

This week's news...



May 4, 2023

Dear Friend,

Pray Without Ceasing

“It is still true that God, ‘by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we could ever ask or imagine,’” says Joan Gray’s book *Sailboat Church*. After reading her book in small groups and gathering in a large group wrap-up session, it is clear that our congregation has a desire to let the Holy Spirit open our imaginations and work through us. [You can read a summary of that conversation here.](#) So, what’s next?

Next steps are tricky. There are many things we can do to be open to the power of the Holy Spirit, but as one person pointed out, if we aren’t careful, we’ll just come up with a new to-do list that is all about human effort and not “the power at work within us.” And that’s rowing, not sailing!

Nevertheless, the April 23 conversation did generate plenty of good ideas. One small idea was to begin and end all church meetings with prayer. I saw that happen just this week: a committee that doesn’t normally open and close with prayer did just that! To keep these prayers from becoming rote, perhaps we can open along the lines of, “Make clear to us the work you want us to accomplish, and give us the grace to do it,” and close with something like, “If our work has pleased you, bless it. If not, make that clear to us.”

You’ve asked for more classes on prayer and opportunities to pray. Here are a couple of opportunities coming up:

- **Thursday, May 18, 12:00 PM. Ascension Worship Service in the Chapel.** After 40 days of appearing to and instructing the disciples, the Resurrected Jesus rose into heaven, but not before promising to send his Holy Spirit. The disciples spent the 10 days between his Ascension and the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost “constantly devoting themselves to prayer.” It was as if they took a deep breath and waited for whatever it was that was to come. We invite you to take a deep breath in the 10 days between May 18 and Pentecost on May 28. If your schedule allows it, begin these 10 days with a prayerful worship service in the chapel.
- **Sunday, June 25. Prayer Workshop following worship.** The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, and he did! He taught them the Lord’s Prayer, and he taught them many other things about our approach to prayer. If you don’t know how to pray, or want to learn more about prayer, bring your questions, and Rev. Nikki will teach you about how to have a conversation with God.

Grace and Peace to you,
Marvin

PASTOR NIKKI'S BIBLE STUDY THURSDAYS @ 7

– Pastor Nikki is hosting a Bible Study via Zoom on the book of Genesis, entitled “Genesis: Relational and Family Dynamics.” The reading schedule is linked on [the Adult Ed page](#) of the website. The Zoom link is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81798184993>, and we will also meet in person at pre-determined times. Please contact Pastor Nikki if you have questions and are interested, or simply join us on Zoom!

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CLASS will not meet on Sunday, May 7. The next scheduled meeting will be May 14, on the topic of Pentecost. Pentecost is celebrated on May 28, 2023. It is the Greek name for the Feast of Weeks, a prominent Levitical feast in the calendar of ancient Israel, and for Christians Pentecost is the “birthday of the Church.” Read details about this important church holy day on the [Christian Heritage syllabus](#).

STEPHEN MINISTER COMMISSIONING – MAY 7



On *Sunday, May 7th* we will commission 2 new Stephen Ministers. They are Paul Sommers and Donna George. Paul and Donna have been through 50 hours of specialized training in Christian caregiving. As a Stephen Minister they will provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care to people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time. They meet weekly with their care receiver to listen, care, encourage, pray, and provide emotional and spiritual support

Please lift up our new Stephen Ministers in your prayers, asking that God bless their ministry and work through them to bring hope and healing to those they will serve. They will be depending on our support in the time ahead as they assume the duties of their ministry. Our congregation is one of more than 13,000 worldwide, representing 160 Christian denominations that use the Stephen Series system of lay caring ministry developed by Stephen Ministries in St. Louis.

How can we help?

First of all, we can pray for our Stephen Leaders, our Stephen Ministers, and their care receivers. This ministry calls for both time and effort.

We can also affirm and show our appreciation for this valuable ministry. We can tell them how much their hard work means to us and tell others how much we value our Stephen Ministry.

We can become involved in this ministry in many ways. Some of us may recognize a call to use our special gifts in this ministry and may apply to be a Stephen Leader or Stephen Minister. Others may accept the care of a Stephen Minister. We can be ministers of referral, watching for people in need and suggesting a Stephen Minister's care. Most of all, we can continue to pray for our Stephen Ministers, affirming them for answering God's call to serve in this way.

Please join us on May 7th as we commission our newly trained Stephen Ministers. Let us thank God for all that they will bring to this congregation in providing care to others and let us promise them our daily prayer and support as we send them out to minister among us.

JOIN US SUNDAY AFTER THE SERVICE this Sunday as we dedicate the renovated Parlor and honor Skip Bean and the Bean family for their generous gift.

2 MAY COOKING DAYS FOR JOSEPH'S HOUSE – Please note that last month's cooking date has been rescheduled for Tuesday, May 16. That means that we will have two cooking dates in May – **Tuesday, May 16, and Tuesday, May 30.**

WOMEN'S WALKING GROUP will walk again on Tuesday, May 9 at 10 a.m. Yes, that it is the day of the PW luncheon at 12, but the previous walkers want to go again. As before, we will walk between 1.5 and 2 mi. over an approximate 1 hr. Meet in the portico.

PORCH BIBLE STUDY – The Porchers will study Daniel and Esther beginning Tuesday, May 30, on Zoom at 7 p.m. We will follow a Pastor Max Lucado study guide. Our group also prays for many joys and concerns and is happy to hear prayer needs. All are welcome.

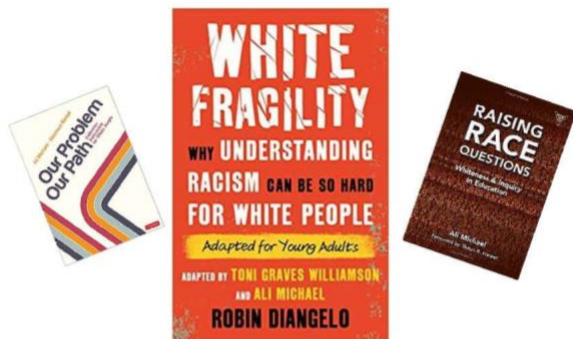


YOUTH SERVICE NIGHT ON SUNDAY, JUNE 4 – The next monthly service night for Middle School and High School youth will be Sunday, June 4. Middle schoolers will meet from 5 to 6:30 p.m. and high schoolers will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Details will follow on service projects for the evening.

YOU'RE INVITED! Come join other people of faith to learn, take action and socialize.

- **Embracing Race – The Conversation** will meet on Thursday, May 11 from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Haddon Twp. Branch of the Camden County Library, 15 MacArthur Blvd. There will be a discussion with the authors who adapted Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* for young adults. Find more info at embracingraceconversation.org.
- **GreenFaith's Southern New Jersey Circle** will meet on Sunday, May 21 at 3:30 p.m. in Prince of Peace Church, 61 E. Rt 70 Marlton, NJ. In addition to the regular agenda, members of the plastics working group will share their presentation on plastic pollution and solutions. Go to greenfaith.org for more information.
- Explore our **Newly Updated Social Justice Site** on the church website (www.haddonfieldpres.org). The Justice and Advocacy Committee thanks Anne Vial for a tremendous job making it more user friendly. It is now much easier to access the various resources especially those offered by PC(USA).

Please join
EMBRACING RACE - The Conversation



With special guests
Ali S. Michael and Toni Graves Williamson
For a discussion of their adaptation (for young adults) of Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility*

Thursday, May 11th, 7-8:30 pm

Camden County Library - Haddon Twp Branch
15 MacArthur Boulevard, Haddon Twp., NJ 08108

For more info, contact
embracing.race.conversation@gmail.com
Or visit embracingraceconversation.org

A big thank you to all who came out and enjoyed (and donated) at a night of Pop Diva music. A special thank you to Marvin Lindsay, Lesley Kirsch, Peter Leibensperger, and Kathryn Dark for

all the work that went into the planning and bringing this performance to the Church. Many who attended had never been in our church before, and this was a great way for the church to reach out with a non-church event, while still being in the Church. We raised close to \$1000 to benefit the music program. Thank you, Margot Dark



CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER LIST - Please keep members and friends of the congregation in your prayers. The weekly Prayer List is available in Sunday's bulletin or online [here](#). If you would like to add a personal prayer request, please contact one of the pastors or Anne Vial. Please obtain the permission of the person needing prayer. *The Prayer Request portal on the website is available for private requests sent directly to the pastors.*

Anne Vial to Depart

I [Marvin] have some bittersweet news to share. Anne Vial, our office administrator, has announced her departure. Anne's last day on the First Presbyterian staff is tentatively set for Friday, June 2.

If you've ever visited the church's website, gotten up to date on church events by reading the *Weekly News*, or been guided through worship by graceful and well-organized bulletins, you're already familiar with Anne's handiwork. Anne also supports the staff and our governing boards by maintaining our church calendar and updating our member care lists. Most of all, Anne has served the congregation with dedication and kindness. I am going to miss her, but I know that she is not going to miss the commute! I'm happy for Anne and her family as they enter a new chapter in their lives.

Doug Gerdts, my immediate predecessor, shared these memories of Anne with me:

Given the difficulty of the pandemic during the transition after Bill Getman's retirement, Anne's unofficial role as the "corporate memory" of the congregation was vital as the entire staff navigated the uncertainties and complexities of our years together. She was often the stable influence we needed and her calm, yet firm, demeanor helped us all maintain an even keel.

Perhaps more importantly, and on a personal level, Anne reined in my overuse of my favorite word, "hence." Although it made an appearance in nearly every weekly email (and many sermons) — friends — it could have been much worse! She also "one-upped" my use of the word "penultimate" (another favorite though not quite as worn out) with her own submission of "antepenultimate"!

She was a stabilizing and gracious presence who shared her considerable gifts and talents freely with the congregation — hence — she will be greatly missed!

Our Human Resources Committee is already working on next steps following Anne's departure. As their work takes shape, we will keep you informed. In the meantime, wish Godspeed to Anne when you see her.



SAVE THE DATE – THE STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL IS BACK! Friday, June 2, 6 – 8 p.m. Sweet strawberry short cakes will be smothered with berries and "sugared" with Musical Notes from Peter and our adult choir for your entertainment.

VBS 2023 – REGISTRATION OPEN!



This year's VBS: Operation Restoration! invites kids to be menders in God's world. As they make connections between Bible stories and mending actions, they'll discover simple ways to live out faith in daily life by exploring the daily themes of Feed, Heal, Forgive, Pray, and Rest. Dates are July 24-28, 2023. Register [here](#) or through the church website:

<http://www.haddonfieldpres.org/children>. As always,

we look forward to including youth shepherds and adult volunteers in the adventure!

The cost of the camp is \$25 per Mender, payable via Check (First Presbyterian of Haddonfield memo line: VBS), Venmo (@FPCHaddonfield), or through Realm (QR code links directly to Realm). We look forward to seeing you in July!



WORKSHOP ON URBANPROMISE WELLNESS CENTER IN JUNE – Please join us on Sunday, June 11, immediately following worship, for an interactive hour-long workshop with Siomara Wedderburn, vice president, programs, and past director of Wellness at UrbanPromise. The Wellness Center at UrbanPromise receives financial support from this congregation by way of an annual donation from the Mission Committee. Ms. Wedderburn will talk about how UrbanPromise has adapted wellness and experiential learning as key strategic initiatives and integrated these across all programs at the school. Join us for conversation and fellowship as we learn more about this wonderful program.

DRESSMAKING CONTINUES! Sewers are working diligently to have enough dresses for each girl in Founder Girls Raising Hands – YouthPromise in Kenya. That's 30-50 dresses. Dresses go both to young girls and to teens. Fabric donations are still being accepted. **And there are now kits available to take home to sew!** Look for them in the window alcove on the way into the Sanctuary. Instructions included.

Camden County's Current Covid Status:

● Low
In Camden County, New Jersey,
community level is Low.

CALENDAR

- | | | | | |
|--------|--|--|---|------------------------|
| May 4 | – 6:30 p.m. Moore Bells
– 7 p.m. Pastor Nikki's Zoom Bible Study
– 7:30 p.m. Chancel choir | – 3:45 p.m. Chapel Choir – last one
– 4:30 p.m. Alleluia Bells – last one | | |
| May 5 | – 9:30 a.m. Women's Prison Ministry | May 11 | – 6:30 p.m. Moore Bells – last one
– 7 p.m. Pastor Nikki's Zoom Bible Study | |
| May 7 | – 10 a.m. Worship and Sunday School,
Stephen Minister Commissioning
– 11 a.m. Parlor Dedication | – 7:30 p.m. Chancel choir | May 13 | – 8 a.m. St. Wilfrid's |
| May 8 | – Preschool Flower Sale (all week)
– 9:30 a.m. Quilters
– 7 p.m. Christian Ed Committee
– 7:30 p.m. Circle 4 Zoom | May 14 | – 10 a.m. Worship, Sunday School
– 11:30 a.m. Christian Heritage Class | |
| May 9 | – 10 a.m. Women's Walking Group
– 10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting
– 6 p.m. Finance Committee meeting | May 15 | – 7 p.m. Session | |
| May 10 | – 10 a.m. Stephen Ministry Leaders | May 16 | – 9:45 a.m. Circles 1 and 3
– 1 p.m. Cooking for Joseph's House | |
| | | May 17 | – 10 a.m. Stephen Ministry | |
| | | May 18 | – noon Ascension Worship Service
– 4:30 p.m. Marketing Committee
– 7:30 Chancel Choir | |

May 19 – 9:30 a.m. Women’s Prison Ministry
May 21 – 9 a.m. Choir Brunch
– 10 a.m. Worship, **Last day for
Sunday School**
May 22 – 9:45 a.m. Quilters
May 23 – 10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting
– 7 p.m. Deacons Meeting
– 7 p.m. Governance Committee
May 24 – 10 a.m. Stephen Ministry
May 25 – 7 p.m. **Pastor Nikki’s Zoom Bible
Study**

– 7:30 p.m. Chancel choir
May 28 – PENTECOST 10 a.m. Worship
May 29 – Memorial Day – Office closed
May 30 – 1 p.m. Cooking for Joseph’s House
– 7 p.m. Porch Bible Study
May 31 – 10 a.m. Stephen Ministry
– 7 p.m. Nominating Committee
June 1 – 7:30 p.m. Last Chancel Choir
June 2 – 6:30 p.m. Strawberry Festival



Fun and games at the Social Connection gathering