

**May 2024**



**First Presbyterian Church of Verona**

***Come and Worship With Us***

10:15 a.m.

10 Fairview Ave, Verona, NJ 07044

973-239-3561

Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Rhonda Myers

Director Music: Chaequan Anderson

Christian Education Chair: Cathy Franco

Sexton: Andy Turner

Admin. Assistant: Patti Beirne

**E-Mail: [veronapreschurch@gmail.com](mailto:veronapreschurch@gmail.com)**

Website: [www.veronapreschurch.org](http://www.veronapreschurch.org)

**MISSION STATEMENT**

We are a caring and welcoming church fully engaged in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we live and worship in joyful fellowship with God, proclaiming the Good News through an active program of Christian education and music for children, families, and individuals of all ages. We are committed to sharing our gifts and talents to implement God's will and to assume leadership in our community, guided by the principles of Christian love.

## ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT AND WORSHIP

For those who are unable to attend, services will be streamed through this you tube site:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0czo7NSkhf56Ffx5OpA03Q>

**On YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0czo7NSkhf56Ffx5OpA03Q>  
and subscribe to our channel.

**Church Website** [www.veronapreschurch.org](http://www.veronapreschurch.org)

**Online giving is now available on our website:** [veronapreschurch.org](http://veronapreschurch.org)

## 2024 CHURCH OFFICERS

SESSION		DEACONS	
Cathy Franco Christopher Kiel Donna Kiel Donna Lauckner	Marilyn O'Neill Deborah Michelsen Margaret Whiting	Kathy Dougherty David Haimann Matthew Koroluk Michael McGough Trevor Mescia	Barbara Haimann Willow Pomponio Marion Shine Tennille Wasak Daniel Uniss

Margaret Whiting, Clerk of the Session Council  
 Dr. Michael Duhaney, Corporation President  
 Ken Lauckner- Treasurer  
 Kathy Dougherty & Donna Lauckner- Financial Secretaries  
 Michael McGough- Deacon Co-Chair

### From the Pastor's Desk—May 2024

“If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves;  
 But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed.  
*(Proverbs 29:18)*



My dear friends in Christ,

I want to thank every one of you who participated in our recent small group discussions hosted by the Mission Study Team. I am told that the conversations were lively, insightful, informative, and well-received. I am so glad to hear it. And I hope you felt that way, too, as you left the room on the day of those discussions. The Mission Study Team can only do their work well with your support, and I am grateful that you have been so willing to help share your experiences of the church and your vision and goals for its future.

Having been meeting regularly for several months now, the Mission Study Team is nearing the completion of its work. There are still a few more tasks to be managed, and those are being organized now. Our hope is to present a Report to the Session very soon for its approval, and then to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry for their approval as well. Once done, the Session can meet to call a special Congregational Meeting to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee and begin the process of searching for a new pastor.

As you can imagine, a large part of this Mission Study process has been the work to discern God's will for the church going forward. It isn't necessarily an easy task to “see what God is doing,” as the wisdom writer encourages in the book of Proverbs. But it is an intrinsic part of our faithful work on God's behalf to be on the lookout for new opportunities for ministry and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in attending to those matters.

One of those new opportunities will be to call a new pastor who will take you on the next step of your journey as a congregation.

I ask that you continue to pray for the Mission Study Team and for the successful completion of their work. I also ask that you seek the Spirit's guidance should you be approached by the congregation's Nominating Committee to consider serving on a *Pastor Nominating Committee*. The work of calling a new pastor is only as effective as the work of the leaders who invest themselves in the process.

I thank you once again for your work in helping the church leaders discern what God is doing amongst us and what God has in mind for this congregation. By so doing, we are surely welcoming the blessings of God as plans are made for a vital, joyful, hopeful future as the Body of Christ in this beautiful community of Verona.

Yours in Christ,

**Pastor Rhonda**

The Rev. Dr. Rhonda Myers  
Interim Pastor

### **Looking Forward to May**

- May 3<sup>rd</sup> Patti Beirne's last day in the office before her knee surgery;  
please welcome Barbara Lyons as she fills in for Patti until her return
- May 4<sup>th</sup> Ann Brillhart's Memorial Service, 1:00pm
- May 5<sup>th</sup> Deacons meeting, following worship in the Parlor
- May 7<sup>th</sup> *In Search of Belief* book study, 7:00 pm in the Sunday School room and on Zoom
- May 12<sup>th</sup> Mother's Day worship with Pam Osborne preaching
- May 18<sup>th</sup> Presbytery of Northeast NJ meets with Pastor Rhonda installed as Co-Moderator
- May 19<sup>th</sup> Christian Education Committee meeting, following worship in Chamberlain Hall
- May 21<sup>st</sup> *In Search of Belief* book study, 7:00 pm in the Sunday School room and on Zoom
- May 23<sup>rd</sup> Session meeting on Zoom
- May 27<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day Parade
- May 31<sup>st</sup> Showing of movie "Unbroken" in Chamberlain Hall
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> Deacons meeting, following worship in the Parlor
- June 4<sup>th</sup> *In Search of Belief* book study, 7:00 pm in the Sunday School room and on Zoom

### ***From the HR Chair Regarding Rev. Dr. Rhonda Myers***

I am pleased to announce that we have agreed to terms to extend Rev. Dr. Rhonda's contract through the end of the year. This past year was a strong step forward in our search for our permanent pastor. We all have participated in moving this process forward so the Human Resources (HR) Committee would like to thank the congregation as well as the various teams alongside Reverend Rhonda for pushing us substantially down this road. Please join me in celebrating this good news!

Christopher Kiel, HR Chair

## GIFT WE ALL CAN GIVE IS THE “THE GIFT OF THOUGHTFULNESS.”



Take some time to remember those who do not have email and/or are unable to attend Worship with us.

Check the church prayer lists that are provided in the Sunday bulletins and are on the weekly Spirit and choose some friends to remember with a note, visit or phone call. A gift that we all can give is the gift of remembrance.

If you would like some assistance in choosing persons to contact, please contact Dotty Ostella or Patti Beirne by phone or email.

## HOPE FOR UKRAINE

The past deliveries of Warm Clothing and Afghans came to another 30+ boxes – Thanks to Dick Crawford and Thrift Shop

The biggest need currently is for canned food. Nothing that needs water added (like Campbell soup) Examples of needed food are - Canned vegetables and fruit, canned pie filling, canned meats & fish, canned coconut milk, etc . Everything is sent by boat and there are rats on the boats. They get into the shipping containers and make short work of any food not in cans.

Thank you all so much for your continued support and love of the Ukrainian people.

Велике спасибі. Хай вас Бог благословить.

Thank you all so much for your continued support and love of the Ukrainian people.

*Christina Turkington*

## MUSIC NEWS



Our Chancel Choir leads us in music on Sunday mornings. We continue to rehearse at 9:45, prior to Worship on Sunday mornings. As Chae's busy schedule slows down, rehearsal times may change.

It is hoped that the children will be singing more often, that guitars will be added from time to time, and our Chancel Choir will grow in number. *Peg Whiting*

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



**The Christian Education Committee continues to grow and work on creative ways to share the word of Jesus with our Children.**

Our parent members joining the group have provided valuable input on how we move forward with planning lessons and Riley Becker has brought a youthful energy to the younger class that they are thriving in.

The children enjoyed the Good Friday workshop where we had a total of 17 children in attendance. The group is working on summer activities for the children to do once **Sunday School ends for the school year on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. This will also be our Recognition Sunday where we acknowledge any and all types of accomplishments from entering Pre-school, to changing schools, promotions, graduations, job changes, and up through retirement. If you have a family member that you would like to have recognized, please let Cathy Franco or Riley Becker know.**

**Information about Camp Johnsonburg** is on our website and a link will take you right to their website. We are thrilled that there is now the Andy Turner scholarship fund to help defray the cost of attending camp. We are in the process of creating the scholarship application process and is open to children who regularly attend Sunday School during the year.

**Adult book study has begun** a new book looking at what the Apostle's Creed means to us individually. Those who have been attending the different book/Bible study groups have shared that they are learning more about what their faith means to them as well as learning so much more about what makes Presbyterians similar to and different from other Christian denominations. There is room for more in this light-hearted group where laughing and learning are in abundance. We meet every other Tuesday evening (next one is 5/7) at 7:30. The studies are offered in-person and via zoom in a hybrid manner. Come and check it out or let Cathy Franco know if you want the link to join from home.

**On Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup> we will be showing the film "Unbroken". A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption. It is rated PG-13. Keep an eye out for the time.**

*Cathy Franco, Chair Christian Education Committee*

## Thrift Shop Reflection

I've written before about the thrift shop where I work/volunteer several times before. The shop financially supports the church that houses it as well as several other charitable organizations both locally and internationally. It also supports the community and the world at large with donations that are not financial; towels/linens that cannot be sold are donated to a local pet shelter. Clothing that is not sold within a certain amount of time will be given to local shelters. Families in need have been given household items. And so it goes.

The thrift shop is part of the church's mission. But thinking about it, the thrift shop is very much like a church itself. There is no sermon of course, but there are so many other aspects that would fall under what a church (should) provide. And maybe churches and other organizations ought to sit up and take note of the lessons that can be learned in the thrift shop.

Like many churches today, the thrift shop is made up of predominantly of women. Not to get into controversial territory (too late!), but women have, in my view, always been a force behind religion. (I was going to say Christianity, but then I realized that it was more than that.) The volunteers range in age and Christian background. Some of the women are active in Sunday worship; some are not. Some are not members of the church and never were or will be. There are retirees, those who work full time jobs (that would be me), those who have part time jobs. Some are students. (My son used to volunteer.) Volunteers come and go, depending on life experience. (For a personal perspective, when I was out of work 12 years ago just after the shop had come into being, I would work every day that the shop was over and then some. Once my work situation changed, so did the time that I was able to put in and that was okay.) All give their time and talent in different ways. (See the parallels here between church and shop?)

All the volunteers have their own talents/specialties that they have naturally gravitated towards. While there are times where we do things that are not our forte if we are short staffed or need to accomplish something in a given time set, for the most part we are left to our own devices. For example, I am one of the women who deals with the clothing when it comes in. Checking it out (clothes we cannot use are put in bags and donated to those in need), hanging them up and putting them in the appropriate place. (We have different racks for different sizes and clothing items.) This is what I (for the most part) enjoy. I do not enjoy the check-out process, but there are people who do, so that's where they "work." No one is trying to place a square peg into a round hole, as organizations sometimes do. And amazingly, everyone does their own thing without supervision or micromanagement! (Businesses take note!)

We also, in the Christian tradition, break bread together. No, it's not an official communion, but once or twice a year ALL who volunteer are invited to a shared meal. All are welcome no matter how much time they dedicate to the shop. ALL are welcome.

Volunteers come and go. No one is "guilted" into volunteering and that is one of the things that makes the shop, and the volunteers, strong. (Organizations take note.) We are there because we WANT to be. And if we are not there, it's okay too. Vacations and breaks are recognized. Everyone realizes that we have lives outside of the shop. The lack of pressure to "be there" I think actually makes people want to be there more often! Maybe that's because we all support one another. We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. We are there in times of sorrow. We pray for each other. (Prayer! See, there is a religious component to the shop).

We also pray and care for those who come to shop. We know many of the "regulars" by name; just as they know us by name. If someone is out, they will ask about a person. We know their likes and if an item comes in that we know that person would want, we might put it aside (temporarily). Customers will help us when large donations are made. (Believe me it's a haul from the back door of the church down the stairs to the large hall that hosts the shop.) And they help without our asking. They help us because we help them. For the most part it is a supportive community, where we treat our neighbors as ourselves. (Now, where have I heard that before? Haven't I read that somewhere? Could it be Mark chapter 12 verse 31?)

That is not to say that we don't have issues or problems. Yes, there are people who will (try to) steal and cheat the shop. We try to be nice. We remind people that the money is not going to US, but to the church and it's missions. (We even have a list of all the organizations we support...including other churches.) We try to be polite; we try to be calm. However, there are times when we have asked people NOT to come back. You might think that is something that would NEVER be done in a church setting, but maybe it should. If there is a person who is disrespectful and disruptive to the group as a whole and is not open to reasonable discourse, maybe that person is not in the right place. (I know this is really controversial, but hey...While I believe that all are welcome and we don't have to agree on everything, we DO need to be respectful.)

The one thing we DON'T have that most religious communities do is a lot of committees and meetings. As I stated previously, we pretty much "govern" ourselves. There is the occasional email or group discussion, but for the most part common sense and kindness rule the day. I appreciate that the powers that be in the church hierarchy tend to leave the group to their own devices (thank you!) and as a result the shop has thrived. (We're going on 12 years!)

Is thrift shop church a real thing? Not really. But it IS an important component of a mission that the church and the volunteers believe in. It's a mission that the volunteers are passionate about and devoted to. Serving in the thrift shop IS holy and spiritual. (Or maybe I should say it can be.) It is where the following verse is proven: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." ~ **Beth Shorten**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



There are numerous opportunities for church friends to share their talents. Opportunities are published from time to time. Ideas are always welcome. Feel free to speak with a Session member or Deacon. Lay Readers for Sunday Worship are always needed. If you would like to volunteer to lay read, please contact Beth Shorten for information: 973-641-2296.

### LAY READERS

May 5 Dotty Ostella

May 12

May 19 Chris Kiel

May 26 Joyce Cougan

### CHANCEL FLOWER DONATIONS



Just as decorating a home for guests is a sign of welcome and hospitality, decorating a sanctuary for worship is also an offering of hospitality. **The church has begun a relationship with Anderson Flowers for the regular delivery of fresh flowers to the church for Sunday worship.** To make this program work, we are asking for your support. Please consider signing up to provide fresh flowers in honor of a loved one, in thanksgiving for God's blessings, in celebration of a special event, etc. The cost is \$30 for one arrangement and \$60 for two arrangements. When making your payment to the church, please note that it is for flowers. Thank you for your support of the church and its ministry! **Contact the church office to check for the available dates.**

May		June	
5th	From <b>Marilyn O'Neill</b> in Celebration of Ann M. Brillhart's Life. A Wonderful wife, mother, sister, nurse and parishioner	2nd	Open
12th	From <b>Janice Tierney</b> with grateful appreciation for the blessing of ALL women who are nurturer's, mentors, caregivers and friends. <b>Happy Mother's Day.</b>	9th	Open
19th	From <b>Beth Shorten</b> in In Memory of her parents, John S. & Elizabeth K. Foster on their anniversary.	16th	Open <b>Father's Day</b>
26th	<b>Open</b>	23rd	<b>Amanda Becker</b>
		30th	From <b>Beth Shorten</b> in memory of maternal Grandparent Anniversary, Clinton F. & Jessie S. Kilbury

**WISHING BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS,  
...a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!**

Remember, the only way to be added to this list is by reaching out to Dan Uniss or a deacon and providing your birthday information (no year required)!

**May**

Felicia Burgos 18  
Dotty Ostella 21  
Barbara Haimann 26



**June**

Liz McGough 16  
Donna Kiel 29

**GRANDPARENTS' GROUP**

Our Grandparents Group meets on the second Thursday of the month via Zoom.

Please email [patheyer75@gmail.com](mailto:patheyer75@gmail.com) or call 973-239-3592 if you'd like to join us.



**HOLY SPIRIT FOOD PANTRY**



The Holy Spirit Food Pantry continues to need our help.

You may use the 24-hour drop-off bin in their parking lot on 30 Gould Street for any donations. Please consider writing a check to: Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit with "food pantry" in the memo line.

**VERONA TOWN MEMORIAL PARADE**

Once again, the First Presbyterian Church of Verona will be participating in the Verona Town Memorial Day Parade Monday May 27 2024 at 10 am. We meet at Everett field at 9:45am. More directions to follow.





## CALENDAR FOR MAY

(Adjustments will be made as necessary)

### Friday May 3rd

Patti Beirne last day before Surgery. Barbara Lyons will fill in for Patti. Same contact info.

### Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>

1:00 pm Memorial Service  
Interment & Repass for Ann Brillhart

### Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>: **Communion Sunday**

10:15am: Worship Service  
Deacon Mtg. following Worship in the Parlor

### Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>

7:00 pm: *In Search of Belief* book Study, 7:00 pm  
in the Sunday School Room and on Zoom

### Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>

11:00 am: Grandparents' Group via zoom

### May 11 to May 19 – **Pastor Rhonda is away**

### Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup> **Mother's Day**

10:15 am Worship Service led by Pam Osborne

### Saturday, May 18th

6:30 pm Presbytery of Northeast NJ Meets'  
Pastor Rhonda installed as co-moderator

**Contact Peggy Whiting for Spiritual Needs  
during Pastor Rhonda's Absence**

### Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup> **Pentecost**

10:15 am Worship Service  
Christian Education Committee meeting,  
following Worship in Chamberlain Hall.

### Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

7:00pm: Book Study: *In Search of Belief*  
in the Sunday School Room

### Thursday May 23<sup>rd</sup>

7:30 pm Session via Zoom

### Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>

**Articles due for June Newsletter**

### Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>

10:15 am: Worship Service

### Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>

**Marching in Memorial Day Parade**

### Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>

**Movie- "Unbroken"** shown in Chamberlain Hall  
Time to be decided

### June 2<sup>nd</sup> **Communion Sunday**

10:15 am Worship Service  
Deacon Mtg. following Worship in the Parlor

### AA Meetings

Meeting in Chamberlain Hall- Tuesdays 8:30pm-9:30pm

### Al-Anon Meetings

Meeting in Julie Chamberlain Room – Fridays 12:30pm to 1:30 pm

### Music Together

This will run from 4/15 through the week of 6/16. The following week may have some makeup classes (week of 6/24.

Mondays 9:30 to 11:30 am in Chamberlain Hall

Tuesdays 3:30 to 4:30 pm - in their dedicated space.

Thursdays 9:30 to 10:30 am- in their dedicated space.

Saturdays 9:30 to 11:30 am- in their dedicated space.