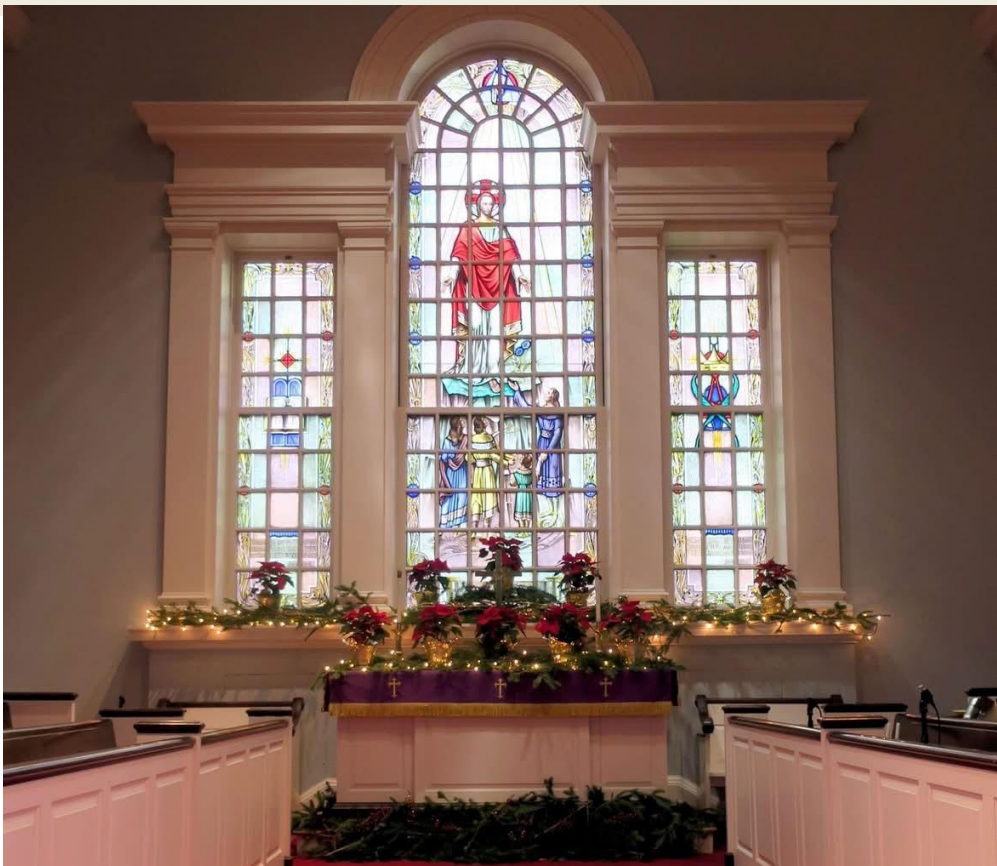


FPCV NEWS

WELCOMING HEARTS, NURTURING SPIRITS,
UNITED IN FELLOWSHIP AND FAITH

www.veronapreschurh.org



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VERONA | 10 FAIRVIEW AVENUE, VERONA, NJ 07044

Come and Worship with Us

All Are Welcome! | Sundays at 10:15am

PASTOR:
Erik Simon

MUSIC DIRECTOR:
Kyle Blackburn

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CHAIR:
Cathy Franco

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:
Danielle Christianson

SEXTON:
Gabriel Gonzalez

SEXTON EMERITUS:
Andy Turner

CLERK OF THE SESSION COUNCIL:
Margaret Whiting

CORPORATION PRESIDENT:
Dr. Michael Duhaney

TREASURER:
Ken Lauckner

FINANCIAL SECRETARIES:
Kathy Dougherty & Donna Lauckner

DEACON CO-CHAIRS:
Kathy Dougherty & Michael McGough

CHURCH OFFICERS:

SESSION:
Cathy Franco
Donna Lauckner
Christopher Kiel
Donna Kiel
Deborah Michelsen
Marilyn O'Neil
Janice Tierney
Margaret Whiting

DEACONS:
Kathy Dougherty
David Haimann
Michael McGough
Trevor Mescia
Willow Pomponio
Tennille Wasek
Barbara Haimann
Marion Shine

ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP

Sunday services are streamed on our YouTube channel: <https://tinyurl.com/4c3wa78r>



From the Pastor’s Desk

ERIK SIMON

When I was in graduate school, my friends and I would sit around and improv limericks, such as this:

There once was a church in Verona
That studied the great Book of Jonah.
They had a fish fry
To honor that guy
And folks raced there as if at Daytona.

I know, nerdy, but what do you expect from a bunch of grad students in Lit? And we did find ways to spice it up: libations, of course, and we challenged ourselves with difficult words to rhyme, like Botswana. I’m thinking about all of this because I was just trying to write a limerick about “stewardship.” Couldn’t pull it off.

Yep, it’s that time of year, when the Gods of Stewardship descend in the form of our Nominating Committee. It’s not an easy time for any of us, especially a minister fully mindful of the fact that the church is, by and large, a volunteer organization. But I’m going to address stewardship of talent here, and I want to say just a couple of things.

I know the tendency. Someone asks you to do something, and the knee-jerk reaction is, “I don’t have time. I mean, I can help with a single event, but I can’t commit to a year.” I get it; we’re all busy, and you’re just not sure if you’re available next summer because there’s the Jersey Shores weekends and so-and-so’s getting married and you’ve been wanting to paint that shed for *years*. But don’t think so far into the future. Commit now, and if you can’t make a meeting or there’s something you can’t do, fine. There are other people on the committee, and no one takes attendance. You’re committing to help, not to do everything.

Also, I’ve got some experience in administration, and I’m pretty good at getting things streamlined and more efficient. Just ask the Session, whose meetings now run an hour, tops. Yes, you read that right. I know how busy we all are, and I also know that inefficiency leads to burnout, and burnout can be a real problem in churches. Which is why I’m pretty vigilant in looking for ways to avoid it. To that end, I ask people to serve only on one committee. You can do more, but I discourage it simply for the burnout reason.

Finally, we are a blast. I mean, have you taken a good look at yourselves? You’re great, and working alongside each of you is a hoot, and our community is going to need all the joy and service we can give in the coming year. So please, consider a committee, and let us know where you’d like to show up, have a blast, and serve the world as our God asks.



MUSIC MINISTRY

Making a Joyful Noise

Exciting Updates

KYLE BLACKBURN

Hi everyone! I’d like to remind you that our choir program warmly welcomes new members of all experience levels to join our worship music journey. If you’d like to participate or learn more, reach out—we’re honored to share this music with you!

During Advent, the choir will sing at every Sunday service as we continue our church’s preparation for Christ’s coming. Our organ project remains actively underway, and we’re steadily moving toward its final planning steps with careful work and deliberation.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

A Fresh Look for a Welcoming Space:
Church Updates in Progress

DEBBIE MICHELSEN &
CHARLES HEYER
CO-CHAIRS OF THE B&G COMMITTEE

It continues to be a busy time for the Building & Grounds Committee!

Various doors of the church have had rotten wood replaced and painted. The bottom hinge of the main double doors is being repaired as well. Weather-stripping will be repaired where needed before winter.

Our beautiful Steeple will be repaired and painted before winter moves in. There are pieces of wood missing that will be replaced with modern PVC, so it will not rot in the future.

Various overgrown bushes and trees will be removed, revealing more of our beautiful church! In the spring, we can assess whether new trees need to be added. A Red Oak, the state tree of New Jersey, will be planted on the Manse front lawn, replacing the large Beech tree that was removed two years ago.

Planning for a new organ system is underway, and much investigating is required by the town and Public Service Electric.

Bringing the kitchen up to code is a long-term project that is being tackled now. A new dish washer, water heater, stove hood and fire suppression system will be added over the winter so we may serve more people in need.

Gabriel is replacing the burned-out bulbs in the Chamberlain Hall ceiling, and soon we will have a fully lit room. The Manse and the Church Boilers are functioning well.



PLANSOEN GRANT

Funding Boosts Programs & Projects

For many years, the FPCV has been the grateful recipient of a generous grant from the Plansoen Foundation, which has provided ongoing support for our music program. This includes funding for concerts, professional musicians—especially during worship services—organ and instrument maintenance, and children's programs.

Past grants have also enabled significant improvements to Chamberlain Hall, including stage restoration, the installation of an ADA-compliant door, an exterior walkway, and a much-needed ADA-accessible bathroom. Additionally, the Foundation has helped support local food kitchens, particularly during the pandemic.

We are deeply thankful for this longstanding and generous support, made possible through the close relationship between the late Charlotte Cunningham, former Music Director, and the Plansoen Foundation.

Charlotte
Cunningham
Remembered

VIRTUAL PIPE ORGAN TEAM

Charlotte Cunningham, dedicated and beloved Music Director and teacher at the First Presbyterian Church of Verona for 43 years, died last fall. Family and friends remember her enthusiasm for all types of music.



Her musical talent was obvious, notably when performing on the piano or the organ and when directing musical performances. She was a magical leader, especially with children learning to sing solo or in a group in front of an audience. During her time with us, Charlotte led six choirs, including two bell choirs and a men's special group.

To honor and celebrate her many years with us, the Session has voted to dedicate the new organ in her memory. Planning for the new organ system is now underway!

Please consider contributing to the Charlotte Cunningham Memorial Fund by making a check out to FPCV and note "CC Memorial Fund" on the Memo line.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Building a Faith Foundation for the Next Generation

CATHY FRANCO

We all know how busy the school year gets and it has been no different for the Christian Education programming at First Pres. of Verona for both our youth and adults. Many thanks to our dedicated committee members which includes our parent participation.

Our youth have been actively learning and living their faith as they hosted 2 coffee hours; for Blessing of the Animals Sunday, and on Trunk or Treat Sunday. They are really getting good at this. We had an active participation of 6 cars with wonderful themes: Creation, God’s love is Purrfect, Noah’s Ark, Heaven-on- Earth-Disneyland, The lost sheep, Joan of Arc with Moses and the burning bush. The children also sent out 3 “love boxes” to our college students so that they know they are loved by their church community and they were a big help serving at the Fish Fry. Their Mischief to Ministry is wrapping up next week and the items will go to the Holy Spirit food pantry. A large focus especially for our upper class is to have them active in service to the community and their church.

On **All Souls Sunday** they will be planting daffodil bulbs in memory of a loved one who has passed on. Each spring they will be able to see the flowers come up and remember that they had a part in creating this lasting memory of their loved one. All of this activity will move us right into preparing for the seasons of Thanksgiving and Advent when our **annual Sock Drive** will begin. Those donated items will be going to Betsy’s Closet in Newark.

Our annual **Children’s Christmas Workshop** will be held on **Saturday, December 13th** so get the word out to your family and neighbors. Registration will open the week **before** Thanksgiving. The workshop runs from 10-1pm for ages 3-12 with pizza lunch included. Pre-registration is required as we can’t take registration the day of the event. Volunteers are always welcome to help and this includes our tweens/teens. Then, keep your eyes open for a special gathering of our college members when they return for the Christmas break.

Now, on to our adult programming for deepening our faith. We have had lively weekly **Bible Study** going through some of the books of the Old Testament with Pastor Erik. We meet on Tuesday 7-8pm in-person with a Zoom option. The link is on our website to join in. There has been a dedicated group of 8 people but more are always welcome. We meet on the first floor of the church.

If you have ideas for other things you would like to see for the adults, please let the Christian Education Committee know. There is a posting on the announcement board outside the kitchen of Fall and Spring retreats at Camp Johnsonburg if you want to check them out. We can register as a group or individually.

Wishing everyone wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas Seasons!



ANDREW TURNER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Planting the Seeds of Success



Our friend **ANDY TURNER**, with help from his grandson, has been back to visit his friends at FPCV. He has gotten to know Gabriel, the new Sexton, and they have already developed a friendship.

Andrew Turner has been a friend of the Amsterdam family for 75+ years. Out of enormous respect and affection for Andy, Marcia Amsterdam Kean and Dianne (Amsterdam) Kangisser established the “Andrew Turner Scholarship Fund” in March 2024 with a generous check and the intent to fund it every year in Andy’s honor.

The Scholarship Fund helps send a deserving child—or children—to Camp Johnsonburg for a week each summer. We are deeply grateful to the Amsterdam family for making this possible.

If you would like to contribute to the growth of this Scholarship Fund and help more of our children attend summer camp, your support would be greatly appreciated. Registration fees have increased significantly over the past decade, and your generosity can make a real difference. Together, we can help raise the next generation of children to know Christ and to grow in their love for God.

May Andy’s humility, kindness, and deep love for children remain a guiding light and inspiration to us all.

Please consider contributing to the Scholarship Fund by making a check out to FPCV and note “**Andrew Turner Scholarship Fund**” on the Memo line.

ANDREA KIEL was the lucky recipient of the award this year. She thanked everyone at a church service after she returned from her time at Camp Johnsonburg.



COMMUNITY

Fair in the Square:
A Fun-filled Afternoon for the Entire Family

We’re so excited to once again be part of Verona’s **Fair in the Square** on **Saturday, December 6th** at the Verona Civic Center! It’s one of our favorite community events — a day full of fun, entertainment, local vendors, and friendly faces.

Make sure to stop by our booth while you’re there! We’ll have hot chocolate to keep you warm and plenty of smiles and conversation to share. It’s a great chance to say hello and learn more about what’s happening at our church.

Come celebrate the upcoming holiday season with us and enjoy a wonderful day in our community. Be sure to stick around for Santa’s arrival as he oversees the traditional tree lighting with Verona's Mayor and Council.



BIRTHDAYS

Another Year Blessed!

We happily celebrate the birthdays of those born in November and December!

November 14th: Suzy Fiederer
November 17th: Eric Burgos

December 1st: Bonnie McCarthy
December 18th: Clover Burgos
December 27th: Ralph Ostella

If you would like to have your birthday added to our list, please contact Dan Uniss or a Deacon to provide your information. No year required!



Many warm wishes for another year filled with joy, laughter, and sweet blessings!

COMMUNITY

Welcome Mulligan
the FPCV Therapy Dog!

JANICE TIERNEY

It is official - Mulligan will be visiting our church, once a month, on Sunday mornings to greet, lean and encourage a few smiles among our members and visitors doing what therapy dogs do best - simply use their cold noses to warm hearts.

The Tierney family has had Mulligan engaged in therapy dog “work” for the past 5+ years. He regularly visits hospitals, schools, libraries, medical treatment facilities, corporations and even the court system. He loves being with humans and blessing them with all of his canine personality and charm.

Mulligan's visits are being made possible through a donation to Creature Comfort Pet Therapy provided by the Tierney’s and we look forward to the joy and comfort that his presence may provide to all of those who choose to engage with him.



COMMUNITY

Our annual **Fish Fry Fundraiser** was a wonderful success! We’re so grateful to everyone who came out to enjoy a great meal and support our church. The fellowship was lively, the food was tasty, and the spirit of community filled the room. A huge thank you goes to all our amazing volunteers who helped cook, serve, and clean up — we couldn’t have done it without you!

This year’s **Interfaith Thanksgiving Service** is set for **Sunday, November 23rd at 3:00pm**, hosted at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church here in Verona. This special gathering brings together congregations from across our community to give thanks and celebrate the blessings we share.



DONATIONS

Come Together in the Spirit of Giving

With a renewed focus on community service, FPCV has donated to each of the following organizations: **Presbyterian Disaster Relief**, **Toni’s Kitchen** in Montclair, **Oasis** in Paterson, and **Isaiah House** in East Orange. Additionally, a donation was made to **Human Needs Food Pantry** in West Orange, along with over twenty backpacks full of supplies to students in need.

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. Donations can also be made here at our Church, and Dick Crawford will bring them over to Holy Spirt every Tuesday. Please consider writing a check to Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit and note “**Food Pantry**” on the Memo line.

We continue to collect donations for **Hope 4 Ukraine**. Canned items—vegetables, fruit, pie filling, and even pet food— can be placed in the bin located in the church foyer.

Our **annual Sock Drive** will begin on **Sunday, December 7th**. We’re collecting new socks of all sizes to support those in need. Clean, dry socks are one of the most requested items at shelters, and your generosity can make a big difference! Those donated items will be going to Betsy’s Closet in Newark.

Join us after worship on **Sunday, November 30th**, as we turn our church into a festive space for the Christmas season. This year, we invite members of the church to participate. It should be a fun and joyous occasion!

Please consider making a donation for the **poinsettia plants** that decorate our sanctuary during the Christmas season. Write a check to the church with “**Christmas Decorations**” on the Memo line.

Online Giving is always available on our website: www.veronapreschurch.org.

<i>November</i>		<i>December</i>	
2		7	
9	Marion Shine In Loving Memory of her Dad, John Kucek	14	
16		21	
23		28	
30			

CHANCEL FLOWERS

Beautify the Sanctuary: A Meaningful Tribute

Decorating the sanctuary for worship is an offering of hospitality and a sign of welcome!

Chancel Flowers may be ordered through the Church Office for delivery from Anderson’s Flowers in Verona. **\$32 for one arrangement** and **\$64 for two arrangements**. When using Anderson’s Flowers, they can generally be used for more than one week unless you specify otherwise.

If interested, please sign up using the Flower Chart located outside Chamberlain Hall. You may also check for available dates by contacting the Church Office directly at 973-239-3561 or veronapreschurch@gmail.com. All orders must be submitted to the Church Office by the Wednesday prior to delivery.

This gift of hospitality is one that is surely appreciated and is a wonderful way to remember or honor a loved one!

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Season:
Sharing of Talent and Financial Support

BARBARA HAIMANN &
DONNA LAUCKNER
THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

November is the month we ask our members and friends to think about Stewardship. We encourage sharing our God-given talents: to serve on a committee, become a Deacon or an Elder, or something as beneficial to the church as helping with Sunday School or hosting a coffee hour several times a year. There are many ways to serve as described in the pages of this newsletter and also noted in Pastor Erik’s message this month.

The Stewardship Committee’s focus in November is to ascertain the level of financial support we can expect from our members and friends for the coming year. We invite you to contemplate your financial giving, and we hope this will culminate in your making a pledge commitment to assist with church expenses in 2026.

A letter will be going out shortly with more information and a Pledge Commitment Card. It will be helpful to our committee to receive your financial commitment by the end of November so that a realistic budget can be prepared for 2026. Please see the undersigned if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

THRIFT SHOP

Treasure Hunting at the Thrift Shop!



Regular Hours of Operation and Donation Drop Off are **Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays** from **10:00am - 1:00pm**.

The Thrift Shop will be OPEN on **Black Friday** this year! The entire shop will be 50%, excluding jewelry. Continue to check The Thrift Shop’s Facebook page to keep up-to-date on any special holiday hours and sales!

Volunteer
Opportunities

- There are many ways for our church family to share their gifts and talents. We invite you to consider how you might use your unique abilities to support the important work of the church during this season.
- The **choir** continues to seek new members and are grateful for the new voices who have joined.
 - **Sunday School substitute teachers** would be appreciated as some of the regular subs are away for the winter months.
 - The Worship & Music Committee would love to have some additional **lay reader participants**. Let the Church Office know if you are interested, 973-239-3561.
 - Providing **fresh flowers** on a Sunday would be most welcome.
 - Contributing “**socks for the homeless**” and/or **food for the hungry** would be appreciated.
 - **Coffee Hour Hosts** are needed. Individuals or groups could work together.

LAY READERS

November &
December

DATE	SUNDAY	READER
Nov 2	All Souls Sunday	Janice Tierney
Nov 9	Communion Sunday	Pat Heyer
Nov 16		Chris Kiel
Nov 23		Dotty Ostella
Nov 30		Janice Tierney
Dec 7	Communion Sunday	Chris Kiel
Dec 14		Pat Heyer
Dec 21		Dotty Ostella
Dec 28		Janice Tierney

CONNECT

Come Gather: Church Spaces Available for You

WEST ESSEX MUSIC TOGETHER

September 15 to November 20

Mondays 9:30am to 11:30am
Wednesdays 4:30pm to 5:30pm
Thursdays 9:30am to 10:30am

AA MEETINGS

Meeting in Chamberlain Hall

Tuesdays 8:30pm to 9:30pm

BIBLE STUDY

Meeting across from the Parlor and via Zoom

Tuesdays 7:00pm to 8:00pm

TPAPNJ (THEATRE GROUP)

September 15 to December 19

All classes in Chamberlain Hall

Mondays 4:00pm to 6:30 pm
Tuesdays 4:00pm to 7:30 pm
Wednesdays 4:00pm to 7:00 pm
Thursdays 4:00pm to 9:00 pm
Fridays 4:00pm to 6:00 pm

AL-ANON MEETINGS

Meeting in the Julie Chamberlain Room

Fridays 12:30pm to 1:30 pm

GRANDPARENTS’ GROUP

Meeting via Zoom

Second Thursday of the month

Please email patheyer75@gmail.com or call 973-239-3592 if you’d like to join.

No class: 10/13, 10/31, 11/27-28

UPCOMING EVENTS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Saturday, Nov 1st	ALL SAINTS' DAY	Thursday, Dec 4th	7:00pm: Worship & Music Meeting Zoom
Sunday, Nov 2nd	Daylight Saving Time Ends 10:15am: Worship Service All Souls Sunday	Saturday, Dec 6th	12:00pm to 5:00pm: Fair in the Square Verona Civic Center
Tuesday, Nov 4th	ELECTION DAY	Sunday, Dec 7 th Second Sunday of Advent	8th Annual Sock Drive Begins 10:15am: Worship Service Communion Sunday
Thursday, Nov 6th	7:00pm: Worship & Music Meeting Zoom	Thursday, Dec 11th	11:00am: Grandparents' Group Zoom
Sunday, Nov 9th	10:15am: Worship Service Communion Sunday	Saturday, Dec 13th	10:00am to 1:00pm: Children's Christmas Workshop Pre-Registration Required
Tuesday, Nov 11th	VETERANS DAY	Sunday, Dec 14 th Third Sunday of Advent	10:15am: Worship Service
Thursday, Nov 13th	11:00am: Grandparents' Group Zoom	Thursday, Dec 18th	7:00pm: Session Zoom
Sunday, Nov 16th	10:15am: Worship Service	Friday, Dec 19th	Deadline for January/February Newsletter Articles
Thursday, Nov 20th	7:00pm: Session Zoom	Sunday, Dec 21 st Fourth Sunday of Advent	10:15am: Worship Service
Saturday, Nov 22nd	9:00am to 12:00pm: Annual Leaf Raking Day	Wednesday, Dec 24th	CHRISTMAS EVE 7:00pm: Candles & Carols Christmas Eve Service
Sunday, Nov 23rd	10:15am: Worship Service 3:00pm: Interfaith Thanksgiving Service Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church	Thursday, Dec 25th	CHRISTMAS DAY
Thursday, Nov 27th	THANKSGIVING	Sunday, Dec 28th	10:15am: Worship Service
Sunday, Nov 30 th First Sunday of Advent	10:15am: Worship Service Church Decorating Event	Wednesday, Dec 31 st	NEW YEAR'S EVE

