

Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

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

January 2021

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“I am
the Vine,
you are the
branches.”
John 15:5

A Note from Nick

Dear Friends,

I think I can speak for everyone when I say, “GOOD RIDDANCE 2020!” Never before has there been a year that I’ve have been so ready to see in my rearview mirror. Like many, I hope that 2021 will bring better days and less chaos. For this has certainly been a year like no other. Less than a year ago, I never would have fathomed having worship online, and now that has become the new normal. Less than a year ago I would have never imagined filming in an empty sanctuary, worshipping outside in December, having my kids go to school remotely, or worrying about things like social distancing or wearing a mask. But in 2020, that is all par for the course.



So, with the New Year comes the hope for a return to life as we knew it. However, believing that things will magically get better when the clock strikes midnight isn't realistic either. So what are we to do, just get ready for more of the same? Accept that 2020 is here to stay, even if it is now 2021? Well, I think that hope is perfectly fine to cling to now. After all, the celebration of Christmas is about welcoming the new born Savior and the *hope* that he brings. Our faith teaches us that we place our hope not in earthly things or human desires, but in God. For God has been faithful and sent us a Savior, and because of him we have life!

As we say “good riddance” to a very hard year, we place our hope in God that 2021 will be a better year! Knowing that ultimately, no matter what the New Year brings, God will continue to be with us and walk besides us. Because unto us a Savior has been born . . . this is the good news of great joy that gives me hope now!

In Christ,

Pastor Nick

Dear Congregation,

We would like to thank everyone for all of the gracious and loving gifts and cards we received at Christmas. Once again, we were deeply moved by all of your generosity and love. During this difficult year, we thank each of you for all of the ways that you care for and support us as members of your family of faith.

In Christ,

The Hatch Family



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 January that Bentley Nicholas Yanovski and Nicholas Mahlon Folmar became children of God through the sacrament of baptism. Congratulations and blessings!

January Birthdays

2	Pat Gendek-Sutton	7	Tyler Unkert	14	Allison Lessig	26	John Lentine
3	Richard Erlandson	8	Craig Bender	16	Howard Thomas	26	Claire Parsons
4	Andrea Pederson		Shirley Krautwald	17	Lisa Schneider	27	Ryan Abelman
5	Will Fritsche	10	Joe Bercaw	18	Irene Fennell	27	Sarah Wardach
6	Kyle Ferdinando	12	Alyssa Schuetz	21	Dean Erlandson	29	Maureen Sutton
6	Isabel Navarro	13	Isa Knapp	22	Martha Harrison	31	Scott Schuetz
6	Carol Pfefferle	14	Lu Branson	22	Nancy Schumann		

The Season of Epiphany

In western Christian tradition, January 6 is celebrated as Epiphany or Three Kings' Day. Epiphany is the climax of the Advent/Christmas Season and the Twelve Days of Christmas, which are usually counted from the evening of December 25th until the morning of January 6th, which is the Twelfth Day. In traditional Christian churches Christmas is celebrated as a period of time or a season of the church year, rather than just a day.

The term epiphany means "to show," "to make known," or "to reveal." It remembers the coming of the wise men bringing gifts to visit the Christ child, who "reveal" Jesus to the world as Lord and King. The colors of Epiphany are usually white and gold, the colors of celebration, newness, and hope that mark the most sacred days of the church year. In traditions that only observe a single day for Epiphany, the colors are often changed after Epiphany to the color green of Ordinary Time, until Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday before the beginning of Lent.

The traditional liturgical symbols of Epiphany are usually associated with the Magi. The symbols include either three crowns or a single crown, various portrayals of the Magi or Wise Men, three gifts, a five pointed star, or a combination of a star and crown.



Winter Meeting of the Congregation

January 31 | 11 a.m.

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This year we will have our Winter Congregation Meeting via Zoom. The Call for the meeting is as follows: The 2021 winter congregational meeting has been called for Sunday, January 31 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting will be held online via Zoom (a link will be posted). The purpose of the meeting will be to receive statistical and financial reports for 2020, to act on changes in the pastor's terms of call for 2021, to nominate and elect financial officers, and to address matters of the corporation."

Copies of the annual report will be distributed Sunday January 24.

Poinsettia Donations



Legend of the Poinsettia: On a cold Christmas Eve, a little girl cried as she walked into church. She wanted to bring a gift for Baby Jesus, but has nothing to give. An angel saw her sorrow and comforted the girl. “It’s not what you give, but what you give from your heart,” the angel said. She pointed to a green plant and instructed the girl to bring it to the church. As the girl entered the church, the leaves bloomed, transforming into a brilliant red poinsettia plant. It was the most beautiful gift imaginable.

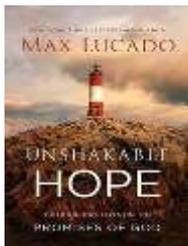


The poinsettias gracing our sanctuary are donated by friends and members of our Church. Donations were made by:

Donated Family	In Memory / Honor of:
Cindy and Joe Accardi	Zachary Accardi
Doug and Lois Bondor	Frank S. Bondor and Howard W. McConnell
Alice and Jim Hansen	our Nanas
Heinback Family	Raymond Ghiocsi
Stacy Kluesner	Angelina and Nick Abbatiello
Pat and LuAnn Keefe	Jim and Lorraine Keefe, Dottie Erwin and Phylis Kinney
Barbara McLaren	Mal (Husband)
Barbara McLaren	Joy at the birth of Jesus
MacWilliam Family	Edwin MacWilliam and Phill and Ruth Kopf
Flora Nielsen	Karl Nielsen (Husband) & Bill and Beulah Stamets (Parents)
Saige Shoudt	Keith William Shoudt
Cathy Torrey	Janet Lockman (Mother)
Judy Zub	Karl Nielsen

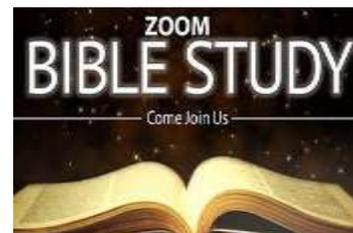
Bible Study via ZOOM

Wednesdays this month!



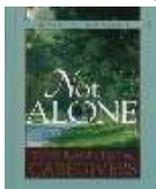
The Tuesday morning bible study is now meeting on Wednesday evenings via Zoom at 8:00pm. This month, a new book study will be starting and would like to invite others to join. The book that will be studied is *Unshakable Hope* by Max Lucado.

If you are interested in being a part of this group, please email Gayle Hatch at gaylehatch@gmail.com. Participants should plan to order their book on their own (Amazon, Cokesbury, etc.)



Never Alone

A Timely Message for Caregivers



Are you currently caring for a loved one or another person in need?

If so, you will welcome an honest and authentic daily devotional titled Not Alone, Encouragement for Caregivers by Nell E. Noonan. Thanks to God, Not Alone helps caregivers who are often sad, exhausted, frustrated, confused and scared. As stated by the author, “God is with us in the tears and the laughter, the brokenness and the blessings, the exhaustion and the whispers of resurrection.

When we pause daily to listen to our lives, God is there. The Great Divine Heart Loves and cares.

We are not alone.”

Copies of this book have been placed in the plastic box outside of the church office. Anyone who is either serving as a caregiver or knows someone who is in need of this type of support, is welcome to take a copy.

Nancy J. Schumann

Lenten Study

Coming Soon!

You're right! We are beginning the Advent Season November 29th. With Ash Wednesday falling on Feb. 17, 2021 and Easter on April 4th, members of the CE Ministry Team have begun reviewing Lenten sources in anticipation of AFPC's 14th Church-wide Lenten Bible Study. You'll be hearing more about the study this month.

Given the current situation, participants will be encouraged to begin this year's Lenten study independently, with the hope that we'll be able to join together for discussion sometime in the spring.

Nancy J. Schumann



Be the Church Day - 2021



In honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Please join us in service to our community by signing up for any of the activities listed below.

To sign up by 1/16/21, click on the following link or on your activity title of interest below.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4FAFA92CA5F58-bethechurch>

○ Fleece Blankets for Woodlands Wildlife Refuge:

1 Kits with fleece and info may be picked up at AFPC as early as 1/10/21 and returned by 1/24/21. Delivery is available.

Contact Marie Knapp 908-797-5310 or at knapttime@verizon.net

○ Alexandria Horse Park Arena ring grating:

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Gather on 1/17/21- 10am–12pm.at the Alexandria Park Horse Barn

Contact Information: Stacy Butz 817-456-6712 or sbutz1@hotmail.com

○ Valentines for Meals on Wheels & Senior Citizens:

Kits may be picked up at AFPC as early as 1/10/21 and returned by 1/24/21. Delivery is available.

Contact Marie Knapp 908-797-5310 or at knapttime@verizon.net

○ Indoor AFPC Repair Project:

Gather on 1/17/21 by 10am at AFPC.

○ Porch Pick-up for Frenchtown Food Pantry:

Your donated items will be picked up on Sunday, 1/17/21.

Please sign up AND contact Larry to be placed on map, at 267-261-8443.

○ Book Studies offering readings on Antiracism (Zoom Meeting):

Zoom call information will be sent to you directly. .

1. “The Thoughtful Christian”: A one-session adult study on White Privilege, 2/7/21 @ 12:30 p.m.

2. “How to be an Antiracist”, by Ibram X. Kendi: 2/21/21 @ 12:30 p.m.

Contact Marie if you have trouble getting a copy.

We hope you can join us in celebrating community service and diversity!
Questions? Please Contact: Marie Knapp at (908)797-5310 or knapttime@verizon.net

- Your AFPC Mission Team

Your 2021 Pledge to Alexandria Church

If you haven't yet pledged to support our church for 2021, it's not too late! **Pledge cards.** [Click here](#) to access the 2021 pledge form. You can fill out the pdf and save it to email Robin directly or drop off the church office in envelope attn: Treasurer. With God's love and support, we can make the New Year very special in the life of our church.

Contact: AFPC Treasurer - Robin Vogel rvalexpre9@yahoo.com



Christmas Joy Offering



This year's 2020 Christmas Joy Offering opportunity was received with your joyful giving and compassion. Your donations on Christmas Eve were gratefully accepted and forwarded in full to the Presbyterian Church (USA). This is truly Good News with equal distribution to The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and student scholarships at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Thank you for your continued and heart-felt generosity.

Meals On Wheels

Drivers Needed

Meals on Wheels in Hunterdon County is in need of drivers. They feed over 150 seniors every day in our area alone. They have set up a very Covid safe system for both the driver and recipient. If you are able to help drive, even once a month please call Meals on Wheels at 908-284-0735



Thank you for your donations

Thank you for all of your generous donations this month for the food pantry and toy drive. We are grateful for your support during this challenging time. Your compassion and care will be helping families all over the community

