

# This week's news...



May 20, 2021

Dear Friend,

## **WE ARE FAMILY!! (...but is that really a good idea?)**

**We are family**  
***I got all my sisters with me***  
**We are family**  
***Get up everybody and sing***



Of the many things I've learned about First Presbyterian throughout the last 11 months is the importance of family — in Haddonfield and in the church.

I frequently hear members describe the "family atmosphere" or that the congregation is "really a family." A prominent line on a "welcome" page on the church's website states: **"Come to visit and stay to become part of this family of faith."**

This email message will likely get me labeled as "anti-family" by some readers so let me offer this caveat: I love my family and consider that collection of people to be among God's greatest gifts in my life. I don't doubt for a second that the vast majority of you feel the same way about yours. Families are great (mostly), but congregations are not families.

Here's why:

1. By definition, "family" sets up boundaries. Everyone knows if they are a part of a family or not. It's not permeable and inclusion is not voluntary — one must be accepted or born into a family. Additionally, not everyone is on equal footing in a family; some have more power and influence than others. That doesn't resemble the community of radical inclusion envisioned by Jesus.
2. "Family" is a loaded word and sends messages we likely don't intend. I'd suggest that no one hears or uses the word without some emotional attachment or reaction. It's a visceral word and we have no control over how it's received. Entire swaths of our society have been excluded by organizations purporting to uphold the primacy of families. Not everyone comes from a wonderful family — some have had horrific experiences — consequently, we should reconsider its use.
3. First Presbyterian is just too big to pretend it's a family. Yes, you may have actual relatives who are also members, you may be part of a legacy of membership, and you may have developed friendships that feel as close as a siblings — but friends — there are supposedly 700 of you!

What's the alternative?

The most obvious is to delete "family" and refer to ourselves as a **"community"** — which is what we are. Simple definition of "community": **A unified body of individuals: such as the people with common interests living in a particular area.**



- Communities are permeable — folks move in and out without barriers or boundaries.
- Communities do not require hierarchy — everyone is equal — while some may have specific roles or responsibilities.

- Communities focus on a common good or goal or purpose.
- The word, "community" is neutral — there's no visceral or emotional response per se.

To push a little further, I like to think of the church as a "**tribe**"! (Thanks to [Seth Godin](#) for this definition.)

"A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea."

"A group needs only two things to be a tribe: a shared interest and a way to communicate."

"Tribes need leadership. Sometimes one person leads, sometimes more. People want connection and growth and something new. They want change."

Doesn't that sound like a congregation — at least one that's vibrant, aware, and motivated to express its faith in tangible ways? It does to me.

What do you think? Is FPCH a family? a community? a tribe? all of the above? none of the above?

Be well, stay safe, and God bless,



### Weekly Wisdom:

"The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change their future by changing their attitude."  
(Oprah Winfrey)

## SUNDAY IS PENTECOST

A special offering will be collected for PC(USA). A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also addresses the needs of at-risk children. FPC retains 40% of this special offering for our missions to youth and families. The remaining 60% of the offering is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Bring your Pentecost Offering to the drive-through, or if you are giving online, select Pentecost Offering from the Funds list.

## SUNDAY WE SHOWER BARB SEWALL WITH OUR LOVE AND GRATITUDE



Barbara Sewall will be retiring from First Presbyterian Church Preschool on May 28th, 2021 **and will be honored during worship on May 23**. Barb has served on FPC staff as the Preschool Director since 1983. For 38 years she has been devoted to the Church and the Preschool. Barb has welcomed thousands of children and dozens of staff members into a loving and supportive Christian atmosphere. She created a school where children feel encouraged, are recognized for their uniqueness and have the opportunity to develop friendships. An integral part of Barb's mission was not only to offer a wide range of experiences to children but to also offer parents and staff a place to develop friendships with those sharing

common interests. Barb's core values and legacy will continue for many years to come under the leadership of Marisa McGovern, who was appointed as Preschool Director on July 1st, 2020.

First Presbyterian Church of Haddonfield would like to wish Barbara well as she begins her next chapter. Your gratitude and appreciation for Barbara's service can be expressed through cards and/or donations to her purse. We will be collecting now until May 21st. Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church and put Barb's name in the memo or donate online at [www.haddonfieldpres.org](http://www.haddonfieldpres.org) through Realm if you prefer. You may also drop off cards/donations to the Preschool office or Church mailbox Monday-Friday 9:00 AM -12:00 PM.

## May 23 is the **LAST WEEK FOR DRIVE-THROUGH OFFERING AND FOOD DONATIONS!**

When we move indoors on May 30, there will be baskets and tables to receive donations and pledges but no longer will folks be outside to collect. A huge thank you to Warren Pross and Paul Urian for service in the drive-through: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

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### CONVERSATION ON RACE



MATTHEW 25

Sunday morning discussions continue from 9-9:45 a.m. on Zoom at [this link](#). This week (5/23): "Race" is often used as a fundamental way to understand American history. But what if "caste" is the more appropriate lens? This week we will listen to the *Throughline* podcast conversation with Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson, to examine the hidden system that has shaped our country. Link to podcast episode: <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/04/898918916/americas-caste-system>. 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).

*Conversations will take a break on May 30 for Memorial Day. See you in worship?*

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### CALLING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS – IT'S DEACONS SCHOLARSHIP TIME!

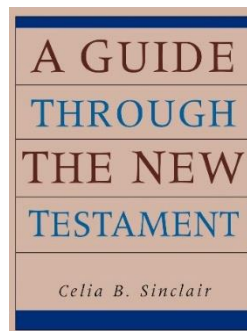
Scholarships are available to class of 2021 High School Seniors who are members of First Presbyterian Church of Haddonfield and who will be attending either a two- or four-year college in the fall of 2021. To get full details, [click here](#). You can download and complete the application from the First Presbyterian Church website [here](#) or call the church office at (856) 429-1960 to get a paper form mailed. **Application deadline is June 5.**



### NEW STUDY OPPORTUNITY:

#### A GUIDE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

This course, like the one on the Old Testament, is meant as an introduction to Bible Study and is perfect for someone who hasn't had much experience with the text. The course is a combination of online teaching and discussion led by Doug and weekly homework in the workbook. Course meets on Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to noon on [Zoom](#), and **will begin on June 21st** and run for approximately 12 weeks. (Don't worry if you'll be away on vacation — this is easy to do on your own!) If you'd like to sign-up or would like a book to use on your own, send [Doug](#) a note and he'll reserve one for you! Books are \$15!



### SUNDAY, MAY 30, WE RECONVENE FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP!

Summer worship begins in Fellowship Hall in two weeks. Watch for information about the FPCH Covid Response Team's careful planning to make this return both joyous and safe.

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### PER CAPITA

Our support of the Presbytery of Southern New Jersey and the larger denomination helps the missions of the PC(USA), and it helps us directly: in 2020, the Presbytery was generous to us in its financial support through grants for technology and mission and in providing support and training for the pastors, helping to keep the church steady through transition. Please do your part in return—\$37 per member. Use the "Per Capita" fund when giving online or label checks to indicate a per capita payment. Thank you!

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Don't forget to use [Amazon Smile](#) when you shop online. Choose First Presbyterian Church Haddonfield and we will get a donation.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

## THIS WEEK IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our younger friends focused on what happened after Judas was ousted and the group of 12 became 11. Would they stay at 11 or would they decide to look for a replacement? How does that even work? Do they hold disciple elections? Are there debates and polls and voting? Competing political parties? How do you even pick candidates for this? Based on the title of our lesson it was pretty obvious that the winner was Matthias but this week we also learned about the how and the why...

Our older friends learned about the disciples a few weeks ago but Peter was the de facto disciple leader and deserved a longer look so we focused on him this week. Peter is not what you'd call a model disciple. Sure he did lots of cool things like walk on water and raise someone from the dead, but he made some big mistakes too. Denying Jesus, anyone? Peter's mistakes, that's what I find meaningful. Jesus does not only choose perfect people my friends. All of our imperfections made us perfect to do what we are called to do.

### The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

**Rocks ..  
Paper ..  
Scissors!!**



Before Matthias is chosen as the new disciple there were several elimination rounds using a new sophisticated high tech selection technique.  
**Acts 1:12-26**

Finally Friends, we have made it to our last Sunday School lesson of the year. And what a year it was! While virtual Sunday School is not the same as in person, I'm grateful you allowed me to share with you each week about different bible lessons, activities and crafts. I am very hopeful that in the fall we will be able to resume Sunday School in person with your wonderful teachers. Thanks for hanging in with me all this time, and I hope you know that doing this taught me just as much as I hope it taught you. That being said, I'm still looking forward to seeing all of you in person in the fall. Have a wonderful summer!

## This Week in Communion Class

It was disciple and Bell Tower Week for the Communion Class. Once dressed in disciple finery, they made their livestream debut with a special children's message based around the choosing of the disciple Matthias. Then it was off to the Bell Tower for a quick tour before heading outside for our Al Fresco Last Supper and disciple lesson.



## THIS WEEK IN YOUTH GROUP

It was our final Youth Group of the year. I was so proud of the kids for sticking it out and making this year work despite all of the changes. What a great year getting to know each other both in person and on Zoom. We finished out the year with a pizza party, lots of snacks, and desserts. And fruit snacks of course, a Youth Group favorite. A game of Man on Ground with some very impressive ways to avoid the ground rounded out the night. We are already looking forward to next year with our new space (see article below) and most definitely the return of Grog. Thanks for a memorable year, Youth Groupers. Have a wonderful summer. And please volunteer to be a shepherd for VBS!

## THE CHURCH'S RE-OPENING INCLUDES BEAUTIFUL BUILDING UPDATES

As we all look forward to worshipping together in person, Pastor Doug has tasked the church's Building Manager, Travis Bogetti, with renovating and repurposing areas in our church which will allow us to safely carry out our plans to re-open and give our various ministries the spaces needed to carry out their future plans.

Our first in-person gathering will take place in Fellowship Hall on May 30th. To prepare for the service, Travis, has worked tirelessly to transform Fellowship Hall into a refreshed place with polished floors, clean windows, and organized space (photo right). Fellowship Hall can now be considered both new and familiar, and with the work that's been done members can enter knowing that they gather in a safe and comfortable space.

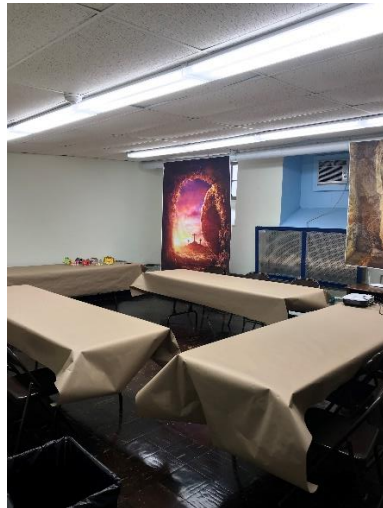
In addition to the changes that have taken place in Fellowship Hall, other rooms on the lower level have also received a fresh facelift. The rooms formerly known as the yoga room (photos 1 and 2) and the children's church room (photos 3 and 4) were treated to a deep cleaning, polished floors, and a paint job. New furniture will be added to provide space for youth Sunday School and for a dedicated youth "hang-out" room. Gab and the Youth Ministry team are thrilled they can re-organize the rooms in a way that makes sense for a variety of needs.



#1



#2



#3



#4



Finally, the Hospitality Center (not yet pictured) has been cleaned and updated. It remains a multi-use space for classes, VBS, meetings, the quilters, and other needs as they arise. This is what's been happening since the church has been closed; look for more updates to come.

## MEMBER CARE FOR THE CONGREGATION

We have a team of folks available to hear your concerns about any members who might be struggling, lonely, or need a phone call. Send an email with your concerns to one of the **Member Care Coordination Team:**

Cheryl Tarditi (Elder Representative) [cheryltarditi@gmail.com](mailto:cheryltarditi@gmail.com)

Rebeca Silva de Foote (Moderator of Deacons) [silvadefoote@verizon.net](mailto:silvadefoote@verizon.net)

Kelly Stout (Deacon Representative) [kellystout322@yahoo.com](mailto:kellystout322@yahoo.com)

Anne Vial (Administrator) [avial@haddonfieldpres.org](mailto:avial@haddonfieldpres.org)

Rev. Passante (Assoc. Pastor) [npassante@haddonfieldpres.org](mailto:npassante@haddonfieldpres.org)

Any questions or comments, please contact Pastor Nikki at [npassante@haddonfieldpres.org](mailto:npassante@haddonfieldpres.org)

## CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER LIST

Please keep members and friends of the congregation in your prayers. 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 still available for private requests sent directly to the pastors.*

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### ST. WILFRID'S OPEN DOOR CLINIC

One of our long time clients, who is an alcoholic and has liver cancer, told us her 22-year-old daughter died from an overdose. Velma's description of her daughter's passing made it sound like a normal, regular event; this is Camden. Losing a child is not a regular event for any parent, but in Camden, sadly, it seems to be. There is a reason that we volunteers are here and that she keeps coming every time we are open. She even prayed short prayers when we had prayer circles before the Pandemic. Please pray for her.

This week marks the **61st straight week** that the Open Door Clinic at St Wilfrid's has distributed food during the pandemic; **82 bags, 5,654 total. Over 141,350 pounds** of food and dry goods, distributed by the all-volunteer, everything donated, nobody gets paid, Open Door Clinic at St. Wilfrid's. Thank you all for your generous collections and contributions.

**NEEDS:** canned fruit, boxes of cereal, spaghetti sauce, bars of soap, deodorant. Also sandwich bags and gallon twist tie plastic bags. Also, we are beginning to collect box fans and backpacks. Items may be dropped off during the week in bins behind Grace Episcopal Church or during the drive-through at FPCH after the service Sundays from 11-12. If you have any questions or would be interested in volunteering please call Jill Mascena at 856-428-7342 and leave a message or check out the website at [www.opendoorcliniccamden.org](http://www.opendoorcliniccamden.org).

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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, May 25** is Isaiah 6:1-8. [Zoom link](#)

**Pastor Nikki's Bible Study:** Nikki's Bible Study is pausing for the summer. Watch for information about workshops Nikki will offer in the coming weeks.

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### WEEKLY CALENDAR

May 23 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race  
May 23 – 10 a.m. Online Worship – Pentecost  
May 23 – 10 a.m. 4th-grade Communion Class  
May 23 – Donations drive-through (Last time)  
May 25 – 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study  
May 25 – 7:30 p.m. Deacons  
May 30 – 10 a.m. IN-PERSON and Online Worship



Next page: an invitation and a thank-you...




South Jersey Vital Congregations Presents

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# VITAL VIGILS

First Wednesday of Every Month in 2021 at 7pm

**6th Vigil: June 2**  
**Labyrinth Walk**

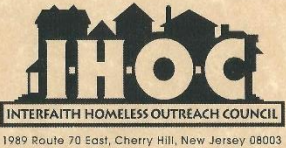
Gathering will be held at  
 Memorial Presbyterian Church  
 202 E. Mantua Ave. Wenonah, NJ 08090

The Gathering will:

- Give us an opportunity to walk a labyrinth
- Give resources for personal, group, and worship prayer practices
- Masks and social distancing required

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Join on Zoom Link in participant email  
 If you are not on our email list please  
 email [adminewjpres.net](mailto:adminewjpres.net) for zoom link



1989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08003

**Certificate of Appreciation**  
 Presented to

*First Presbyterian Church of Haddonfield*

*For your generous support of IHOC*

From the Officers and the Board of Trustees  
 IHOC's Annual Mall Walk  
 February 28, 2021