

MAY & JUNE 2026

# FPCV NEWS

veronapreschurch.org

WELCOMING HEARTS, NURTURING SPIRITS,  
UNITED IN FELLOWSHIP AND FAITH

**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 CHAIR:**

KATHY DOUGHERTY

**CHURCH OFFICERS:**

**SESSION:**

DJENANE DUHANEY

CATHY FRANCO

CHRISTOPHER KIEL

DONNA KIEL

CAROLINE MESCIA

MARILYN O'NEILL

JANICE TIERNEY

**DEACONS:**

KATHY DOUGHERTY

SUZANNE FIEDERER

BARBARA HAIMANN

DAVID HAIMANN

LIZ MCGOUGH

WILLOW POMPONIO

MARION SHINE



*Come Worship with Us*

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

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

SUNDAYS AT 10:15AM

**ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP**

SUNDAY SERVICES ARE STREAMED ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL:

[WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@FIRSTPRESBYTERIANCHURCHOEJV7478/STREAMS](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@FIRSTPRESBYTERIANCHURCHOEJV7478/STREAMS)



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

ERIK SIMON

Technically, we are still in Easter season. As many of you probably know, there is a church calendar for the whole year with varying seasons of varying lengths of time, each season denoted by a color: Advent and Lent are purple; Christmas and Epiphany, which lasts about two weeks, is white; Easter, which lasts to Pentecost, is also white, and Pentecost, which gets only two days, is fiery red. You'll see these colors in the church and sometimes on me. There are cloths which cover the alter table and that drape from the two pulpits; they are called paraments, and their color reflects the season. The stole I wear around my neck while I preach also reflects the season (usually; sometimes I go rogue), and I wish Pentecost were somehow longer because I love my red stole but get to wear it only one day all year, although we also wear the red at installation and ordination ceremonies for other ministers. Every now and then I will wear the red when I feel like it because, well, it's just a great color, great stole.

I'm not a fan of the church calendar in large part because it's trying to tell me how I'm supposed to feel or what I'm supposed to think. During Lent I'm supposed to be somber and reflective, wondering how I can better follow Jesus. Well, I don't like being somber and so would never choose that mood, and I'm pretty reflective every day of the year and often wondering how I can better follow Jesus. During Advent I'm supposed to be expectant, but spiritually I have learned that living in the present and reducing expectations is the best way to go. Christmas and Easter are fine enough, but for me (and most ministers) it's a really busy time of year with holidays when people who don't usually come to church actually come to church, a number of them eager to critique what I'm doing wrong and some of them letting me know. Minister is one of those professions that great numbers of people who have never been one feel compelled to tell you how you should be doing it. Teachers get that a lot, too, reams of people who have never taught telling them how to do it. My closest friend in the world has never read the bible and hasn't been to church in decades and yet often argues with me about the bible and religion. Ironically, he's a teacher. I always marvel at people who have never really read the bible telling me how my understanding of it and my sermons about it are wrong. That's some real moxie, no?

But here's my biggest problem with the church calendar. The great majority of it, of the year, is called Ordinary Time; its color is green. I think there is no such thing as Ordinary Time, and I don't like being told by my church that there is, that somehow certain days and times of the year are more extraordinary than others. I think every day is extraordinary if you're open to it being so. Yesterday, I had lunch with my son and his new girlfriend; he showed me his new tattoos, we talked about film and travel, we laughed, and it was magic. In early June, we resume Ordinary Time, but it's also when honeysuckle comes in bloom. How can anyone smell honeysuckle and think the day is ordinary? There's nothing ordinary about a poem by Robert Frost or Elizabeth Bishop or William Butler Yeats, and every day I have the choice to read one. Even when things seem like they're going wrong, the extraordinary is possible. I was home the final six months of my father's life, helping my mother nurse him to his death. One cold, snowless day in February, he said he wanted to go for a drive, so we put him in the car, and I drove through the Midwestern countryside where the fields lay fallow, and I saw the landscape which most would call bleak through his eyes, the eyes of a dying man, and it was beautiful. There's nothing quite so lovely as an old barn standing in the distance stately and alone against a gray winter sky.

The church, too, our church, is filled with the extraordinary on a daily basis. All week long, a phalanx of volunteers work at the Thrift Shop, generating revenue for the church and providing charitable items for those who need it. Behind the scenes, seen by only a few, Dick Crawford sends numerous items from here to the people of Ukraine. The Mission Committee is constantly working to provide food to the hungry and much more, and the Finance Committee gives hours to the dull and burdensome task of managing the church finances. Almost every Tuesday evening this past year, a group of us met to discuss the bible, and the interaction was profound. On Sundays, we come together to worship God. Not one of you has to be there, and yet you are. Once a month your Elders meet to make difficult decisions for the church. Last week, Donna Kiel made sure we had a cake for Peg Whiting's birthday, and most of us partook. Our children collect food and money for the needy. Deb Michelsen makes sure the grounds look their loveliest. Charlie Heyer makes sure the heat and lights work. Every Sunday, Dan Uniss shows up two and a half hours before church begins and gets Chamberlain Hall ready for fellowship. These are but a few examples. All of this kind of stuff is happening all of the time, and I find it extraordinary, every day of the year, even during the time my church tries to tell me is Ordinary.

**MUSIC MINISTRY***Make a Joyful Noise.***EXCITING UPDATES**

KYLE BLACKBURN

It's been a busy start of the year for the music ministry, but I'm excited to soon be sharing our new piano with all of you! I'm hoping with careful stewardship and regular maintenance that this instrument will be here for many years to come. Additionally, thank you to everyone for your support of our Easter service - the Chancel Choir and our guest musicians made a glorious noise!

Be on the lookout for some additional changes to our sound system over the next few months. I'm currently in the process of reworking many of the components to make it easier to operate while also providing updated materials and training opportunities for Deacons. If you're interested in running sound on Sundays, please let me know! I'll happily train anyone who wants to learn so I don't have to wear as many hats simultaneously on Sunday mornings.

In some sad news, some of you may have noticed that the choir has not sung since Easter. For the foreseeable future, our Chancel Choir will be pausing performances while we work towards a more sustainable number of singers. That being said, the congregational singing we experience every Sunday will always be improved with some more confident singers! I'll be hosting hymn practice sessions at 9:45am each Sunday prior to service to familiarize any volunteers with the music for the day. Feel free to pop by!

**BUILDING AND GROUNDS***A Fresh Look for a Welcoming Space.***CHURCH UPDATES IN PROGRESS**

CHARLES HEYER &amp; DEBBIE MICHELSEN

CO-CHAIRS OF THE B&amp;G COMMITTEE

The Building & Grounds Committee continues to make improvements!

The lights outside the main entrance are not coming on at night; this problem will be addressed in May.

Quotes are being gathered for work to update the Parlor and to replace the faded carpet in the sanctuary.

We anticipate receiving detailed plans from Boswell Engineering to update the electric service of the church. Increasing the electricity coming into the church will allow for improvements in the Kitchen and in the Sanctuary.

Repairs to two leaking heating pipes will be done during the down-time of the boiler.

**POEM***I Wandered Lonely  
As a Cloud*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had  
brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### *Building a Faith Foundation for the Next Generation*

CATHY FRANCO

Spring is in the air and the children enjoyed seeing the daffodils that they planted in the fall coming up and being beautiful on the church lawn. They made pictures on Easter of different types of daffodils as we discussed how we can be re-newed each Easter as well.

The annual Good Friday workshop was held with all enjoying the smiling faces of the children and helping them to grow in learning about God's love for them. At Easter, the Sunday School teachers expanded from 2 to 4 with Donna and Ernie Kiel returning from Florida. We welcome them and their many years of experience in teaching.

The Sunday School classes continue to learn how they can make a difference in the world. We had a good return of our One Great Hour of Sharing fish banks and the children took pride in counting the money up (we aren't done yet) to see how their collection can help others that they learned about during the Lenten season. They are becoming good disciples of Jesus in helping those less fortunate. After their successful sock drive and Souper Bowl Sunday they selected to donate ¼ of the money they were given by Session to Feed Across America which they learned had a 16x matching fund. They got to learn what that meant. This quarter they have selected to donate to Prison Fellowship to support children of incarcerated parents so that they can attend a christian camp to learn about Jesus and in the summer they will donate to Mercy Ships.

The last day of Sunday School will be on June 7th. The Christian Education Committee has decided to return to our prior approach to Recognition Sunday. We will recognize anyone who is graduating high school or college and it will occur during coffee hour. This year we will recognize Riley Becker and Ashley Duhaney who are graduating college and Sabrina Perez who is graduating high school.

Our lively discussions during Bible study will be coming to an end on April 28th. With everyone's calendar's bursting at the seams in the spring it makes sense to take a break until our new Pastor arrives to resume study of the Bible.

There will not be Sunday School over the summer but there will be work behind the scenes preparing for the fall. In August we will send out a schedule of events for the start of the school year to help our families include our events into your family schedules.

Have a fun and relaxing Summer!



## ANDREW TURNER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

### *Planting the Seeds of Success*

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. The criteria and registration form can be found on our website at [www.veronapreschurch.org/christian-ed](http://www.veronapreschurch.org/christian-ed).

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

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

## DONATIONS

### Hope 4 Ukraine

CHRISTINA TURKINGTON



Greetings – There is a need for canned goods. Not just fruit and veggies but also DOG food (and you know what Dog spelled backwards is...).

Please feel free to write notes or cards and leave them in the bin located in the church foyer. They will be included in the boxes. One of our Sunday School students drew a picture of their family and we sent that to Ukraine.

**HELP PEOPLE,  
EVEN IF THEY NEVER  
KNOW WHO HELPED THEM.**

## PLANSOEN GRANT

### Funding Boosts Programs & Projects

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

Other worthwhile endeavors have included 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. Previous grants have also enabled support of local food pantries, the Children's Christmas and Easter workshops, as well as painting the newly-repaired steeple.

Looking forward, some of the projects planned are the purchase and installation of a new Virtual Pipe Organ (VPO) to replace the 75-year-old organ, improved hearing devices in the sanctuary, upgrades to the kitchen fire-suppression system, and a carillon for the church steeple.

We are deeply thankful for this longstanding and generous support, made possible through the close relationship between the late Charlotte Cunningham, former Music Director for 43 years, and the Plansoen Foundation.



## COMMUNITY

### A Dog in Church? :

### MULLIGAN, THERAPY DOG

JANICE TIERNEY

That's right. Mulligan, a certified therapy dog, is a monthly visitor during worship and fellowship. Owned and handled by the Tierney Family, they have donated a visit each month to support church members and visitors. You may also see him around the church at other times offering a tail wagging greeting to the volunteers and staff that make our church run.

He is a big, goofy bernedoodle who thrives on leaning in for a good pet. Mulligan "volunteers" his time bringing care, calm and comfort in hospitals, schools and universities, care facilities, infusion labs and even court. His cold nose warms hearts everywhere he goes.

If you see him around church, take a moment to say hi. It just might make your day!



## DONATIONS

### Come Together in the Spirit of Giving

The Mission and Outreach Committee is holding a laundry donation drive in May to continue our support of the efforts of **Isaiah House** in East Orange. We are asking for laundry detergent (gallon-size preferred) and towels (bath-size). More to follow on other ways in which FPCV will be helping Isaiah House and their clients.

Our commitment to **The Church of the Holy Spirit Food Pantry** in Verona continues. We shop monthly for grocery items that are needed for distribution to the pantry clients.

For any donations, you may use the 24-hour drop-off bin in their parking lot on 30 Gould Street. We also have a box in the back of the church for any other food donations that you wish to make, and Dick Crawford will deliver to Holy Spirit every Tuesday.

**Online Giving** is always available on our website: [www.veronapreschurch.org](http://www.veronapreschurch.org).

## THRIFT SHOP

### Treasure Hunting

REGULAR HOURS OF  
OPERATION AND DONATION  
DROP OFF:

TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS, AND  
SATURDAYS  
10:00am - 1:00pm



## Another year Blessed!

We happily celebrate the birthdays of those born in May and June!

- MAY 5.....RILEY BECKER
- MAY 18.....FELICIA BURGOS
- MAY 21.....DOTTY OSTELLA
- MAY 26.....BARBARA HAIMANN
  
- JUNE 16.....LIZ MCGOUGH
- JUNE 29.....DONNA KIEL

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!

## 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](mailto: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!

MAY		JUNE	
3		7	
10	CATHY FRANCO IN LOVING MEMORY OF HELENA GARDNER	14	
17		21	
24		28	
31			

## CONNECT

*Come Gather:*

### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FPCV

**AA MEETINGS**  
MEETING IN CHAMBERLAIN HALL  
  
TUESDAYS.....8:30PM TO 9:30PM

**AL-ANON MEETINGS**  
MEETING IN JULIE CHAMBERLAIN ROOM  
  
FRIDAYS.....12:30PM TO 1:30PM

**BIBLE STUDY**  
ON SUMMER BREAK

**GRANDPARENTS' GROUP**  
MEETING VIA ZOOM  
  
SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH  
  
EMAIL [PATHAYER75@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PATHAYER75@GMAIL.COM) OR CALL  
973-239-3592 IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN

**TPAPNJ THEATRE GROUP**  
SEPTEMBER 15 TO JUNE 5  
  
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  
  
NO CLASS: 05/25

**WEST ESSEX MUSIC TOGETHER**  
SPRING SEMESTER - APRIL 15 TO JUNE 29  
  
MONDAYS.....9:30AM TO 11:30AM  
WEDNESDAYS.....4:30PM TO 5:30PM  
THURSDAYS.....9:30AM TO 10:30AM

## 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.

- The **choir** continues to seek new members and are grateful for the new voices who have joined.
- **Sunday School substitute teachers** are always welcome.
- 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** and/or **food** would be appreciated.
- **Coffee Hour Hosts** are needed. Individuals or groups could work together.

## LAY READERS

*May & June 2026*

DATE	SUNDAY	READER
MAY 3	COMMUNION SUNDAY	PAT HEYER
MAY 10	MOTHER'S DAY	CHRIS KIEL
MAY 17		DOTTY OSTELLA
MAY 24		JANICE TIERNEY
MAY 31		PAT HEYER
JUNE 7	COMMUNION SUNDAY PRIDE SERVICE	CHRIS KIEL
JUNE 14		DOTTY OSTELLA
JUNE 21		JANICE TIERNEY
JUNE 28		PAT HEYER

## CALENDAR

### May & June 2026 Upcoming Events: (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

*May*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

*June*

DATE	EVENT
SUN, MAY 3RD	<b>LAUNDRY DONATION DRIVE BEGINS</b> 10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE <b>COMMUNION SUNDAY</b>
THURS, MAY 7TH	7:00PM: WORSHIP & MUSIC MEETING (ZOOM)
SAT, MAY 9TH	11:00AM: INTERMENT OF DALYCE TENORE 2:00PM: MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SHANNA ALYSE KRAAR
SUN, MAY 10TH	<b>MOTHER'S DAY</b> 10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE
THURS, MAY 14TH	11:00AM: GRANDPARENTS' GROUP (ZOOM)
SUN, MAY 17TH	10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE
SUN, MAY 24TH	10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE
MON, MAY 25TH	<b>MEMORIAL DAY</b>
THURS, MAY 28TH	7:00PM: SESSION (ZOOM)
SUN, MAY 31ST	10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE

DATE	EVENT
THURS, JUNE 4TH	7:00PM: WORSHIP & MUSIC MEETING (ZOOM)
SUN, JUNE 7TH	10:15AM: PRIDE WORSHIP SERVICE <b>COMMUNION SUNDAY</b>
THURS, JUNE 11TH	11:00AM: GRANDPARENTS' GROUP (ZOOM)
SAT, JUNE 13TH	2:00PM: TRUMPET STUDENT RECITAL
SUN, JUNE 14TH	10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE
SUN, JUNE 21ST	10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE
THURS, JUNE 25TH	7:00PM: SESSION (ZOOM)
SUN, JUNE 28TH	10:15AM: WORSHIP SERVICE