

*This week's news...*



March 4, 2021

## **The Righteous and the Imaginative!**

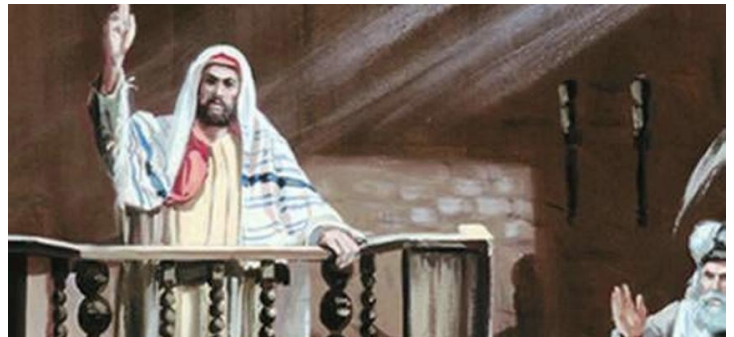
Dear Friend,

First off, a quick comment about my snow-covered sidewalk rant — apparently, I'm not alone! I touched a nerve with a bunch of you and, surprisingly, no one came to the defense of the non-shovelers and many proposed fairly draconian punishments for transgressors! The community's capacity for grace and forgiveness apparently decreases with the temperature and so "Woe to you who cleareth not the icy paths to your home!"

On to this week's note!

I've mentioned before my daily calendar of wise words from smart people and this week Stephen Covey showed up with these simple words:

**"Live out of your imagination, not your history."**



Of course, I'm always thinking about the people of First Presbyterian of Haddonfield and so I immediately applied this sentiment to our time together and wondered if churches have a harder time following Covey's advice more than most?



Are churches more enamored with their history than they are filled with excitement for their future? It's a bit of a conundrum as churches are often the markers of history and stability in a community and Haddonfield is a perfect example. Our imposing stone edifice stoically guards one entrance to the commercial center and no one can miss the soaring bell tower and walls of Port Deposit granite. I wonder what our structure "says" to those who pass

by? What message does our structure send and does it represent the mission and vision of the congregation?

Seems that churches are hard-wired to "live out of their history" but that it takes a different set of skills to "live out of its imagination" — to wonder about possibilities and ventures and vulnerable places that God is calling us to.

That's all part of what we can do during this "in-between" time and what the Mission Study Team is focused on these days.

Where, in your wildest of imaginations, is First Presbyterian Church headed?

Be well, stay safe, and God bless!



**COMMUNION AND DEACONS OFFERING** – As we celebrate the Lord’s Supper this Sunday (3/7), we are mindful of the needs of the world. Your support of the deacons allows them to carry God’s healing into the community around us. (Please make sure envelopes are marked with your name or giving number.)

### What Do the Deacons Do?



*Presbyterian Deacons are called to a ministry of “compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress” (G-2.0201)*

If you are not familiar with the Deacons or what we do, here’s a little introduction. The Deacons are a committed group of individuals who provide outreach and service to our church members and the wider community. Some might even say that the Deacons are the hands and feet of the church.

Deacons traditionally serve our church family and the community at large in several ways:

- Delivering flowers
- Visiting with church members in need
- Transporting church members to services who lack transportation
- Dispersing funds to various community causes / non-profit organizations
- Fundraising to award students with scholarship money
- Ushering and greeting at church services
- Assisting with communion

Thankfully during the pandemic, we have been able to help people in need within our community. Recently, Deacon and Social Services Coordinator, Ed Hess helped forty homeless men who were living at a school in Camden. He wisely used the Social Service funds to assist the men by getting them food, temporary shelter, and medical supplies. Ed is also working to help a mom of two who is in need of essentials such as a queen-sized mattress and towels. We love every opportunity we can get to “serve the least of these” (Matthew 25).

One particular area of service that we miss dearly is transporting our elderly church members to Sunday worship services. Because we all enjoy going to church, and being with our family of faith every week, we understand how meaningful it is for the older members to get to church. It means so much to us to help the older members of our congregation so that they can be a part of their faith community. This is one of the many ways we show love for our church family. We are hoping and praying that one day soon we will be able to resume all of our normal activities. We truly miss you!

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**CORRECTION TO LAST WEEK’S ANNOUNCEMENT:** The \$500 that was sent to Texas for disaster relief came from the Mission Committee. They, too, carry this congregation’s love into the world in numerous ways. Apologies for the confusion.

### **WANT TO HELP WITH DISASTER RELIEF?**

The PCUSA is reaching out to those affected by winter storms. If you would like to donate, go to <https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/DR000148/>.

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### **A PRAYER REQUEST FROM PASTORS NIKKI AND DOUG**

If you’ve ever shaken hands with a minister on the way out of church and said, “By the way, I’m having a procedure on Thursday. Say a prayer for me,” you know what Doug means by an “arm-touch” prayer. We are severely lacking in arm-touch moments in COVID times. So Doug and Nikki would like to hear from you by phone or through the “[Prayer Request](#)” form on the website. Whenever you have occasions that cry out for compassion and/or celebration in prayer, you can text or call Nikki (541-324-6900) or Doug (302-354-6930) with your request. Prayer requests are private and confidential.

## CONVERSATIONS ON RACE

Sunday morning discussions continue from 9-9:45 a.m. on Zoom at [this link](#). This Sunday (3/7) we welcome guest speakers Lindsey H. and Denis Spaulding, both from Moms Demand Action, who will discuss the disproportionate impact that gun violence has on people of color. [This column](#) provides a good introduction. 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](mailto:rebeccabryan@me.com).

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## OLD TESTAMENT BIBLE STUDY

Bible study for anyone who has hesitated to join a Bible study or wants to try something new. **Meets Mondays at 11:30 a.m.** on [Zoom](#). Contact Doug [here](#) to get a book. *If you can't join the discussion but would like to work through the book on your own, that works, too. Doug is happy to have one-on-one conversations on the texts at any point.*

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### MUSICAL MEDITATION FROM MARK

*Were You There?*, arr. Mary McDonald

[Listen Here](#)

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

We met another Old Testament Power Couple this week - Abraham and Sarah. God makes some promises to Abraham and Sarah, but believing in those promises requires a lot of faith. At the end of the lessons for our younger friends this week there are some stories celebrating all different types of families. I hope you'll read them, and think about all the different families out there – the ones we're born into, our friend families, and community families to name a few. There are so many ways to make a family, as long as the main ingredient is love. Please know your church family loves you all very much.



**This Week for Lent:** This week for Lent we are going to practice The Sound of Silence. We are surrounded by so much noise these days and it can be hard to be in the right mindset for prayer. This week we are going to prepare ourselves for prayer by practicing being silent for 30 seconds per day, more if you want to challenge yourself. Last week we focused on who or what to pray for, this week we are going to work on being fully present for those prayers.

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## YOUTH GROUP NEWS!

It was all about *Among Us* this week and I'm happy to report that I am improving my game! The kids were very patient with me as I asked ridiculous questions and made many mistakes. There's a lot of grace in our group! Next week, 3/7, we are virtual again and I'm looking into some Jackbox games for us to play – so watch out for the Zoom info coming soon. But Spring is in the air, Friends, and meeting in person will soon be here. Stay tuned... Contact [Gab Heimerling](#) to receive Youth Group emails.

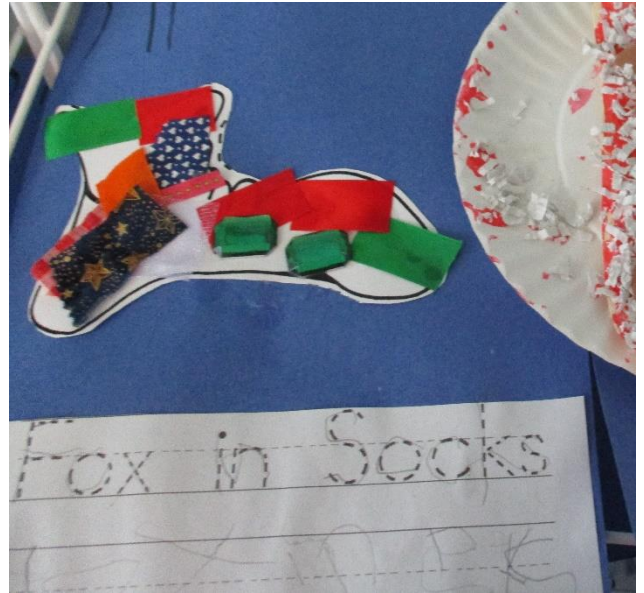
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## A BIG FAT GREEK MOVIE NIGHT MARCH 9!

On Tuesday, March 9, from 7 to 8 p.m. join a [Zoom conversation](#) about “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.” Watch the movie on your own beforehand, and then meet up online—just for fun and fellowship—no work, no study, no reading! If this is something that folks enjoy, we'll do it every month!

## Dr. Seuss at the Preschool

Each year Read Across America Day is celebrated on March 2nd, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. We take this opportunity to celebrate reading with fun rhymes and crafts. Typically, Dr. Seuss books are the center of our celebration. This year, as is the case with everything else due to the pandemic, our celebrations are scaled back. Our classes engaged in Dr. Seuss silliness on one of their class days. They made crafts like the one pictured and enjoyed making up fun rhymes.



An announcement was made this week by Dr. Seuss Enterprises to cease publication and sales of six Dr. Seuss titles. Titles such as "And to Think I Saw it on Mulberry Street" and "If I Ran the Zoo" depict people in hurtful and racist ways. Despite this fact, Dr. Seuss is adored by millions around the world for the positive values portrayed in many of his books, including environmentalism and tolerance. His books remain popular with beginning readers. They feel a sense of accomplishment and pride when they can independently read books like, "The Foot Book" and "Green Eggs and Ham." We don't want to take this opportunity away. How will the Preschool handle this announcement?

At First Presbyterian Church and Preschool we support diversity and respect all communities. The Preschool will be removing the six Dr. Seuss titles from our libraries. The books we share with our children matter. They can shape their views and model how to relate to people, places, and ideas. Books such as "My Many Colored Days," by Dr. Seuss use a spectrum of vibrant colors and variety of animals to teach children about feelings. There is still value in many Dr. Seuss books and there is a place for them.

During Read Across America Week, we can deemphasize Dr. Seuss, encourage diverse reading and leave plenty of room for fun and silliness.

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## ONGOING...

**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 9** is John 3: 1-21. **Doug's Bible study has a new [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 **updated 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 **updated [Syllabus](#)**.

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## UPDATE ON THE PATH TO A NEW SENIOR PASTOR

The Mission Study Team has begun its work. Members of the team are Trish Adkins, Kathryn Dark, Gene Spinelli, Bud Miller, Becky Bryan, Paul Urian, and Rachel Davis. Their job is to review the Mission Study and Holy Cow survey data from the recent associate pastor search and update as needed. The Mission Study must be completed and approved by West Jersey Presbytery before a pastor nominating committee is formed.

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## ST. WILFRID'S OPEN DOOR CLINIC

### The Report of the Open Door Clinic February 27, 2021:

**Observations:** Arturo has become one of our "first in line" group. He will be 40 this year. He is disabled. married and a father of three. I asked him about the items in our foodbag: does he use everything? Is there anything else he would like to have? Answer: everything is fine: "You know, my wife works, and I clean, take care of the apartment and cook....You know, if it wasn't for the weekly food bag, we wouldn't have food through the entire week." This is what your donations are doing!

**Pandemic Awakening:** Peaches was one of the first in line group. She and some of the others used to sweep and rake the curbline of accumulated trash and debris outside St. Wilfrid's before the clinic opened in summertime. She disappeared but...she returned Saturday. She was employed as a crossing guard but was laid off during the pandemic, so she went back to Jamaica. "I've learned I don't need a lot of money to be happy." Welcome back to St. Wilfrid's!

**This week marks the 50th straight week** that the Open Door Clinic at St. Wilfrid's has distributed food during the pandemic: 117 bags, 4,620 total. Over 115,500 pounds of food and dry goods, distributed by the all-volunteer, everything-donated, nobody-gets-paid Clinic. Thank you all for your generous collections and contributions. **Needs:** Again this week, we are asking if you would consider purchasing and donating baby wipes, diapers (5's and 6's), disposable facemasks, canned chicken or salmon, and pancake syrup (you all came through on the pancake mix!). **The Foodbank Team** performed admirably twice last week. We have room for additional helpers to lift cartons and boxes, and transport them to St. Wilfrid's. Our next expected pickup is Friday morning, March 5, a little after 8:00 at the Foodbank, about 8:40 at St Wilfrid's. Plenty of exercise and comradery. Please check with Rose Guthrie if you can help at [intrepidrose@hotmail.com](mailto:intrepidrose@hotmail.com).

**Other Observations:** No one is ever turned away from the Open Door Clinic. Near the end of Saturday's session, a very big, fit older man with shoulder-length hair arrived with an elderly man in an old truck. We met him and offered him and the other man foodbags. Daniel, the big man, is from Florida, up in Camden to help his elderly mother and, was dressed in a sweatshirt. We found a jacket for him, but his arms are so big, they wouldn't fit through the sleeves of the jacket. We're looking for a coat or jacket for a man size XXL or larger for Daniel. **Coats:** We are winding up our coat drive. We will always accept, but unless temperatures really drop over the next few weeks, they will only be taking up space over the summer. Thank you for your wonderful outpouring of coats. If you donated a coat, look in the mirror...And know that God loves you!



Weeks ago, these keys were found in one of the coat pockets: So far no one has asked about missing keys. If you have any questions or these are possibly your keys or you would like to volunteer at St. Wilfrid's, please call Jill Mascena. 856-428-7342

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### WEEKLY CALENDAR

Mar. 4 – 6:30 p.m. Nikki's Bible Study  
Mar. 7 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race  
Mar. 7 – 10 a.m. Worship, Communion  
Mar. 7 – Donation drive-through, church driveway  
Mar. 7 – 5 p.m. Virtual Youth Group  
Mar. 8 – 11:30 a.m. OT Bible Study

Mar. 9 – 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study  
Mar. 9 – 7 p.m. MOVIE NIGHT  
Mar. 10 – 7:30 p.m. "Speaking the Truth in Love"  
Mar. 11 – 6:30 p.m. Nikki's Bible Study  
Mar. 14 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race  
Mar. 14 – 10 a.m. Worship