



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF  
YORKTOWN

# *The* DISCIPLE

December 2022

## Save the Dates:

December 11  
Congregational  
Meeting  
11:45am

December 14  
12:00pm  
Christmas  
Lunch Bunch

December 21  
7:30 pm  
Longest Night  
Service

December 24  
3:00 pm  
Christmas  
Pageant and  
Family Service

7:00 pm  
Christmas Eve  
Service with  
Candle  
Lighting

11:00 pm  
Christmas Eve  
Service with  
Candle  
Lighting

December 25  
Christmas Day  
10:30 am  
One Worship  
Service



*Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given!  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

"Now in Flesh Appearing." That line from the fourth verse of the beloved Christmas carol "O Come, All Ye Faithful" guides our Advent theme this year. We sing the carol every year on Christmas Eve to invite us into the celebration of the Word-made-flesh who dwells among us. The fourth verse is our response to the good news that has been born in Bethlehem. "Yea, Lord, we greet thee..." the verse begins. Like so many before us, we gather to welcome the One who became one of us, who is "now in flesh appearing."

But what does it mean for us to sing, "Word of the Father / now in flesh appearing"? And where is God now in flesh appearing? That's what we hope to discover this Advent season – ways of understanding "now in flesh appearing" for our life and faith, not just for Christmas day or Christmas past, but in the life we live, the ministry we share all throughout the year, and even in creation itself.

To discover answers to those questions, it's helpful to pay attention to when God appears in flesh, according to the hymn. "Now," it says. The hymn doesn't intend for us to go back in time and celebrate a past event as a one-time moment. That would separate us from the event and make it historical, an event we memorialize but don't really experience today. Instead, this phrase celebrates the incarnation of God's love now. Now is when the Word-made-flesh is appearing. It was not in the past, it is now, today, and it will be now in the future, as well.

(Continued on page 2)

The Gospel of John invites us to consider how God is appearing now when it says, “The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...” According to John, it seems that no one was looking for the presence of God, not even creation. They weren’t ready to receive God when God appeared in the substance of creation or as a human being.

That, then, is our hope for this Advent season, that we would put ourselves in a posture that is ready to receive God “now in flesh appearing” this year, that is, to receive God’s hope, peace, joy, and love in the myriad ways they are appearing to us every day. To receive those gifts, I wonder how we need to prepare ourselves to greet God, as the hymn says. If we approach this season with an openness and curiosity to how God is now in flesh appearing, what abundance of hope, peace, joy, and love we will see of the presence of God in creation and humanity that is waiting to be revealed.

The good news of our faith invites us to receive the presence of God in creation, in the Word-made-flesh, in one another, and in creation. Advent is the season of the year that nurtures our practice of receiving that good news, not only in preparation for Christmas Day, but as a practice of our faith throughout the year. I hope you will join us in this Advent season of preparation as we worship and study together, serve and fellowship together, all to prepare ourselves to receive the good news on Christmas Day and greet God throughout the coming year.



Chip



Jami



## Christmas Week Services

### Wednesday, December 21

7:30 pm Longest Night Service (in-person and online)

Join us for our traditional Longest Night Service with scripture readings, prayer, candle lighting, music and hymns.

*We gather to remember the darkness in our lives, to acknowledge our struggles and sorrows, and to seek God’s light and hope.*

### Saturday, December 24 (all services will be in-person and online)

3:00 pm Christmas Pageant and Family Service

7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service with Candle Lighting\*

11:00 pm Christmas Eve Service with Candle Lighting\*

\*prelude music will begin 15 minutes before

### Sunday, December 25

10:00 am Worship Service



### THE MONTHLY SCOOP

#### A Special Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown

Will be held in person and on zoom (hybrid) on Sunday, December 11, 2022  
following the 10:30 AM Worship for the purpose of:

- The election of six Ruling Elders, Class of 2025;
- The election of four Deacons, Class of 2025;
- The election of two Deacons, Class of 2023;
- To amend a portion of the Bylaws of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown to permit more flexibility in the number of Ruling Elders, Youth Elders, Deacons, and Youth Deacons. (See below)
- And to conduct any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Proposed Amendment to the Bylaws  
of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown:

*(Added changes are in Italics)*

**Section XIII. Elders:** The congregation shall elect up to eighteen (18) Elders divided into equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the Election Meeting for a three year term. The rest of Section XIII remains as written.

**Section XIV. Youth Elders:** The congregation shall elect up to two (2) Youth Elders at the election meeting for a one year term. The rest of Section XIV remains as written.

**Section XV. Deacons:** The congregation shall elect up to twelve (12) Deacons divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the Election meeting for a three year term. The rest of Section XV remains as written.

**Section XVI. Youth Deacons:** The congregation shall elect up to two (2) Youth Deacons at the Election Meeting for a one year term. The rest of Section XVI remains as written.

*A copy of the current Bylaws of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown (Adopted December 12, 2021) are available on the FPCY website.*



#### Special Congregational Meeting

Being held Sunday, Dec. 11th  
after the second service  
to elect next class of elders and deacons  
and to amend church bylaws



Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation From the Center for Action and Contemplation Week Forty-Eight: *The Future of Christianity*  
THE LIVING CHURCH

*CAC teacher Rev. Dr. Barbara Holmes finds hope in the innovative, Spirit-empowered resilience of the Black church in the United States. In CAC's recent webcast, The Future of Christianity, she reflected:*

The contemplative movement—which is now finding roots in BIPOC [1] congregations and African-American traditional denominations—is growing, and I'm watching more and more people turn away from an entertainment-focused worship style and leaning more toward a growth that is internal rather than external. One of the reasons that the Black church has focused so much on music and exhortation is because in order to survive or to remain Christian, we had to look beyond the tenets of Christianity to the mystical. We had to be able to transcend, and the transcendence comes when you are singing a song that reaches a place that words can't.

I was in church last Sunday, and we go to a very tiny little church on purpose, because I'm always looking for places where there's a breakthrough of the presence of the Divine. I'm not so interested in articulate sermons. And they started singing a song "God Did It Suddenly"—this is before the preacher even took the pulpit—but suddenly there was this moment where everything changed: "God changed the way I walk, the way I talk, changed my attitude, and God did it suddenly." It's that understanding—that God can enter in, no matter how devious the Christian tenets have become with regard to race, and suddenly change everything, can change the hearts of your enemies, can make you strong enough to be able to stand, can give you power and can give you strength.

The other thing that made us stay Christian, I think, is that we read the Bible differently, thank God. We saw Jesus walking on water and acting like a shaman. We know shamans. We saw the walls of Jericho fall from walking. And we knew that this God that allowed us to be transported in chains from Africa was the God who could also free us. So we weren't listening to what they told us Christianity was; we had an understanding of Christianity rooted in our own African understandings.

*In Holmes's experience, leadership and ministry didn't come from official ordination, but from the movement of the Holy Spirit among the people: You always knew who had the gifts, 'cause they couldn't fake it. If in their presence folks got healed, that was a healer. If they could walk up to you and tell you what your life had been and what was going to happen tomorrow, that was a discerner. And so there are all these gifted people around but they didn't have any power within church structures, which made people like me realize that the real power was not in the structure of the church, but in the living church. The gifted prophets in our midst.*

[1] BIPOC is an acronym for Black, Indigenous, People of Color.

Yours in harmony,  
Garrett





## FAITH STUDIES

### The Christmas Story in Four Gospels

Have you ever looked at the Christmas story in each of the four gospels? You might be thinking, wait, there's no Christmas story in Mark or John! Join us as we examine the story we (think) we know well and the story that is less obvious. Join us on Thursday mornings at 10, or Sunday mornings at 9:15, in the library or on Zoom. The Sunday class will begin on Sunday, November 27 and the Thursday class will begin on Thursday, December 1. Please have a Bible handy. You might also want to have paper and a writing instrument as we work our way through these stories.

Join us on **Sunday evenings** from 7 until 8:30 for a discussion of John Philip Newell's book, *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul*. Books will be available in the office. Contact Tami if you want to join us via zoom.

Join us for **Centering Prayer** every Wednesday evening at 7, in the library or on Zoom.

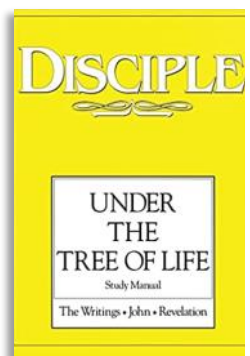
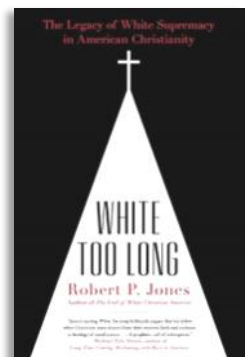
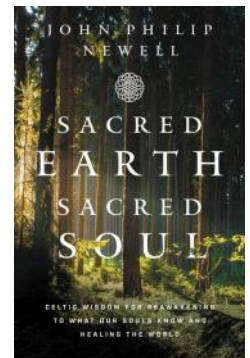
The **Men's Breakfast** will be held on Saturday, December 10 at 8:00am in our Fellowship Hall

The **Tuesday morning** Faith4Life class will continue discussing *White Too Long*.

The **Wednesday night Disciple** group continues at 7:30, in person and on Zoom.

Important: Please note that you do not have to be a member of our congregation to join us for any of these offerings. If you know someone who would like to participate in any of these discussion groups, feel free to invite them to attend a session of something that interests them.

Contact Connie Knapp or Tami Seidel for Zoom information to join any of the classes online.





# Sunday School



"Happy December from a very busy Sunday School!! We are so happy that Sunday School is thriving and that so many students are participating every week. As ever we are eternally grateful to our fabulous teachers for all the work they have been doing with our children. We are so blessed!

As a reminder, with attendance being so high **we are still in need of teachers and substitutes**, so if you are interested in helping (no experience necessary!) please reach out to Miranda McGill or Wanda Diaz.

The Christmas pageant is fast approaching and we are hoping to see as many faces as possible at this wonderful event. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy, and peaceful New Year!"

**Register your children and youth here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/FPCY-SundaySchool-2022-23>

- Our youngest students, up through grade 4, are learning all about God's big love in Shine
- 5th & 6th graders are connecting to the lessons in the Hebrew scriptures in Connect,
- 7th & 8th graders are exploring the journey of God's people in FaithX.
- 9th – 12th graders are pondering big thoughts and wrestling with big questions in Fathom,



# FPCY YOUTH GROUPS

All Middle and High School Youth are invited to join in on Christmas Caroling on December 18th from 3:30 to 6:30!

We'll meet up at 3:30 at the church, bring holiday cheer and joy to senior members of our community and then warm back up again with cocoa and snacks afterwards.

Out of care and love for our neighbors, we will keep our singing strictly outdoors so that we don't carry any germs from house to house, so please plan on wearing your most festive and weather appropriate outerwear. Reindeer antlers, elf ears, and Santa hats are strongly encouraged (as are masks if you so choose). A well-polished singing voice is not required, but a desire to make a joyful noise is.

Adults who want to tag along and/or help drive us around are also invited! Please let us know if you can come by following this link: <https://tinyurl.com/FPCY-Youth-Caroling2022> or scanning the QR code.

Any questions, please reach out to Steph Hare [stephanie@fpcyorktown.org](mailto:stephanie@fpcyorktown.org)

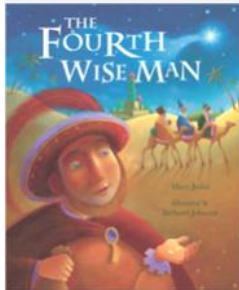
We can't wait to see you!



## YOUTH GROUP



## IN THE LIBRARY—CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS BOOKS



Since the Christmas season is upon us, here are a few seasonal books from the church library:

**The Fourth Wise Man** by Mary Joslin is the beloved classic of a French legend showing there is more to Christmas than anything money can buy.

**One Wintry Night** by Ruth Bell Graham. An injured boy, caught in a snowstorm, takes refuge in a cabin and hears the Christmas story.

**Song of the Stars** by Sally Lloyd-Jones. All creation celebrates Jesus' birth.

**Journey to Bethlehem** by Akiko Kageyama tells the biblical birth story, Beautifully illustrated.

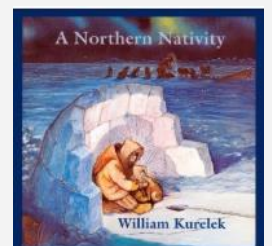
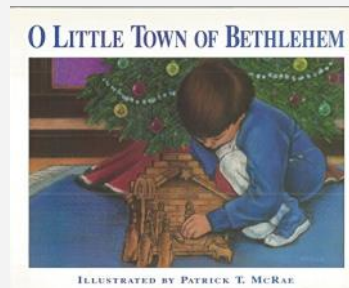
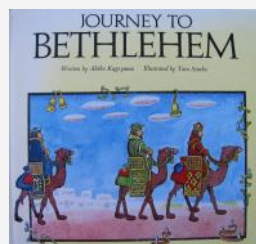
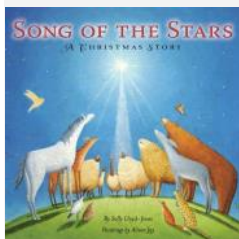
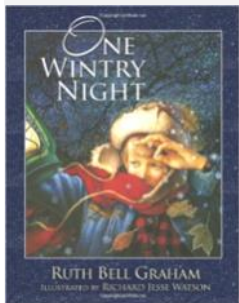
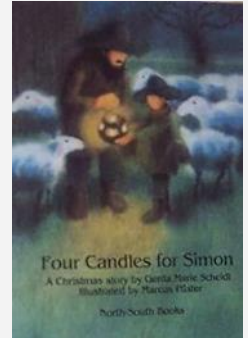
**A Baby is Coming** by Daphna Flegal tells the biblical birth story. Beautifully illustrated with text in both English and Spanish.

**O Little Town of Bethlehem** has the text of the beloved hymn, with illustrations by Patrick T. McRae that depict a family preparing for and experiencing Christmas.

**A Northern Nativity** by William Kurelek takes place in the dreams of a boy who sees the story unfold in various prairie and Eskimo settings.

**Four Candles for Simon** by Gerda Marie Scheidl describes a shepherd boy looking for his lost lamb and finding it along with a baby in a manger.

**A Small Miracle** by Peter Collington tells a story with no words at all, just a series of illustrations that show a starving old woman being rescued by townspeople after she used her last bit of strength to assemble a vandalized nativity scene in a village church.



Carol Jensen, Church Librarian



### BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

#### FPCY Bereavement Group

A bereavement group is meeting weekly at the church on Mondays at 10 am.

As we experience grief, at all stages, it is important to talk to people about our loss and pain. In this group, it is not necessary to hide or deny our feelings. We can learn to be grateful for those with the compassion and openness to hear our pain and stay with us--as we all travel this journey together.

Facilitating the group will be Judy Chessa and Dolores Vidal-Roy. Please contact Judy (914-552-2509) or Dolores (914-980-6877) to register or if you have any questions.

God heals the broken-hearted,  
and binds up their wounds. ~Psalm 147:3



### FPCY Bereavement Group

#### Prayer Shawl

Our next in-person meetings will be:

December 7 at 9:30am

December 21 at 10:30 am

If you need yarn or project guidance  
contact Marianna Sherman  
(914-737-8294)



#### Knit Together

We will distribute baby blankets and lap blankets to local groups in December. Our next meeting date is Monday, December 12 at 10:00 am in the church library. All knitters are welcome to join us; Yarn is available. For information call Norean Radke 914-962-4370 (or email [radke30@msn.com](mailto:radke30@msn.com)).

# LOVE WITH SKIN ON – HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS



## Jan Peek and Noontime Meal: Thanks for 2022; We Need You in 2023

First, we'd like to express our gratitude to the many Jan Peek House and Noontime Meal volunteers who have helped us this year (or are scheduled to do so soon):

### Jan Peek House:

January: Donna Gresh, Christine Lazarus and

Wendy & Peter Eagleton & family

February: Barbara Wanamaker and Judy Vlad & family

March: Jennifer Rowe-Behun, Amy and Vinny Wallace,  
and Deborah Szanto-Phillips

April: Nance Thompson, Pam Darreff and Judy Chessa

May: Diane Hawlk, Courtney Donnelly and Kaycee Perry

June: Gloria Coccodrilli, Beth Coccodrilli & family, and  
Jennifer Rowe-Behun

July: Liza Placido and Liana & Guy Grieco

August: Barbara Wanamaker and Judy Vlad & family

September: Nance Thompson, Sue Caruso, Carolyn Braverman

October: Donna Gresh, Robin Corpolongo and Elaine Heyde

November: Abby Cross (with her son's Taekwondo class)

December: Nance Thompson

(coordinating catering by Cole's Market and our Christmas Cookie drive)

Noontime Meal: The meal was catered in January and February; then we switched to a cheaper model whereby a member of the congregation ordered the food from ShopRite and delivered it to the Salvation Army in Peekskill.

March & April: Donna Gresh

May: Pam Darreff

June: Diane Hawlk

July & August: Heidi Haring

September: Pam Darreff

October: Sheri Gausepohl

November & December: Charles and Ruth Barton

Thanks to all of you for helping us with these important missions that allow us to understand and serve our neighbors.



Regarding 2023, we are urgently in need of volunteers to provide dinners to the residents of Jan Peek House in 2023, Particularly:

January 28th  
February 25th  
and March 25th.

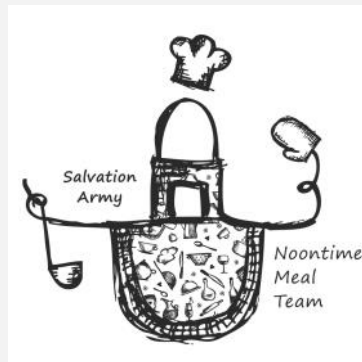


Sign up is easy: just scan the code or visit:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050e45aea62fa1fb6-janpeek>  
and claim a slot.

We are also in need of a volunteer for Noontime Meal for February 7, 2023. This would require approximately one hour of your time anywhere between 11am and 4pm on that date. The Noontime Meal activity entails ordering groceries (rotisserie chickens, potato salad and apples) from the ShopRite in Mohegan Lake, picking them up and delivering them to the Salvation Army in Peekskill (located less than 10 minutes from the ShopRite). If you are potentially interested and would like to know more, please contact Jeff Kephart at [jeffkephart@gmail.com](mailto:jeffkephart@gmail.com).

After February or March, we hope to move to a new model in which we prepare the Noontime Meal in our own kitchen. We had a group of Seniors who did this in the past. If you have ideas about how we can resurrect this wonderful practice or if you might be willing to participate, please contact Jeff Kephart ([jeffkephart@gmail.com](mailto:jeffkephart@gmail.com)).



Sincerely,  
Jeff Kephart. Chair, Hunger Action Team



## Share your Christmas Cookies with the Residents of Jan Peek

On the fourth Saturday of each month, three families from our church deliver a hot meal to the residents currently experiencing homelessness at the Jan Peek House in Peekskill. In December, this happens to fall on Christmas Eve. Given how busy this day is for our church community, the Hunger Action Team has decided to alter our usual routine. The meal itself will be catered by Cole's Market. But there is still a big role that you can play!

If you're already planning to make Christmas cookies for your family and friends, why not make a somewhat bigger batch and give an extra dozen or two cookies to the residents at Jan Peek? The cookies -- along with the love and care you bake into them -- will bring extra cheer at what can be an especially stressful time of the year. Perhaps, as you eat your cookies amidst the many comforts and blessings of home, you will imagine our neighbors at Jan Peek -- who are currently in a less comfortable and blessed position in their lives -- enjoying those same cookies. You might contemplate what other more substantial things you could do to help (such as volunteering for a Jan Peek meal in 2023).

If you'd like to contribute cookies to this cause, then please let us know by December 16th. There are two options:

- a) contact Nance Thompson at [bsnwahoo@gmail.com](mailto:bsnwahoo@gmail.com) or
- b) use Signup Genius. Scan the code or visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050e45aea62fa1fb6-janpeek> and click on the "Cookie Baker" role on December 24th, then click the blue "Submit and Signup" button at the bottom of the page. You will see a Quantity dropdown. Please use it to indicate how many dozen cookies you plan to contribute.



There are two cookie collection dates. One option is to leave your cookies at the drop-off table in Fellowship Hall/Gathering Space (depending on the state of the kitchen renovation) on Sunday December 18th before noon. The second option is to leave your cookies on the table in the library on Friday December 23rd sometime before 3pm. If you're using Signup Genius, it would be helpful if you could indicate in the comments your likely collection date. If you need to make alternative arrangements, please contact Nance Thompson.

Please consider bringing a little Christmas cheer to our neighbors at Jan Peek.

Sincerely,  
The FPCY Hunger Action Team



**Did you know that Amazon will give 0.5% of eligible purchases to FPCY if you set the church as your designated charity in the Amazon Smile program?**

Just go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to set the church as your charity, and from then on, every time you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) the contribution will automatically happen! There are even browser extensions that will redirect you automatically to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) every time you shop at Amazon.

So consider going to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) today to set things up!

## BREAKFAST RUN THANK YOU!



Big thanks to all who contributed to and participated in sorting, packing and going on our November Breakfast Run! We served breakfast to approximately 45 people on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. In addition to food, we distributed sweatshirts, socks, underwear, scarves, period products, and toiletries.

Along with our own volunteers from FPCY, we were grateful to be able to share the experience with volunteers from our larger community, including with a staff member from Fox Lane High School. Students from Fox Lane supported the Run by collecting socks and providing donuts and muffins as a part of our breakfast offerings. The students hope to be able to plan their own Breakfast or Midnight Run with the knowledge they gained from supporting ours.

*Speaking of plans, we plan to do a Midnight Run in the early Spring, so watch for more information on how you can participate in the Run as a donor and or volunteer "Runner".*

## FPCY PANTRY NEWS



### Pantry Thanks

Thanksgiving Pantry gratitude — The Thanksgiving Pantry on November 19 was our largest ever, with nearly 250 families receiving dry goods, poultry and produce for their holiday meals. We are so grateful for all the support we received from the congregation and the community. With apologies if the following long list still missed someone -- Thank you to our volunteers, who packed hundreds of bags of groceries and produce on Friday afternoon and distributed them in the cold of Saturday morning; to the men who answered the call to help with traffic flow early on Saturday morning; to the Yorktown Federation of Teachers, who donated nearly 1000 food items, and to the Knights of Columbus who brought an additional 500 items; to the Elks Club for their generous cash donation; to the countless people from our congregation and from St Patrick's that donated (we think) over 60 turkeys; to Wilkens

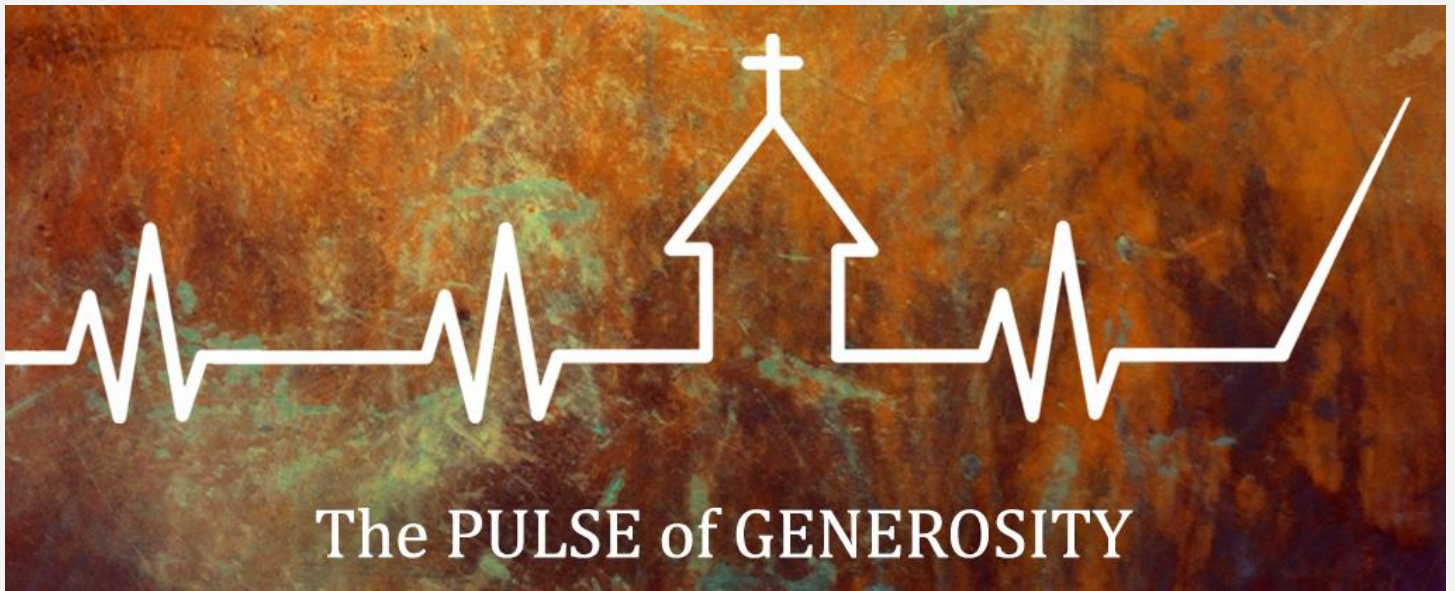
Farm and Meadows Farm for their produce donations; and to Feeding Westchester for supplying most of our dry goods free of charge.

### Item-of-the-Month: Healthy Cereals

*The majority of the food we offer at our Pantry comes to us from Feeding Westchester. Some items we like to distribute are in short supply. Your contribution of the item-of-the-month can help fill the gap! A donation bin is by the back doors.*

**Next Pantry Dates:  
December 3, 17 & 31\*  
8 to 11am**

**\*We are adding an extra pantry date to fill in the gap between our second December pantry and the first January pantry.**



This Fall the Stewardship Commission asked members of FPCY to speak about their motivation to be generous. We are happy to share Abby Cross's words with you and hope that you will find inspiration in them. Abby was scheduled to share these during the service, but she was "COVID positive" that day.



Hi! I'm Abby Cross, and I wear a few hats at FPCY – I am on the Gathering Time team for Sunday School, I sing in the Choir, I lead 30 minutes of Contemplative Prayer every Wednesday (online and in person), I am in the Disciple discussion group, I'm co-chair of the Worship Design commission, and I am in my third year as a Session member.

Way back when, at my first Session meeting, I had no idea what to expect. I knew Session sometimes makes hard decisions that affect a lot of people, and I imagined that not everyone agrees all the time. With some anxiety I wondered if, like in the US Congress, the occasional disgruntled Session member would stand up, open the Bible, and start reading genealogies aloud in an attempt to filibuster during particularly contentious discussions...

In almost three years on Session, no one has filibustered, but what really struck right away in that first meeting was the commitment -- as a group -- by Session to be generous. One of the topics that night was how we take care of our staff, and we were looking carefully at the budget. I was pleasantly surprised at how everyone in the room was, without hesitation, dedicated to living out our faith through our resources. It was inspirational, and impressive that even behind closed doors our governing body returns to our professed principles to do the work we can, in any way we can, to

build God's kingdom here on earth.

It occurs to me that generosity must be contagious. Like the story of Stone Soup that Debbie Hager read at the CrossGen event, and then Connie recapped in her sermon last week, it's so much easier to let go of fear and suspicion and mistrust, when we first observe others taking a chance and sharing. And then when we do it as a group, it emboldens us to take more chances to be generous as individuals outside of our church lives, and inspire others' generosity. I know that's what happened to me when I saw how Session members so readily and unanimously wanted to provide as best we can for those who serve on our staff. Yes, session members can in fact disagree on issues, but we give space to concerns, we listen to each other respectfully, we discern with patience, and we return to our faith to guide us.... which of course reminds us to be generous.

It takes courage to be generous – it can feel vulnerable and even dangerous. Why is that? Well, we as a species have a natural survival instinct that reflexively hangs on tightly to our resources, out of fear or mistrust that we won't have enough for ourselves. Turns out it's a wonderfully freeing and whole-hearted experience to let go of that fear, to trust God, to love fearlessly with our hearts and our actions. I find it so easy to be generous with my resources and my time when I am among others doing it so intentionally, bravely, and joyfully. So thank you Session for spreading that generosity bug to me with your collective spirit of fearless love! I hope I can spread a bit of it around myself.

We thank Abby for generously sharing her comments with us!  
Connie Knapp and Jessica Mayes, *Stewardship Chairs*

## STEWARDSHIP

**As we plan for the future, we invite you to  
join us in making a Giving Covenant for 2023.**

You can find the 2023 Giving Covenant Form by scanning the link or by visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/FPCYcovenant2023>

The form will help you make a spiritual commitment through prayer, engagement in our ministry, and financial support. This covenant is between you and God through the church and its ministries.

**Would you prayerfully consider making a Giving Covenant with FPCY for 2023?**

Your generosity will strengthen the lifeblood of our congregation and keep our ministry and mission alive and well.

Thank you! ~ The Stewardship Commission



# THE PERFECT GIFT.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering,  
we come together to support past, present and future leaders,  
embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

## 4 WAYS TO GIVE TO



**FPCY**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF YORKTOWN



### IN-PERSON

via the  
offering plate  
on Sundays,  
or drop it in  
the locked  
mailbox near  
the office  
entrance



### TEXT

text  
**MYFPCY**  
to **73256**,  
followed by  
your gift  
amount



### ONLINE

set-up one time or recurring gifts  
visit: [www.tinyurl.com/FPCYgive](https://www.tinyurl.com/FPCYgive)  
or scan the QR code  
  
or set it up through your online banking



### QR CODE



### MAIL

send checks to:

**FPCY**  
2880 Crompond Rd  
Yorktown Heights NY,  
10598

## STEWARDSHIP WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS



*Amy Baisley*



*Michael Hagen*



*Paul Cantales*

Amy Baisley, Michael Hagen and their daughter Anna reside in Somers with their Labradoodle Lottie. Amy is a life long native of the Hudson Valley and has been a middle school English teacher for over 20 years. Michael was raised in England and is a horticultural curator at New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx.

I was born in New York City and grew up in Pelham Manor. I attended the historic Huguenot Memorial Presbyterian Church. I remember going to Sunday School and then attending services and Summer Retreats. I graduated from Pelham Memorial High School. I went to College in California and graduated with a BFA degree and a MFA degree under a full Fellowship. I've worked as an Artist and now I'm retired but I occasionally show my Art work. I've been living in Garrison for the last 17 years. I look forward toward being a member of the FPCY.



*Sonia Braham*



*Sheri Gausepohl*

*Mark Gausepohl*



*Megan Whalen*

My name is Sonia Braham. My husband of 41 years and I recently relocated here from the city. We have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. I am a retired RN and certified midwife I was a staunch advocate for my patients to ensure safe delivery of mothers and babies. Looking forward to my new endeavors at FPCY.

We have been married for 25 years and currently live in Ossining with our two rescue dogs, Hudson & Otto. When not in NY we are typically hiking in a national park out west or enjoying modern art at some remote museum in a European city.

Megan Whalen has lived in Yorktown for 15 years and prior that NYC for 13 years. Mother of 3 children Julia 16, Emily 14 and Ben 12. Married to Dave for 20 years this December! Working as bookkeeper for several small churches and active volunteer in the Yorktown Schools. Megan is very much looking forward to becoming involved in the Food Pantry and Mission trips and her kids are enjoying the Sunday School and Youth Group.

## YEAR-END GIFTS AND STEWARDSHIP

**As we head into 2023 (and beyond), we ask you to help us finish this year strong by making an end-of-year financial gift to FPCY. For applicable tax benefits, make a gift by December 31, 2022**

A major change during 2020 was the suspension RMDs for the year by the Cares Act in response to the pandemic. This suspension was not carried forward into calendar year 2021 and as a result those account owners subject to RMDs must once again make sure the required minimum amount has left their account by December 31. RMDs may be satisfied in one of two primary ways: 1) by the individual taking a direct disbursement or 2) by the individual requesting a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

The IRS defines a QCD as an otherwise taxable distribution from an IRA (other than an ongoing SEP or SIMPLE IRA) owned by an individual who is age 70½ or over that is paid directly from the IRA to a qualified charity. In other words, a QCD is when IRA owners who are at least 70½ can direct their IRA provider to send a check drawn from the IRA directly to a charity of their choosing. QCDs are a great way to support the charities you care about most, including your local church, in a tax efficient manner.

There have been several news stories about 2020 CARES Act charitable provisions expiring but the traditional charitable deductions remain. Gifts of cash, stock, collectibles, real estate, and transfers from your retirement account may all offer charitable tax deductions while providing for your church or other missions and ministries you hold close to your heart.

People of all ages can make gifts of stocks, bonds, or mutual funds. When you give appreciated assets directly to the church, no capital gains tax is due. More detailed instructions can be found on our website: <https://fpcyorktown.org/giving/stock-giving/>

Did you know that you can deduct unreimbursed expenses incurred on behalf of a charity, such as the cost of traveling to a location to preform volunteer services? That's right, your trip to the church building to help stock the pantry can be deducted.

Giving is a strong Christian value and your own personal statement of faith, but you can also take advantage of the savings in the tax code.

*Adapted from resources provided by the Presbyterian Foundation*

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



### Lunch Bunch Catered Christmas Luncheon

Join us for our Christmas Lunch Bunch at the church. Space is limited, RSVP by December 8th!

Turkey, sides and all the fixin's will be provided. Please bring a dessert to share! Cost is \$22 per person. Scan code or visit link to register:

<https://tinyurl.com/ChristmasLunchBunch22>



*Volunteer  
to host a  
coffee hour!*



Coffee Hour after our service(s) is a time for fellowship and catching up with each other. In order to have coffee hour, we depend on volunteers for simple tasks that include setting up, plugging in the urns, and cleaning up. Please consider signing up for one or more Sundays so that we can all enjoy one another's company along with some coffee! Read more details here:

<https://tinyurl.com/FPCYCoffeeHour>



Your Mental Health Ministry continues to provide educational and other resources in the form of brochures in the Gathering Space, a growing book collection in our Library under Mental Health—on the cart, and occasional training opportunities such as: **MENTAL HEALTH 101**; **COMPANION TRAINING**, and the 2-day **ASSIST** training for suicide prevention, which was held in our church in September and was open to the public.

**ASSIST** training was a very useful and successful event that gave us information, tips, and practice in how to communicate—hold a discussion with someone who is suicidal; ie, talking with them until finding the hook (what is important to the person) that can be used to encourage the person to stay alive for now until help is arranged. There were 20 attendees, with a good percentage from our church.

We also recently held a Mental Health Wellness event, on Monday, Nov. 14 at 6:30, which included practices that can help maintain a healthy mental and spiritual state and can help manage feelings when one's mind is not at it's optimal health, ie- anxious or so.

We practiced a type of deep breathing to help with anxiety, using belly breathing and lengthening breaths to calm our bodies and minds. Before we practiced the deep breathing, a meditation was shared that reminded us that we can't reach God in a deep healing way through our minds but only through loving God, often in a sacrifice of quiet time becoming more aware of the Living Breath of God in us. All reported feeling calmer after this practice.

This is one of the premises behind Centering Prayer, which involves deep breathing and sitting in silence to offer one's heart and mind as more available to God. We also used silent prayer to support one another in their concerns as we listened to each person's burden and then sat in silence, as a gesture of sitting with them with God (in silent prayer support), for a minute in soft candle light. A candle was lit for most concerns. Tamsin led this section and reminded us that this time was not to be hurried, or pressured for everyone to share, so we often sat for a while in silence until someone was ready to share. In our impatient, impulsive world with a desire to control and fix this was a major change. There were some major burdens shared as a result. It was hard at first not to speak or react with a hug, etc.

However, later the feed back was that this was much appreciated by those suffering, because no one was trying to "fix it", they felt safe sharing their full burden of grief, that it was ok to feel bad, in the warm soothing candle light, surrounded by loving presence of caring friends. By the end of the meeting, I witnessed a miracle. The somberness and sense of helplessness was relieved by laughter and even joy that was palpable—some lifting of suffering for a while. Suffering that was more bearable with loving support and God's powerful subtle Spirit. We then worked together on a collaborative poem, which allowed us the pleasure and bonding of working together on something creative.

We learned yet again the value of prayer, connection to God, listening in love and the importance of staying silent at times. Stay tuned in the coming months for more of these special mental wellness events.



## What's Up with the Kitchen?

The final major project of the Capital Campaign is the renovation of our church kitchen. This project was originally scheduled for the summer/fall of 2021 but was delayed by materials shortages and a non-performing contractor for the first piece of the work. We are now back on track, with all components ordered and scheduled for delivery, and a general contractor set to do the full job. We hope that demolition of the existing kitchen will begin in early December, and that the project will be complete in time for the annual meeting in early February.

The new kitchen will include a safer and more energy efficient cooktop, double ovens, a warming drawer, a higher capacity refrigerator and freezer, and sanitizing dishwasher that is both fast and high capacity. The kitchen will have improved accessibility features and a better “flow”. New cabinets and new flooring will complete the renovation, giving us a more professional, but still warm and welcoming, center for our food-based fellowship and ministries.



Thank you for your support and patience throughout the Campaign. All other major projects are complete. The projects have stretched over three years so sometimes it's hard to remember where we started – if you enjoyed the air conditioning this summer, have bragged about our solar panels, like the smooth paving and lighting on the big parking lot, or have had meeting or classes in the new Board room, the Youth room, the restored room 2, the new larger room 7 (younger children gathering space), or have enjoyed coming in the office entrance and not having to open the heavy doors across the hallways – all of these (and more) have been your campaign in action.



## Why Blue for Advent?

As we move through the church year, there are many symbols which the church uses to remind us of the significance of seasons and days. The liturgical colors orient us to the season of the church year and engage the sense of sight in worship. Red symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit. White and gold symbolize the days and seasons of joy, and mark pivotal events in the life of Christ (e.g., Christmas, Easter). Green symbolizes growth and marks Ordinary Time, the seasons after Epiphany and Pentecost, when we focus on the mission of the church. Purple and blue have been the traditional colors of Lent and Advent, seasons of penitence and preparation.

In more recent times, a number of churches have adopted blue as the color for Advent and purple for Lent. Blue represents hope and expectation, while the purple represents preparation and penitence. Deep blue is the color of the predawn sky, the color that covers the world in the dark, cold hours before the dawn. It is meant to inspire us in the hope of faith, and to encourage us to keep watch for the promised light of Christ, changing night into day, and darkness into light. As the color associated with Mary, blue reminds us that during Advent the church waits with Mary for the birth of Jesus.

For more about the Presbyterian liturgical seasons visit: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/faq-signssymbols/>

**Many of our members & friends remember their loved ones at Christmas  
by helping to decorate the Sanctuary with Poinsettias.**

Please fill out the form below or contact Lisa in the office (914-245-2186)  
or [office@fpcyorktown.org](mailto:office@fpcyorktown.org) by December 18.

Names will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin. You may purchase as many flowers as you wish. Each can be in honor/in memory of as many people as you wish. The cost is \$15 each.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How Many: \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Inscription: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





### Have you seen the gorgeous star hanging on the portico of the Sanctuary?

This is a 26-point Moravian star. As a young girl, whenever my family drove from Lancaster to Annville, PA for the Seidel Family Christmas party, my brother and I liked to play a game – to see how many Moravian stars we could spot along the way. We always hit the jackpot in the town of Lititz, which was founded by Moravians in 1742. There were Moravian stars hanging on almost every porch and in every doorway. The local bank hosted a gigantic 6-foot star with over 110 points. In the midst of all the flashy holiday decorations, I loved these stars for their simple beauty and aura of peacefulness. But I always wondered where they came from...

Did you know that the Moravian church is the earliest organized Protestant denomination in the world whose roots predate Martin Luther's kick-off of the Protestant Reformation by a good 100 years? The Moravians were followers of Jan Hus, a Roman Catholic priest who tried to reform the Roman Church but was burned at the stake for heresy in 1415. His followers organized themselves into the "Unity of Brethren" in 1457, but they called themselves Moravians since many of their founders were from the provinces of Moravia and Bohemia in what is now the Czech Republic. The Moravians were persecuted for centuries until they were offered refuge by Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf on his estate in Saxony, Germany in 1722. From there, they sent out missionaries all over the world, including America where Moravian communities flourished in PA and NC.

The first Moravian star was constructed by a student at a Moravian boarding school in Niesky, Germany in 1820 and used as a Christmas decoration. Because of their distinctive shape, the stars were used in teaching geometry lessons. The most common Moravian star has 26 points (like ours) and is made from 18 square-based pyramids and 8 triangular pyramids. This shape is technically known as an augmented rhombicuboctahedron, which is a mouthful! The stars were quickly adopted by Moravian communities around the world as Advent decorations and became a source of commercial enterprise for many of them.

Moravian stars are lit and hung at the beginning of Advent as a prophetic symbol of the Light coming into the world. Like the Star of Bethlehem, it leads us to the manger. On Christmas Eve, the star takes on even greater meaning as God's promises are fulfilled in the birth of Christ, the Word made flesh, the Bright Morning Star as Jesus calls himself in Revelation 22:16. The star remains lit throughout the Christmas season and Epiphany, the darkest time of the year, to remind us all that the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it. According to the Moravian Church in North America website, "It is a star of promise, a star of fulfillment, a star of hope."

As you pass by our Moravian star, may it guide you to trust in God's promises, to rejoice in the wondrous news of Christ's birth, and to live in hope that God's Light will shine in your heart this season and radiate throughout all the world.

~Tami

**December 2022**

www.FPCYorktown.org

914-245-2186

office@fpcyorktown.org

Office Hours: Mon-Wed, Fri 9-4, Thu 9-2

Co-Pastors: Rev. Chip Low and Rev. Tami Seidel

# The DISCIPLE



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office@fpcyorktown.org



## FPCY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORKTOWN  
2880 CROMPOND RD | YORKTOWN HEIGHTS NY, 10598

**Current Resident or:**

December				1 10am F4L Study  6:45pm Adult Bells 7:30 Stewardship 8:00pm Choir	2  3pm Pantry Set-up	3  8am Pantry Distribution
4 Advent #2 8:00/10:30am Worship 9:15am Faith Formation Hour 11:45am Youth Bells 1:15pm Pageant Rehearsal 7:00pm F4L—Sacred Earth	5 10am FPCY Bereavement	6 10:00am F4L Study  7:30pm Session	7 9:30 Prayer Shawl 10:30am Women's Circle 7pm Centering Prayer 7:30pm Disciple	8 10am F4L Study  6:45pm Adult Bells 8:00pm Choir	9	10 8am Men's Breakfast 3pm Budget & Finance
11 Advent #3 8:00/10:30am Worship 9:15am Faith Formation Hour 11:45am Congregational Mtg Youth Bells 1:15pm Pageant Rehearsal 7:00pm F4L—Sacred Earth	12 10am FPCY Bereavement 10:00am Knit Togethers 7pm Mental Health Team Meeting	13 10:00am F4L Study 7:30pm Worship Design	14 12pm Lunch Bunch 7pm Centering Prayer 7:30pm Disciple	15 10am F4L Study  6:45pm Adult Bells 7:30pm Personnel 8:00pm Choir	16  3pm Pantry Set-up	17  8am Pantry Distribution
18 Advent #4 8:00/10:30am Worship 9:15am Faith Formation Hour 11:45am Deacons Youth Bells 1:15pm Pageant Rehearsal 3:30pm Christmas Caroling 7:00pm F4L—Sacred Earth	19 FPCY Bereavement	20 10:00am F4L Study 7:30pm Mission/Operations	21 10:30am Prayer Shawl 7:30pm Longest Night	22 10am F4L Study  6:45pm Adult Bells 8:00pm Choir	23	24 Christmas Eve  1:00pm Pageant Rehearsal 3:00pm Pageant 7:00pm & 11:00pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Services
25  10:30am Worship	26 Office Closed 10am FPCY Bereavement	27	28	29	30  3pm Pantry Set-up	31  8am Pantry Distribution