

THE TOWER TIE

The Newsletter of the
First Presbyterian Church of Goshen

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Luke 1:26–38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

"Do not be afraid," the angel says to Mary. In this time of darkness, the angel informs Mary that God has chosen her. God has chosen a young woman to do the impossible. She is a virgin, a life unlived—on the precipice of being lived—engaged to an upstanding man, Joseph, and this choice could jeopardize all that she has. Mary could have said no.

"Do not be afraid." Mary's acceptance of God's choice in her is what makes her holy.

The idea is that all of us are Godly, all of us are human. We realize that God chose a young woman. God chose to become one of us. God who could choose to be anyone, anything, chose to be like us; to join us humanly and humbly to experience the vulnerabilities of life—to grow up. Mary could have said no.

"Do not be afraid," the angel tells Mary, "You have found favor with God." God is growing within you. What if we are Mary? What if this is a parable about how God chooses us to have Christ grow inside all of us?

What if God is one within us, becoming one with us? This year I will be like Mary. I will accept God's choice in me.

"May everything you have said about me come true" (Luke 1:38). And then the angel left her.

Pastor Kingsley

**A friend recently shared this bold statement about the nature of the church in today's population.
Pastor Kingsley**

In response to a friend's post sharing an article about why there are so few children in church anymore, published in a Lutheran magazine, I offered the following response.

Robert Wuthnow, an American sociologist with specialties in sociology of religion has written "After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion" which is a wonderful assessment. To over-simplify his thesis, my parents and grandparents generations largely followed a pattern of finishing high school, going to work, getting married, having children, always involved in church. They were active in church and never had a gap of time away from church. Skipping quickly forward, boomers and later generations leave home for college, delay marriage, delay having children, and the resulting motive of having their children in church is removed if not heavily delayed. People check out, and they are approaching middle age when they plug back in for their children, if they come back at all.

I would also stress heavily that the church has not faithfully allowed the scriptures to evolve with what we know now from science, psychiatry, and medicine. Wouldn't the writers of the scriptures be rolling in their graves at our reticence to comprehend the faith story they were telling with limited knowledge of their times with new insights we have from what is known now? Some boomers and more x-ers, millennials, and others find this heavily flawed and archaic understanding of faith to be unacceptable, irrelevant, and even false, not seeing any value in church.

A damning quality of my boomer generation is that we look around for those who historically did all the work - fundraisers, dinners, socialization events, working committees - to keep doing it rather than picking up the torch ourselves. We're horribly spoiled! But our parents are elderly and disabled, if not dead. If we don't carry the beautiful labors of church work, why should our children, who still watch us to see what we value? I hope I'm seriously wrong, but I think the institutional church has maybe one more generation before it whimpers away. On the hopeful side, I trust the promise that God will raise up some other "body" that will faithfully make disciples for the transformation of the world.

2018 ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE
BY JANUARY 6, 2019

THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
IS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2019



Music Notes

In 2019 the church begins to celebrate its three hundredth birthday. We start a series of special programs with a coffee house in February. Details will be announced soon.

It was wonderful to receive a grant for the restoration of the historic organ in the church. What a great 300th birthday gift the finished product will be! We need to do the roof first. You have stepped up wonderfully to support the church for years...please keep it up! This church has stood tall in Goshen since 1720, and I'm sure you want it to be standing tall and burning brightly in the year 2320 AD!

In June, my tenure as chair of the Committee on Professional Certification, American Guild of Organists, will come to an end. I have been actively involved in that program for over a decade, in various roles, and it has been an incredibly rewarding journey. The Guild is chartered by the Board of Regents to administer professional certification exams. Our certificates are respected as important professional credentials the world over. My committee is responsible for overseeing the program and creating the annual exams.

What are we without mountains to climb, oceans to cross, moons to visit, challenges to overcome? Growing a church, building an organ, challenging one's musical skills, are all at the core of what makes us human. In the New Year, let's resolve to keep going.

Jonathan

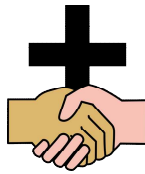


NOTES FROM the Presbyterian Women's Association...

The Presbyterian Women Association finished another successful year at First Presbyterian Church in Goshen. Our participation in the Deacon's Holiday Craft Fair was a success; final revenue totals will be included in the annual report. As 2018 winded down, PW sent checks to a variety of other good causes throughout the area; including the Warming Station at St. Paul's in Middletown, the People to People Fund, HONOR in Middletown and of course to our own Roof Fund and Organ Fund. PW collected, assembled and distributed 18 Christmas bags to church members who've had a hard time getting to church this year or who we felt just needed a hug from PW.

A reminder that ALL WOMEN of the church are members of PW. It would be wonderful to see more faces at our monthly meetings. Our next meeting will be in the parlor on the first Monday in March 2019.

Hope to see you there!



News from the Outreach

Together We Get Through It

We are so happy that this group is so successful and hope that if you know someone who needs to come and benefit by this service, please spread the word. Please let them know that they can find the parlor by coming through the church office door on Park Place. Meetings are at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday each month.

Post cards

We care about our members and when we do not see you or you are not signing the red books in the pew, we send a post card from us letting you know that we miss you. We know lives get busy and sometimes you do not make it to church, but we really do miss seeing you. So if there is something going on, you need help, someone is ill, please let us know so we can help.

Visitors/Members

In each pew there are red registers for you to sign to acknowledge your presence with us. When visitors sign the register and leave their address, we like to respond with a letter of thanks for joining us. The red register serves as a tool to know who may not have been in church for a while and need a card or a call to let them know we miss them. The Outreach Committee asks members that if they sit near someone new, to please ask them to sign the register, invite them to come to coffee hour, and if they are interested in joining, to seek out one of the committee members or call the church office and speak to Pat. The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who seeks out our visitors and makes them feel welcome.

We will be having a new member class in January. The dates are as follows – Sunday, January 13th and Sunday, January 20th in the parlor right after church. On Wednesday, January 23 they will come and meet the Elders at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. They will be received as members on Sunday, January 27th during the worship service. Please let Darlene, Lisa, Cliff, Deb, Wendy, or the church office know so that we can prepare the folders for each person.

Prayer Shawls

Six prayer shawls have gone out this past month to those who needed a hug and a baby blanket. If you know someone who may need a shawl, please let Darlene, Lisa, Barbara Hankins, Barbara Schust or Pat in the office know and she will pass on to the committee. We can always use help crocheting shawls.

Community Dinner

If you know of a committee or a group that would like to host, we have August and September open.

A Challenging Future

In the United States between 4000 and 6000 churches close each year, between 100-200 every week (<https://factsandrends.net/2018/01/16/hope-for-dying-churches/>). Locally, six Presbyterian churches in the Hudson Presbytery shut their doors in the last four years. Unfortunately, these trends seem likely to continue. Here at First Presbyterian Goshen, coming out of the joy of Christmas and into the New Year, we enter that little known ecclesiastical season, budget season. FPG, like most churches, runs a deficit budget. This means that we generally spend more than we take in and hope for the best. Some amount of hope is normal, too much of it though and you end up joining the ranks of the 100 churches closing their doors this week.

Here's a quick review of our budget and some of its issues. With apologies to all the accountants out there, we're going to use some round numbers. On the expense side, we have staff, programs and the building. Roughly speaking, staff costs us, all-in with benefits, etc. about \$220,000 a year. The building costs us another \$130,000. Programs amount to \$40,000; \$390,000 total. Let's call it roughly \$400,000. That's not counting "special" expenses like roofs and organs and such.

We had 77 families pledge about \$150,000 last year and this year will probably be about the same. So we need about \$250,000 to magically appear each year. Luckily our tall church tower provides rent from some cellular companies to the tune of almost \$100,000 leaving us just short another \$150,000. So we fundraise; Great American Weekend, Plant Sales, Rummage Sales, etc. It seems like every week there's some kind of new fund raiser. All that fundraising brings in about another \$20,000 a year. Unfortunately, that still leaves us \$130,000 short. Let's just call it \$100,000 short. That's a good round number.

Which brings us back to budget season. The Finance Committee, and in turn the Session, are trying to figure out how to bring the ends together. Budget cuts are difficult on several levels. There's nothing we can do about building expenses short of finding a smaller and cheaper building. A lot of churches do this, but given our beautiful historic space, this an unlikely choice for us. The staff is critical to the church's function. Sermons, music, newsletters, programs - none of that seems optional. Programs can be cut, but as a church, programs are our mission. Why exist without doing the things we're supposed to be doing in our community as Christians? Failing to cut costs, we need a plan for getting more revenue. Easier said than done, but the math isn't hard. Maybe we could fundraise more? We fundraise a lot now so more doesn't really seem possible. Bake sales are great, but it takes an awfully large number of bake sales to raise \$100k.

How about pledges? 77 families giving \$150k means an average of roughly \$2k per family. We could get that average to \$3k. That would do it. Or we could get another 75 families, which might do it. Or we could just get Bill Gates to join the church and pledge \$100k per year. That seems unlikely.

This is obviously a difficult subject but as members of the church we're all invested in caring for the future of First Presbyterian Goshen. We're blessed with many multi-generational memberships. We should strive to pass a church to our children that's strong and vibrant, not a shell hanging on by a thread.

In closing, here are some things we want to make sure you know -

1. We are very grateful for our members, what they've done for the church in the past, and what they do for the church today. It's why we're still standing.
2. We are very grateful for the non-members who visit or attend our church. It's our mission to bring God's word to the community. At some point we hope that they become active members of a church. We'd like it to be us, but that's up to God, not us.
3. We are worried about the future. What we're doing isn't sustainable.
4. We are open to ideas. If you have one, please talk to any of the members of the finance team or the Session.

5. In many things you often don't get what you want, you get what you work and sacrifice for. As members we won't always have the church we want, but we will eventually find ourselves in the church we support financially. Please consider doing what you can to support the church you want to have.

6. Thanks. If you've read this whole article, you definitely care. And that's the first step towards a solution. :)

Respectfully,

The Finance and Administrative Committee

Scott Roper

Deb Hourahan

Bill Hodges

Mal Stewart

Ken Phelan

For the Year Ahead

And I said to the man who
stood at the gate of the year:
Give me a light that I may
tread safely into the unknown!

And he replied:
Go out into the darkness
and put thine hand into
the Hand of God!

That shall be to thee better
than light and safer than
a known way.

M. Louise Haskins

PAY YOUR PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT FOR 2019

Every year, the Presbytery of the Hudson River charges every member church an assessment according to the current active membership. Our recorded active membership is currently **314** and **our assessment per member** (not per family) **for 2019 is \$38.80**, which is a total of **\$12,183.20** to be taken from our operating budget. If you haven't already done so, please assist with this expense and write a check for your family assessment and either mail it to the church or place it in the Sunday offering plate. Thanks for doing your share.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE BLANKETS - A Mission Opportunity

Comfort, Warmth, Compassion

A CWS blanket can provide warmth and shelter, comfort and privacy, and healing and hope wherever God's people may need care.

From January – June 2018, 19,201 blankets were distributed in United States alone.

CWS envelopes will be in the church bulletin on January 27 and February 3, 2019. Kindly put your donation in the envelope (or use the special offering envelopes in the pews) and place in the offering plate. Checks should be made out to "First Presbyterian Church in Goshen" and write "CWS Blankets" in the memo section.

Every dollar donated will make a difference. Whether you donate a dollar or one hundred or more, all money will go towards the purchase of the \$10.00 CWS blankets.

MISSION TRIP 2019

In July 2019, we will travel to the Dominican Republic to build homes for those in need! We will be working through Bridges to Community (as we did when we went to Nicaragua.) The trip is July 20-27th.

We will hold an information meeting on Sunday January 13, 2019 after church. Please join us then to learn more.

If you are interested in joining us or you have questions contact Mark Glasse at (845-325-4439 or mpglasse@optonline.net) or the church office.

The Mission Committee

MISSION NEWS – Habitat for Humanity of Newburgh

Would you like to be a part of our 8-person work team to Habitat Newburgh on Saturday, January 19?

We will meet in the church parking lot at 7:30 a.m. and return at 1:30 p.m.

You must be at least 18-years-old. **Contact:** Sue Varden in church, or reach her at svarden@hvc.rr.com or 845-649-7830.

TIDBITS FROM THE TOWER

HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAYS TO:

1	<i>Steve Coon</i>	14	<i>Alexandria Cox</i>
	<i>Stephen Serkes</i>	16	<i>Ed Berry</i>
	<i>Chris Viebrock</i>	17	<i>Sam Fontana</i>
5	<i>Wayne George</i>	18	<i>Tanya Hagopian</i>
8	<i>Alayna Fuller</i>	20	<i>Logan Diglio</i>
	<i>Hannah Warner</i>		<i>Laura Pietropaolo</i>
10	<i>Audra Cox</i>	25	<i>Sam Boese</i>
	<i>Nicholas Gati</i>	26	<i>Emmanuel Phillips</i>
11	<i>Susan Stewart</i>	31	<i>Maddie Laskoski</i>
12	<i>Scott Roper</i>		<i>Sara Laskoski</i>
13	<i>Don Dinsmore</i>		<i>Richard Paulus</i>
	<i>Molly Farley</i>		
	<i>Ryan Farley</i>		
	<i>Whitney Schindley</i>		



HAPPY JANUARY ANNIVERSARY TO:

13 *Heather and Brian Case*

*If you are also celebrating a special day, we wish you much happiness.
If you would like your birthday and/or anniversary included, please give your
dates to Pat in the church office.*

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA UPDATE

Last month we had another successful Breakfast with Santa. It is such a joy to watch the children pick out a gift for someone special and meet Santa for the first time or talk to him like they are old friends.

It is with much sadness that I have to say this was my last Santa Breakfast. Due to my health issues over the past almost two years, I can't keep up and am relying on my husband to handle things that I can't.

This was my 9th year and every year has always been better than the last. I started out not knowing anything about the breakfast, and now I've got the most wonderful volunteers that say "yes" before I even have a chance to ask.

I hope someone steps up to do this rewarding service for our church. I have everything written down with complete list of what to do. I'm here to help with the transition.

Thank you so much to everyone.
Kathy Stringer



PRAYER CORNER

The following members or friends are going through a time in which they have asked for prayer by the church. Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Colin Alevras	Ron and Kathy Alevras	Ed Berry
Ann (Strong) Blake	Sarah Bohling	Susie Bohling
Marilyn Borth	Tommy, Amy, and Makayla Brahs	John Burleson
Jessica Chasen and Jackson Doebla	Linda Di Meo	Everyone serving in the Military
James, Max, and Liam Feragola	Mary Lee Farris and her sister	Judy Fazio
Esther Glassé	Matthew Gould	Barbara and George Hankins
Kevin and Sara Hankins	Georgia Hickey	Kris Hill
Susan Johnson	Joseph	Rosemary Joy
The Keahon Family	Regina Kenny	David Kingsley
Linda Koch	Mary Kopec's cousin, Cathy	Jeff Kott and Natalia
Brenda Kujawski	Margo Kumpf	James Lowry
Karen Magee	Kelly Magee Thrush	Ruth Maney
Evelyn Mercado	Bob Montalbano	Richard Montalbano
Eileen Myslinski	Amy (Thompson) Nguye	Dean Oberg
Josephine Pecoraro	The Family of Jim Pellegrini	Richard Paulus and Family
Carlos and Miarose Reyes	Natalie Roger	Marge (Chasen) Rolan
Jennifer Serkes and Family	Tom Sawyer	Gary Smith
Louise Spencer	Peggy Srirach	Kathy Stringer
Barbara Hankins' sister, Virginia Stubenrauch		Lise Suenson
Christopher Tucker	Danny Tucker and Family	Cindy Vanderplaat
Kenneth Van Etten	June Vautin	The Wade Family
Jo Wolfe	Anne Wood's brother-in-law Dennis	Sandra Wood
Orra Wood	Vicki Yost	

(If you or someone you know would like to be on this list or if you would like to take a name off the list, please call the church office and the name(s) will be included/omitted next month.)

Maney-Hawkins Meditation Garden



JANUARY UPDATE

Memorial Pavers

The serenity of The Meditation Garden is there even in the heart of winter... enjoy!

To order a memorial paver to honor or remember your loved ones, please see Pat in the church office. The cost of each paver is only \$100.

Prayerfully Consider a Donation to the Meditation Garden

It's a great way to keep your church's sacred outdoor space well-funded for the future
and well maintained in the present. PLUS: it's tax deductible!

5 Niches Remain Available for Purchase in the Memorial Columbarium

Each niche allows for double or single interment with four purchase options:

Payment in Full = \$2,500

12-Month Payment Option = \$250 / month for 12 months (\$3,000)

24-Month Payment Option = \$130 / month for 24 months (\$3,120)

36-Month Payment Option = \$ 90 / month for 36 months (\$3,240)

"Stewards of Our Garden"

Special thanks to our dedicated Stewards for keeping the garden neat!

The JANUARY/EARLY FEBRUARY Steward's Schedule:

Bill Eustance	January 1 – January 15
Barbara and George Hankins	January 16 – January 31
Beryl Yungman	February 1 – February 14

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

We could certainly use a few extra "Helping Hands."

YOU can be a Steward of Our Garden on any day of the week!

It takes only a few minutes of your time to pick up any litter, pull a weed, sweep a few pavers clean, or gather a few leaves and you too can help keep YOUR garden beautiful! Contact Pat in the church office to sign up and be added to our Steward's schedule.

Call the church office (845-294-7991), Rev. Kingsley, or Wayne George (914-213-4093)
for any information you may need about The Maney-Hawkins Meditation Garden.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we shall seek to use our gifts through worship, ministry, and mission, to gather the Church in from the world, to continue to nurture one another, to serve a world still broken, and to exemplify through common values and purposes Christian discipleship to the greater glory of God.

BOARD OF ELDERS

Class of 2019

**Linda Boardman
Geri Corey
William Eustance
Brad McLeland
Brian Meek
Malcolm Stewart**

Class of 2020

**Darlene Bartley
George Hankins
Deb Hourahan
Barbara Thompson
Sue Varden
Rob Warner**

Class of 2021

**Mark Glasse
Bill Hodges
Lori Kilmer
Ken Phelan
John Redman
Scott Roper**

Clerk of Session: Sue Varden

BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2019

**Liese Boese
Margaret Dickover
Jon Hourahan
Carolyn Keller
Jody Kopec
Logan Quick
Felicia Van Doran**

Class of 2020

**Diane Church
Carol Gabella
Jane Geyer
Gina Gruber
Mary Kopec
Betty Lobb
Charlie von Pentz**

Class of 2021

**Michael Coyne
Allison Csernai
Don Dinsmore
Patrick Ellis
Paty Glasse
Barbara Schust
George Schust**

**Moderator of Deacons:
Presbyterian Women:**

Carolyn Keller

STAFF

**Jonathan B. Hall, Minister of Music
Patricia Schwetje, Church Secretary
Deborah Hourahan, Church Treasurer
Anne Wood, CLP – Mission Pastor to Sullivan County**