

This week's news...



March 18, 2021

NEW BEGINNINGS

Dear Friend,

After twelve months of shut-downs, restrictions, loss, and diminishment of social interaction, this fuzzy little baby chick might be a small reminder that life, however changed, does go on.

Marisa is going to tell you more about this year's hatch in the preschool a little further down in this email — but I was delighted to walk into the building on Monday morning to have the staff excitedly tell me that all chicks had hatched overnight — not in small groups of two or three at a time — but the entire dozen at once!



Of course, I had to check them out as they bundled into a heat-seeking scrum after each had been "taught" to eat and drink. When I was given permission to hold one, I very gingerly reached into the plastic tub and gently let one climb onto my hand. The chick was less than eight hours old but was robust, active, and inquisitive.

That little chicken reminded me that even though the church remains closed to in-person worship, the life and work of the congregation continues unabated.

Your COVID Response Team (CRT) has done outstanding work on your behalf. The safety of the congregation and staff has been its guiding principle from the beginning. Full stop. The committee is very much aware of the strong desire to gather in person and shares that drive. To their credit, they have resisted the easy path and have persevered despite repeated pleas to the contrary.

That said, with vaccinations on the rise and other haltingly promising indicators, the CRT is shifting its intention to how to re-open safely. The overarching mandate is simply this: **The church will open for in-person worship when it is safe for all persons to gather.**

This is the season of renewed vitality and beginnings — while never forgetting the profound loss wrought by the pandemic — and always mindful that God holds us in God's hands with wonder, joy, and compassion.

Be well, stay safe, and God bless!



PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK – A WEEK FROM SUNDAY



The 10 a.m. live-streamed worship service on 3/28 will be extra lively, with music by our children's choirs. After the service, drive through the parking lot for a palm. If you are 10 or under—or caring for someone who is—make the playground your next stop for an Easter Egg Hunt! (See announcement below.) There will be many opportunities for prayer and worship during Holy Week. Click here for the [full schedule](#).

FPCH'S FIRST EASTER EGG HUNT!

Calling all kids aged 10 and under for an Easter Egg Hunt at **11 a.m. on Palm Sunday, 3/28/21!** We will be dividing up the playground and church grounds by age for kids to be able to have some fun and hunt for eggs. Our Easter Egg Hunt will be BYOB(asket) and BYOM(ask). Come grab a palm and then hunt for eggs. Hope to see you there!



CONVERSATIONS ON RACE

Sunday morning discussions continue from 9-9:45 a.m. on Zoom at [this link](#). During our Conversation on Race this week (3/21), we delve into the intersection between racism and food accessibility. In preparation, please review this [African American Vegan Starter Guide](#), provided to us by our guest facilitator, Antoine Chambers. Each week's resources are linked in the weekly email newsletter and on the [Adult Ed](#) page of the website. Questions? Email Becky Bryan, rebeccabryan@me.com.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

A special offering of the PC(USA), One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is an important way for local churches to take part in the national and international missions of the denomination. OGHS benefits the ministries of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. FPCH receives the offering on both Palm Sunday and Easter. [This article](#) from the Presbyterian Mission Agency describes OGHS's support of Organización Boricúa [Bor-ē-qwa], a grassroots network of farmers, agricultural workers, educators, organizers and activists in Puerto Rico. Organización Boricúa promotes and practices agroecology as a means of achieving food sovereignty and environmental justice on the archipelago. Your OGHS offering can be made online or with a check. (Please label accordingly.)

MUSICAL MEDITATION FROM MARK

Jesus, Priceless Treasure, arr. Thomas Keesecker



[Listen Here](#)

*Jesus, priceless treasure,
source of purest pleasure,
friend most sure and true:
long my heart was burning,
fainting much and yearning,
thirsting, Lord for you.
Yours I am, O spotless Lamb,
so will I let nothing hide you,
seek no joy beside you!*

Our Appreciation for Mark Cole

Mark Cole will be leaving First Presbyterian Church and his last day will be on Easter Morning (April 4th). He has served as organist for FPC for 3 ½ years and he will be greatly missed. Despite no in-person worship this past year, we have been blessed to receive his gifts of music in through online worship.

Before he goes, we want to wish him well. If you would like to express your appreciation to Mark, we will be collecting cards and/or donations to his purse at the drive-through on Sunday mornings, now through Easter. Please make check payable to First Presbyterian Church and put Mark's name in the memo or donate online in Realm if you prefer. You may also drop off cards/donations directly to Cheryl Tarditi. Please contact her directly to schedule arrangements: cheryltarditi@gmail.com or (919) 784-9450.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Today's lesson has to do with secret meetings and learning about the path to eternal life with God. That's a lot to cover! The Pharisees believed that to follow God meant to follow all the rules. What Jesus taught was different from what they understood to be true. It's important to know that Jesus loves our hearts, not our smarts. (I didn't write that but I think it's a really important lesson for us all to learn). And like Nicodemus, don't be afraid to ask questions and keep asking them until you start to understand. Asking questions is so important, and there are lots of people all around you who will help you with whatever questions you may have.

This Week for Lent: This week in Lent we are challenging you to find something to fast for a week. Fasting doesn't always mean about food - you can take a fast from lots of different things. It's super easy to fast from something you don't like or don't really do, so try to make it something that will be missed. Remember, it's only a week!

Here are some fasting ideas for our younger crew:

fast from TV

fast from dessert

fast from a bad habit

fast from meat



Here are some fasting ideas for our older crew:

snacking between meals

cracking your knuckles

instagram filters

rolling your eyes at your parents

complaining

the phrase "I can't even"

using the word "can't"

checking your phone every two minutes

YOUTH GROUP NEWS!

We got the band back together and met LIVE. So wonderful to see people in person! We played charades, a lively game of Heads Up, and had many, many socially-distanced snacks. With warmer temperatures, we are looking forward to more in-person get-togethers. We are meeting this week on Sunday between 5pm-6pm and are thinking of playing capture the flag. Hope to see you there! Contact [Gab Heimerling](#) to receive Youth Group emails.

*Let's meet
in person
FOR A CHANGE!*



BLOOD DRIVE right here at First Presbyterian

Tuesday, April 13, 2-7 p.m. Sign up on the American Red Cross [website](#).



THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE IHOC MALL WALK

It was an unusual year for the Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council (IHOC)'s annual Mall Walk, as it has been for everything else. Many thanks to donors, virtual walkers, and supporting organizations for helping IHOC raise \$39,000 to fund its mission. IHOC's assistance to these homeless neighbors continues. Thank you!

PRESCHOOL NEWS

Spring is in the air! The Preschool has been participating with Quiver Farms Projects for over 25 years and we have countless ribbons that congratulate us on successful chick hatching. Last week, a dozen eggs were brought to the Preschool and placed in an incubator which kept the eggs at the appropriate temperature. Our preschool classes shared the responsibility of caring for the eggs, carefully turning them each day. On Tuesday morning, we were blessed with the sounds of cheeping! All 12 chicks hatched overnight. Presby had another perfect hatch!



Our Acorn class witnessed the baby chicks being transferred from the incubator to the cozy bin where each chick was taught to eat and drink. Now, all the little baby chicks are happily cheeping away.

This experience is so much more than a science experiment. It not only allows for a chance to witness the miracle of life, but provides opportunity for responsibility, patience, and gentleness with God's creatures!



ONGOING...

Old Testament Bible Study: Meets Mondays at 11:30 a.m. on [Zoom](#). Contact Doug [here](#) for info.

Doug's Bible Study: Tuesdays at 8:00 a.m. on Zoom, Doug hosts an informal conversation about the scripture that will be the text for the following Sunday's sermon. The text for **Tuesday, March 23** is John 12:1-16. [Zoom link](#)

Speaking Truth in Love: Nikki's class "Speaking Truth in Love: How to Be an Assertive Christian" continues on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Find the syllabus [here](#) and the Zoom link [here](#).

Nikki's Bible Study: Join Nikki on Thursday evenings at 6:30 for an in-depth study of **Revelation**. Here is the [Zoom link](#), and here is the [Syllabus](#).

ST. WILFRID'S OPEN DOOR CLINIC

The Report of the Open Door Clinic March 13, 2021:

106 bags of food were given out Saturday. This week marked the **52nd straight week** that the Open Door Clinic at St Wilfrid's has distributed food during the pandemic; **4,817 total bags**. **Over 120,425 pounds** of food and dry goods were given out. We gave out jackets again. BUT...No more jackets or coats are needed until Fall because there is nowhere to store them. Thanks again for your caring!

Current Needs (These may be dropped off during the week in the bin behind Grace Church or during the drive-through on Sundays after church from 11-12):

- baby wipes and diapers (5s and 6s)
- 1-gallon, clear, twist-tie storage bags,
- syrup
- canned peas and carrots
- canned chicken or salmon
- plastic grocery bags from Shoprite or Wegman's
- paper grocery bags to line and strengthen the plastic bags
- newspaper bags to hold hygiene products

Foodbank – The Foodbank Crew collects and transports goods usually on Friday mornings at 8 a.m. at the Foodbank and 8:40 a.m. or so at St Wilfrid's. Rose Guthrie is looking for additional volunteers as we contemplate vacations. Please contact Rose at intrepidrose@hotmail.com to confirm, examine or just see if you want to join the fun. Check out the website and see other ways to help, opendoorcliniccamden.org. If you have any questions or would be able to help for a few hours, please call Jill Mascena at 856-428-7342

"Let your light so shine before men, that they will see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Mar. 18 – 6:30 p.m. Nikki's Bible Study
Mar. 21 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race
Mar. 21 – 10 a.m. Worship
Mar. 21 – Donation drive-through, church driveway
Mar. 21 – 5 p.m. Youth Group – IN PERSON
Mar. 22 – 11:30 a.m. OT Bible Study
Mar. 23 – 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study
Mar. 23 – 7:30 p.m. Deacons Meeting
Mar. 24 – 7:30 p.m. "Speaking the Truth in Love"

Mar. 25 – 6:30 p.m. Nikki's Bible Study
Mar. 28 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race
Mar. 28 – 10 a.m. Palm Sunday Worship
Mar. 28 – 11 a.m. Palm distribution in the drive-through
Mar. 28 – 11 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt
Mar. 29 – 6:30 p.m. Holy Week Prayer Service on Zoom (See [Holy Week schedule](#))