of ways:

- 1) Write a check to AFPC with "Hurricane" in the memo line and we will send it to PDA.
- 2) Go the "Give Online" link on our church's website www.alexpres.org and donate via the "Hurricane Fund" link.
- 3) Go the PDA's website at: <https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/DR000169>.



Mission Interpretation: It's What We Do

October 3, 16, or 17 | 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

www.riamede.com

It's apple season! And America's Grow-a-Row is partnered with Riamede Farm in Chester, New Jersey to glean perfectly good fallen apples from the floors of their orchards. Tuesday October 3, Monday October 16, or Tuesday October 17 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. are three upcoming dates to join an already scheduled volunteer group to help harvest these perfectly good apples. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board for October 16 and 17. You'll need to contact Lainey Johns if you're interested in helping October 3. Stay tuned as your Mission Team does some gleaning itself about AGAR's winter service projects!

And We're Off!

Another exciting year of Sunday school is underway! We are so thankful that God is working through these individuals as they teach His Word to our children and youth. Our teachers are:

· Pre-K and K	Cyndi McDowall, Laura Strangfeld	· Sr. High	Renee Skibinski
· 1 st -3 rd	Mary Goldman, Julie Lyons	· Substitutes	Craig Norgard, Shari Norgard
· 4 th -6 th	John Solomon	· Helper	Athena McDowall
· Jr. High	John McDowall, Barbara Pederson		

Additionally, our little ones are cared for by the following nursery caregivers: Evelyn Cameron, Sue Gunderman, Christina Heilig, Sue Lawson, Mary Schuetz, and Cathy Torrey.

Hayride & Pumpkin Pickin'

Sunday, October 8
Trauger's Farm Market
Kintnersville, PA

Cider and gingersnaps provided

Pumpkins, apples, etc. available to buy

Be sure to look for the kettle corn stand!

Sign-up is requested

Sign up sheets are in the narthex
and Fellowship Hall

The cost is \$5pp



Worship Assistants

- Oct 1** Charlie Tiedeman
Oct 8 Nancy Schumann
Oct 15 Flora Nielsen
Oct 22 Glynn Skibinski
Oct 29 Karl Nielsen

Ushers

- Oct 1** Skibinski family
Oct 8 Gunderman family
Oct 15 Stagg family
Oct 22 MacWilliam family
Oct 29 Schuetz family

Communion Servers

- Oct 1** Al Navarro, Shari Norgard,
 Tammy Sassaman, Charlie Tiedeman

Special Dates

Also see the main calendar on page 9

- Oct 1** World Communion, Exploring Membership
Oct 8 Exploring Membership, pumpkin picking
Oct 15 New members received, Caring Hands
Oct 29 Reformation Sunday

Coming Up

- Nov 18** Churchwide clean up day
Nov 19 Consecration Sun., churchwide bowling
Nov 26 Christ the King Sunday

Our Ministry Team Officers

- Building and Property** Marty Gunderman (E), Jim Hansen (D)
Christian Education Alicia Apgar (D), Cyndi McDowall (E),
 Barbara Pederson (E)

- Evangelism/Membership** Lois Bondor (E), Howard Jones (E),
 Cathy Torrey (D), Carol Van Norman (D)

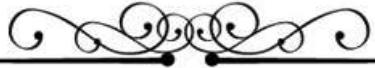
- Mission Interpretation** Brad Bondor (E), Evelyn Cameron (D),
 Lainey Johns (E)

- Nominating** Joan Carroll (E), Cyndi McDowall (D)

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

- Stewardship and Finance** Pat Keefe (D), Karl Nielsen (E),
 Robin Vogel (E)

- Worship and Music** Jeri Bone (E), LuAnn Keefe (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
 Milford, NJ 08848
 Web: www.alexpres.org
 Office: 908-996-4333

THE STAFF OF ALEXANDRIA CHURCH
 Reverend Nicholas C. Hatch
Pastor

Jerry Phelps
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: nhatch@alexpres.org



Alexandria Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1 World Communion 9:00 Christian Ed meets 10:00 Worship, communion 11:00 Refreshments, fellowship 11:15 Exploring Membership 2:00 Boy Scouts	2	3 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 12:30 America's Grow-a-Row 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:00 Deacons	4	5 9:00 Session materials due 7:00 Bible study, Skibinski home	6 7:00 Chancel Choir		7
8 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:00 Refreshments, fellowship 11:15 Exploring Membership 2:00 Pumpkin picking, see page 7	9	10 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 5:45 Presbytery, Lawrenceville 6:30 Boy Scouts	11 7:00 Session	12 3:00 Staff 4:15 Worship and Music meets 6:30 Brownies 7:00 Chancel Choir	13	14	
15 10:00 Worship, new members received 10:15 Sunday school 11:15 Caring Hands Crafters	16 12:30 America's Grow-a-Row	17 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 12:30 America's Grow-a-Row 6:30 Boy Scouts	18 9:30 Bible study 7:00 Bible study, Skibinski home	19 9:00 November Branches deadline 3:00 Staff 6:00 Junior Choir 6:30 Youth Choir 7:00 Chancel Choir	20	21	
22 10:00 Worship, commissioning 10:15 Sunday school 11:15 Caring Hands Crafters	23	24 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:30 Boy Scouts 7:00 Building and Property meets	25 9:30 Bible study	26 7:00 Chancel Choir	27	28	
29 Reformation Sunday 10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school	30	31 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Bible study 6:30 Boy Scouts					



October

Deacon of the Week

- October 1 Cathy Torrey
- October 8 Carol Van Norman
- October 15 Pat Keefe
- October 22 Helen Jones
- October 29 Alicia Apgar