

Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

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

November 2019

**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,

In my recent sermon series I have been exploring what exactly it means to love our neighbors. After all, that is what Jesus tells us to do . . . love our neighbors. It sounds easy, but so often is not. Especially if we truly try and love all of our neighbors without exceptions. Loving without exceptions . . . is that even possible? I think we can all agree that loving our neighbor sounds good in concept, but we place all sorts of qualifiers on who and when we will love our neighbors.

But if we truly believe that everyone is a child of God and that each of us are made in God’s image, who are we to decide who we love? God has chosen to love all of us, and blessed the world with the gift of a savior. After all, the scripture passage John 3:16 says “God so loved the world . . . that he gave his only son.” God didn’t just love a few. God didn’t just love some that had a certain skin color, or who lived in a certain country, or those who had a certain amount of money . . . God loved the world!



Our new banner at the church speaks to the many ways that we make exceptions and it challenges us to love our neighbors without exceptions. Can we love our neighbors? Even our neighbors that don’t look like us, love like us, vote like us, pray like us, speak like us, or think like us?

I hope, friends, that we can answer this challenge together. Let’s do our best to love our neighbors without exceptions. Try for a week, or even just a day, to regard everyone you encounter as a neighbor. Can you do that? Everyone that you meet, pass in the street, see in the office, encounter at the store . . . all of them are our neighbors. Remember that each is made in God’s image, and beloved by God. I hope that each of us can engage together in regarding each of God’s children as neighbors . . . with no exceptions!

Your friend in Christ,

Pastor Nick

P.S. Reminder—if you missed my sermon series on this topic entitled “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” you can listen to it online at the church’s website.

Tending the Flock

Baptisms

Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible event: the reconciliation of people to God. We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary this month. It was in November that Ryan Abelman and Heather Marie Pardonner were baptized. Congratulations and blessings upon being children of God!

Condolences

Christian sympathy and prayers are extended to Jim Bush and his family upon the sudden passing of Jim's father Larry Bush on September 30, 2019. May they know the comfort of God's love during this difficult time.

Memorial Gift Giving

Financial gifts often are given to the church in memory of a loved one via a check. Sometimes they are mailed in and other times they are placed in the offering plate. Our Memorial Fund secretary records each gift and sends an acknowledgement to the giver on behalf of the family. But sometimes a check is received without any note indicating in whose memory the gift was given. Please remember, it is essential that the memo section of the check indicates both the name of the loved one and that the check is a memorial gift. Without that information, we are unable to acknowledge the gift or correctly enter it in the proper church account. Thank you.

November Birthdays

2 Sue Gunderman	6 Flora Nielsen	15 Linda Thomas	25 Carly Skibinski
3 Lainey Johns	11 Alexis Gunderman	19 Laura Navarro	29 Wyatt Goldman
4 Brandon Schuetz	Timothy Unkert	Scott Parsons	Joan Lentine
5 Karen Stagg	14 Jake Maglio	20 Ken Gregory	
6 Elmer King	Emma Strangfeld		

Sanctuary Flowers Given to the Glory of God

- October 6** by Martha Harrison in celebration of the birthdays of her son Harold Jr and Gram
- October 13** by the Erwin family in celebration of Keith's 90th birthday
and by the Hatch family in celebration of Nora's 9th birthday
- October 20** by the Lagun family in joyful celebration of the baptism of their daughter Lydia Mary
- October 27** by Tammy Sassaman in celebration of the birthday of her granddaughter Belle

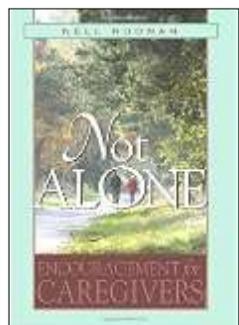
New Church Officers

It is a joyful day when we ordain and install officers to serve Christ by serving this congregation. On October 13th we ordained and installed our new church officers. Adding to the Board of Deacons are Pat Keefe, Karen Pardonner, and Tammy Sassaman. And to the Session are Craig Bender, Joan Carroll, Cyndi McDowall, and Steve Pardonner. Thank you for answering God's call to help lead our congregation.



As we begin think about this year's stewardship campaign, we will focus on the many blessings that have been given to us by God. It will be a time of great opportunity to remember God's blessings and to think about how we can, in turn, be blessings to others.

Come help us celebrate those blessings on November 17! In the weeks leading up to the 17th, we will highlight this year's campaign in worship with special Minutes for Mission and unique sermons. The final celebration will be on Consecration Sunday, November 17 when we bring our pledge cards forward as generous stewards of God's amazing love and generosity and in appreciation for his many blessings. After worship we will celebrate together with cake and fellowship. Plan to join your church family during this time!



Spiritual Sustenance for Caregivers

Are You a Caregiver for a Relative, a Loved One, a Friend . . . ?

As one who served as primary caregiver for my mom, I so remember the sinking feeling as my mental, physical, and emotional "battery" ran down over the course of the years. On occasion, I took a break, getting away for a while, hoping a vacation would re-energize me. As much as I enjoyed my time away, I found that I was never quite able to re-charge my battery completely. Given the responsibilities I carried, I soon began to run down again after my return.

Throughout those years I did, however, find a devotional source that helped lift my spirits on a daily basis: *Not Alone, Encouragement for Caregivers* by Nell Noonan. After my mother passed away, I decided that I'd like to provide spiritual sustenance for caregivers within our church family and beyond. I began contributing copies of Noonan's book to AFPC.

I have found joy in the success of my personal mission, as the supply of books has ebbed and flowed over the past 9 years. I've replenished the books again. You will find copies of the book in both the narthex and Fellowship Hall. Feel free to take a copy for your use or to pass one on to someone you know is in need of support.

submitted by Nancy Schumann



It's Time to Smile

November 4 | 2 to 9 p.m.

We are updating our photo directory with the help of Lifetouch Family Photography. The photographer will be on site to take photos on Monday, November 4 from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m. If you haven't scheduled your appointment, it's not too late! Just give Lois Bondor a call.

For those who had their photos done last fall, you can come and have yours updated to show new family members, growing kids, or just because you'd like that free 8 x 10" picture!

Remember, additional photos and packages will be offered for those who wish copies for Christmas cards or gifts. You may even include your small pets.

Deacons' Thanksgiving Boxes



Coupons for free turkeys abound! Cranberry sauce and stuffing are on sale! Thanksgiving Day must be near! Our deacons are beginning their annual food collection to help fill Frenchtown Food Pantry's turkey dinner boxes for local families in need. Look for the needed items in the narthex (different location this year).

Needed are frozen turkeys that are 10 lbs. or less and 10 boxes. All non-perishables may be dropped off in Fellowship Hall or in the Christian Education wing by the church offices. Please have your donations delivered to the church by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 20. Frozen turkeys should be delivered on November 23 before 8:30 a.m. Someone will be in the parking lot to receive them at that time. Donation sign-up sheets are in the narthex and Fellowship Hall.

Our deacons will be assembling and delivering turkey boxes to the Frenchtown Food Pantry early on the 23rd. Thank you all for your continued prayers and generosity that support this vital mission. If you have questions, please contact any deacon.



Canned Veggies (corn, mixed, or carrots)

Frozen Turkeys (15 lbs. or under)

Cream of Mushroom Soup

Mashed Potatoes (instant)

Canned Pumpkin-Pie Mix

Gravy (canned or packet)

Turkey Broth (canned)

Muffin or Biscuit Mix

Cake or Brownie Mix

Evaporated Milk

Cranberry Sauce

Yams (canned)

Fruit Cocktail

Piecrust (box)

Applesauce

Stuffing Mix



Caring Hands Crafters

November 17 | 11:15 a.m.

Rust and gold, russet and cedar, marigold and sand. These are the colors of fall and the yarn colors we love making into warming caps this time of year. And that's the lovely thing about the Caring Hands Crafters: if you love working with seasonal colors and items, that's great! But if you are inspired to work on something else, like baby blankets, PICC line covers, or limb huggers that's great too! Every item made by our group is enthusiastically received by its recipient. We are currently donating hand-crafted items to the Cancer Centers of St. Luke's, Knots of Love, and the American Heart Association.



Please think about popping in at our next gathering. We have sweet treats to nibble and sweet thoughts to share!

News from Presbyterian Church USA

Almost All Presbyterians Pray at Least Several Times a Week

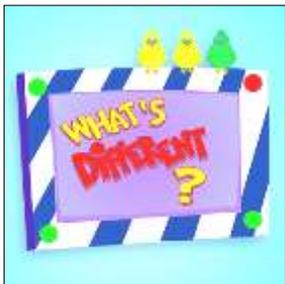
Nearly all (90%) of Presbyterians pray at least several times a week and nearly half (42%) read the Bible on their own at least several times a week. Middle-aged and older Presbyterians engage in these spiritual disciplines more frequently than younger Presbyterians do. This information comes from responses from the new Person in the Pew survey format, a project of Presbyterian Church USA.

Sixty-one percent of Person in the Pew participants report praying or meditating at least once a day, and 29% do so several times a week. Seventeen percent report reading the Bible on their own at least once a day.

A breakdown by age group shows that more participants in their late 50s or early 60s pray and read the Bible at least several times a week than do other participants, while fewer participants in their teens, 20s, 30s, or early 40s than other participants do so. Differences among age groups may reflect how literacy has changed over the past half century. "Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (and other similar social media platforms) have changed how much people are accustomed to reading," says the Rev. Dr. Jason Santos, the Presbyterian Mission Agency's mission coordinator for Christian formation. "This has had an influence on how younger generations see reading the Bible."

A small majority of Person in the Pew participants (57%) report saying grace before meals at least several times a week. There are no clear age-group differences in involvement in this practice.

by Perry Chang, Research Services | Special to the Presbyterian News Service



You May Have Noticed . . .

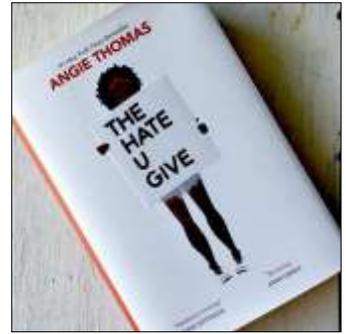
. . . that the Red Hymnals are missing and that the Blue Hymnals are in the pew racks . . . this is an effort by the Worship and Music Team to help declutter our pews and make better use of our space. This is a trial period. The Red Hymnals are still available and we can put them back if we find out we miss them. And remember, when we do want to sing hymns from the Red Hymnal we can place inserts in the bulletin. We are also interested in your feedback, please share with the Worship and Music Team (Flora Nielsen and LuAnn Keefe, co-chairs)

and let us know what you think about the change. (Please note: the Bibles have been returned to the pews.)

Book Discussion

November 3 | 11:15 a.m.

What is our Christian response to racism? How can we do better? What role should our community of faith have in responding to racism? We will begin to study these questions as a church in a series of meetings over the next year. Our first meeting will be on November 3 following worship. We will meet to discuss the book *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas. This book is a great way to introduce the topic. Please grab a copy, read it, and join us! (You can obtain a copy of *The Hate You Give* at Amazon.com, your favorite bookstore, or the local library.)



Grab a Rake!

Saturday, November 16

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Can you spare a few hours to help tidy up the grounds for winter? If so, join us at the church between 9 and noon on the 18th to rake leaves and do a few repairs.

Bring your rake, leaf blower, and tarp if you have them.

Thanks for your part in making the Lord's house tidy.



Looking for Nursery Caregivers

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080544ABAE2AAAF58-nursery>

Do you have an interest in helping out with the church nursery? We are in need of nursery care providers to assist us on Sundays and for special events throughout the year. If you are interested, please sign up for a time slot using the link above. Leave us your name and email address so we can contact you. If you have not volunteered for nursery care before, we will need to complete some steps before you can be up and running.

When helping out, please arrive at the nursery by 9:50 a.m. so that families can drop children off before the service starts. Plan to stay to clean up afterwards until approximately 11:30 a.m.

Let us know if you have any questions or concerns by reaching out to Mary Goldman or to Cyndi McDowall.



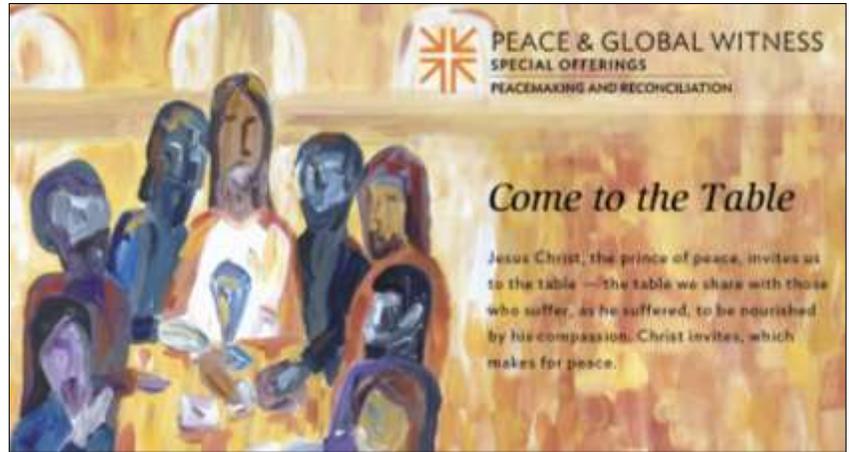
Mission Interpretation

A Worldwide Thanks to All who Donated!

October 6th marked one of three AFPC 2018 Presbytery USA annual offerings, the Peace and Global Witness Offering (P&GWO). This fund strives to reach worldwide basic needs and AFPC answered with over \$300.00 donated toward this cause. The unique part of this one offering is AFPC is allowed to keep 25% of that total to use toward a mission project recommended by your church Mission Team.

We are currently discussion various local mission projects to dedicate our share of the P&GWO. The hope is to use this offering as a seed to grow a sustainable resource for local mission needs.

submitted by Howard Thomas



Makin' Some Noise: Joyful Noise

Christmas Concert Rehearsals

Calling all who love to sing! Calling all levels of singing ability! Calling all who love the Lord! You are all whole-heartedly invited to make beautiful music with the Chancel Choir for the Christmas concert. The concert will be held on December 8 at 3 and 6 p.m. Christmas music is being rehearsed on Thursday nights from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

in the choir room. Come “make a joyful noise” to the Lord in celebration of Christ’s birth. Speak with our Director of Music Ministry Seuli Koo with any questions.

Spread the Word

December 8 | 3 and 6 p.m.

Planning for Alexandria First Presbyterian Church’s Christmas concert is underway! Under the direction of Seuli Koo, Minister of Music, *The Joy of Christmas* will take place on Sunday, December 8, 2019 at 3 and 6 p.m. There will be guest musicians, youth choirs, Chancel Choir, and some surprises in store.

Please mark your calendars and invite family and friends to join us to celebrate the Christmas Season!



Worship Assistants

- Nov 3** N Schumann
Nov 10 L Johns
Nov 17 K Pardonner
Nov 24 L Bondor

Ushers

- Nov 3** Norgard family
Nov 10 E Cameron, A Hansen
Nov 17 Norgard family
Nov 24 B McLaren, C Van Norman

Communion

- Nov 3** S Cameron, L Gregory, J Hansen, S Norgard



Special Dates

Also see the main calendar on page 10

- Nov 3** Communion, Daylight Saving, Book club
Nov 13 Joint Elders/Deacons meeting
Nov 16 Fall Work Day
Nov 17 Caring Hands, Youth roadside clean-up, roller skating

Coming Up

- Dec 8** Christmas concert
Dec 15 Christmas caroling
Dec 18 Blue Christmas service
Dec 22 Lessons and Carols service
Dec 24 Christmas Eve services

Our Ministry Team Officers

Building and Property Craig Bender (E), Jim Hansen (E)

Christian Education Mary Goldman (E), Laurie Gregory (D), Cyndi McDowall (E)

Evangelism/Membership Lois Bondor (E), Karen Pardonner (D), Sharon Solomon (D)

Mission Interpretation Stacy Butz (D), Steve Pardonner (E), Howard Thomas (E)

Nominating LuAnn Keefe (E), Cyndi McDowall (E)

Personnel Joan Carroll (E), Helen Jones (D), Flora Nielsen (E)

Stewardship and Finance Pat Keefe (D), Robin Vogel (E)

Worship and Music LuAnn Keefe (E), Flora Nielsen (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



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 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 First Presbyterian Church November 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <div style="background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><u>Deacon of the Week</u></p> <p>Nov 3 Karen Pardonner Nov 10 Tammy Sassaman Nov 17 Sharon Solomon Nov 24 Helen Jones</p> </div> 					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<p style="color: red; margin: 0;">Daylight Saving</p> <p>10:00 Worship, communion 11:15 Refreshments 11:15 Book discussion see p. 6</p>	<p>Directory Photos 2-9 p.m.</p>	<p>9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 7:00 Boy Scouts</p>	<p>9:00 Session materials due 9:30 Bible study</p>	<p>7:00 Chancel Choir</p>		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<p>10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school</p>		<p>9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 5:45 Presbytery 7:00 Boy Scouts</p>	<p>6:00 Joint Session and Deacons meeting</p>	<p>6:00 Junior Choir 6:30 Youth Choir 7:00 Chancel Choir</p>		<p>Fall Work Day see p. 6</p>
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<p style="color: red; margin: 0;">Consecration Sunday</p> <p>10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school 11:15 Caring Hands Crafters 12:00 Sr youth roadside cleanup 1:00 Roller skating</p>		<p>9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 12:00 Lunch Bunch 7:00 Boy Scouts</p>		<p>9:00 December <i>Branches</i> deadline 7:00 Chancel Choir</p>		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>10:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday school</p>		<p>9:00 Bulletin deadline 10:00 Bible study 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Building and Property Team</p>		<p style="color: red; text-align: center;">Thanksgiving Day</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Church office closed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Church office closed</p>	



HAPPY THANKSGIVING