

Newsletter

July and August 2025



First Presbyterian Church of Verona

Come and Worship with Us
All Are Welcome

10:15 a.m.

10 Fairview Ave, Verona, NJ 07044

973-239-3561

Pastor: Erik Simon

Music Director: Kyle Blackburn

Christian Education Chair: Cathy Franco

Admin. Assistant: Patti Beirne

Sexton: Gabriel Gonzalez

Sexton Emeritus: Andy Turner

E-Mail: veronapreschurch@gmail.com Website: www.veronapreschurch.org

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**“Welcoming Hearts, Nurturing Spirits,
United In Fellowship and Faith.”**

ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT AND WORSHIP

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

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

Online giving is available on our website: veronapreschurch.org

CHURCH OFFICERS

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

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

From the Pastor's Desk: Erik Simon

Hello, Friends:

This is my first "Note from the Pastor's Desk," I'll try to keep it riveting and short, unlike my sermons 😊.



I am so excited to be in Verona working alongside you all. (I'm also excited to get real salami, shop in the Thrift Store, and play frisbee in that massive living room of the manse.) The world, as you can see, is a bit out of sorts, and there is much work ahead of us; yet while that work may at times be trying, I'm a firm believer in joy, and so if we're not having fun living the gospel, then we're doing it wrong.

Whenever I start at a new church, I focus on three tasks: first, to establish a vibrant, consistent worship service, even if it is summer and no one comes, which is fine; I don't take attendance, and God is just as available outside of church as inside, especially these days when so many of our churches are just temples of cruelty and exclusion. Second, meet people and leaders in the community and discern where the need and work is. And finally, meet with each and every one of you, if you are interested. I love to sit down over coffee or a cigar or a meal and learn your stories, who you are. To that end, here is my email and phone number: erikladdsimon@hotmail.com and (845) 274-5080.

I'm not really an office hours guy; the schedule of an active minister just isn't that consistent and predictable. However, I am available to you anytime, 24/7, and I mean that, so please, reach out, and let's meet. As for time off, I usually take off Sunday after church through Tuesday morning, and that'll definitely be the case this summer, but you can still reach me if it's an emergency.

Technically, my start date is July 13, but I will be in town on June 30 and around all of that first week and preaching on July 6. Because of a wedding I have to attend and a couple of other things, it's that second week I'll be tough to track down.

Again, I look forward to working alongside you all. Erik

REPORT FROM PASTOR SEARCH NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC)

PNC REPORT: The PNC committee has officially completed its work. On June 1st, 2025, during the Congregational meeting, the Rev Erik Simon was elected to be our full time Pastor. Erik will assume all Pastoral duties starting July 1st, 2025. Kathy Dougherty and I would like to thank our committee members who have devoted many hours of time over the last 7 months and want to express our sincere gratitude to Riley Becker, Mike Duhaney, Cathy Franco, Janice Tierney and Tennille Wasek. We pray and wish Erik a successful tenure as our new Pastor. In Peace, Ernie Kiel and Kathy Dougherty, Co-Chairs PNC

CHARLOTTE CUNNINGHAM REMEMBERED

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.



Since Charlotte's passing, the Church Session has been thinking an appropriate way to honor and celebrate her many years with us. Now, we have found the perfect answer.

The organ in FPCV needs to be replaced. At its recent June meeting the Session voted to honor Charlotte by dedicating the new organ in her memory.

Please consider contributing to the Charlotte Cunningham Memorial Fund: Please send your donation to The First Presbyterian Church of Verona, 10 Fairview Avenue, Verona, New Jersey 07044. Please note the "CC Memorial Fund" on the Memo line.

Thank you,

The Virtual Pipe Organ Team

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music ministry means different things throughout the year and during the summer I'll be putting my time, sweat, and tears into several large projects. While I can't share details for all of them, I can share that I'm adding two new skills to my repertoire: music librarian and piano tuner. By the fall I'll have completed a full inventory and categorization of all the music in the choral

library - if you've ever seen the filing cabinets full of music you know how much of a task that will be.

I'm also currently taking courses with the Piano Technician Academy to become a piano tuner and technician, further ensuring that First Presbyterian Church of Verona will have the most in-tune and cared-for instruments.

I look forward to exploring musical history and building skills to help bring the music ministry into the future, but I'm always looking for help! If you have any interest in helping categorize the music library, please feel free to email me (fpcvmusicdirector@gmail.com) or see me after a church service to discuss.

Kyle Blackburn: Music Director

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

There's a lot being done around church during the last couple of months:

- The area of Chamberlain Hall that had fire damage has been repaired and painted.
- The Manse dining room ceiling has been repaired & painted and the Manse has been power washed in preparation of welcoming our new Pastor in July.
- The Flat Roof over Chamberlain Hall was in need of recoating and has been completed when the temperature was not too cool and not too hot.
- The stage floor has been refinished to restore it to the condition before the fire.
- Our Insurance Company has requested a total Electrical Inspection of the church buildings—as a result of the stage fire. Some minor repairs will be done during the summer.
- New doors for the Pine Street entrance are expected to be installed during the summer.
- A vote by the Session to select a contractor to repair and repaint our church steeple is upcoming.

Debbie Michelsen & Charles Heyer—co chairs of the B&G Committee

ANDY TURNER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Gratefully, our friend Andy Turner has been back to visit his friends at FPCV. In a wheelchair and with help from his grandson, he has already made three visits. Andy has got to know the new sexton, Gabriel and they have already developed a friendship.

Andrew Turner has been a friend of the Amsterdam family for 75+ years.

Because of their enormous respect and affection for Andy and his humility, kindness, and love of children, they established **The Andrew Turner Scholarship Fund** in his honor. The Scholarship Fund can be used to send a deserving child, or children, to camp for a week each summer.



Marcia Amsterdam Kean and Dianne (Amsterdam) Kangisser have established the "Andrew Turner Scholarship Fund" in March of 2024 with a generous check and intent to fund it every year in Andy's honor.

We are grateful to the Amsterdam family for this gift, If you would like to expand this Scholarship Fund to support sending our children to summer camp, your gifts would be most welcome as the registration fees have grown substantially over the last 10 years.

I hope we can help to implement this, and to let others know that Andy's humility and kindness – and love of children – are a beacon for us all. Many thanks for your assistance.

Please make your checks out to the church and put "Andrew Turner Scholarship Fund" in the memo. Together, we can help raise the next generation of children to know Christ and to love our God.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Another year has flown by and our Sunday School classes ended on June 15th. It was quite a busy day between it being Father's Day, Triune Sunday, and Recognition Sunday. We were able to celebrate with 3 individuals from Sunday School. Cricket Wasek was promoted to Middle School. She has been in our Sunday School and an integral helper with our Fish Fry and at church gatherings. Trevor Mescia graduated from James Caldwell High School and will be attending the University of Delaware where he will study

Finance. Trevor was baptized and attended Sunday School with us and after making his confirmation has become a deacon and helps with the live streaming team. Kayla Kim returned home after graduating from Oberlin College with a degree in anthropology. She also attended Sunday School in our church, made her confirmation, and has helped with Children Workshops when she has been home. We wish all three of them the best.



Our students have made some welcome posters for Pastor Erik when he starts on July 1st.

Over the summer the Christian Education Committee will be working with our Pastor, Erik to plan an exciting return to classes in the fall. With our having a new Pastor on board, one of our tasks will be determining when our next group of students will be ready to start their journey towards Confirmation Class.

Over the summer while Sunday School is on a hiatus, we will continue to have work bags by age group in the back of the church for our young people of faith to use during the service. Our younger class also selected their own personal activity books which they can pick up when they come to church over the summer and will leave them for the next time they come. There will be a children's table in the Narthex for them to sit with families and do their work and where adults will be within listening distance for the sermon each week.

Pull out your painting clothes! Reverend Erik would like to paint the picnic table that is in the back yard of the manse and move it to the front lawn to be an inviting place for people to stop by and gather. We will be looking for volunteers from the congregation including our Sunday School classes to help with this church wide project.

We are also restarting our "ask the Pastor" question jar. It is located in the first floor hallway outside the lady's room. Put your questions for Pastor Erik in the jar and he will be answering them. Feel free to suggest what type of bible study or topics related to faith you would like to have for our adult education studies.

Blessings to all for a laid back summer where you can take in the beauty of God's creations.

Cathy Franco, Chair Christian Education Committee

Recognition Sunday

On Sunday, June 15th we recognized volunteers who help to ensure that there is a worship service and fellowship each week. During Rev. Rhonda's tenure with us she enlightened us to understand that those in a leadership position (elected or appointed) are obligated to volunteer to help with the leadership of the church. With this in mind, volunteers who were recognized were those who were doing so as part of their leadership obligations. The following were recognized:

Choir members: Doug Hathaway, Charlie Heyer, Isabelle Mercado, Caroline Mescia, Marilyn O'Neill, Peggy Whiting.

Lay readers: Pat Heyer, Andria Kiel, Chris Kiel, Dotty Ostella, Janice Tierney. Substitutes: Cathy Franco, Caroline Mescia, Beth Shorten, James Shorten.

Sunday School teachers: Riley Becker, Donna Kiel, Ernie Kiel, Mike McGough, Christina Turkington.

Live Streaming team: Ernie Kiel, Walter Koroluk, Mike McGough, Trevor Mescia.

Coffee Hour: Donna Kiel, Marion Shine, Dan Uniss.

PLANSOEN GRANT

For many years, the FPCV has received a significant grant from the Plansoen Foundation. In the past and currently, the Church has requested funds for continuing support of the music program

including concerts, professional musicians especially during Worship Services, maintenance of the organ and other musical instruments, and children's programs.



Previous grants have enabled restoration of the stage, new doors including an ADA- compliant door and an exterior walkway for Chamberlain Hall, completed in 2024, and support for food kitchens especially during the pandemic. Funds were used to add a much-needed ADA bathroom across the hall from Chamberlain Hall.

We are most grateful for this amazing support, all started many years ago because of the close connection of Charlotte Cunningham, former Music Director, and the Plansoen Foundation.

Barbara Haimann & Debbie Michelsen

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous opportunities for church friends to share their talents. Please consider how you might use your gifts and talents to support the vital work of the church during this season of transition.



- 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 Patti Beirne 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.

Our membership vows include a commitment to being a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ and devoting ourselves to the work of the church. Let's be sure to uphold those vows!

FISH FRY

We're into the Summer Season and hope all have an enjoyable time. It will fly by fast and Fall will be fast approaching. We then look forward to our annual Deacon's Fund Raiser – the Fish Fry!!

Save the date – Friday, October 24, 2025. Peace & Blessings, *Marion Shine*

LAY READERS and PULPIT SUPPLY

DATE	SUNDAY	WORSHIP LEADER	LAY READER
June 29		Rev. Rhonda Myers	Janice Tierney
July 6	Communion Sunday	Pastor Erik Simon	Dotty Ostella
July 13		Rev. Susan Friedl	Pat Heyer
July 20		Pastor Erik Simon	Cathy Franco
July 27		Pastor Erik Simon	Chris Keil
August 3	Communion Sunday	Pastor Erik Simon	James Shorten
August 10		Pastor Erik Simon	Cathy Franco
August 17		Pastor Erik Simon	Pat Heyer
August 24		Pastor Erik Simon	Janice Tierney
August 31		Pastor Erik Simon	Dotty Ostella

STEWARDSHIP IS VITAL TO THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH



As we move forward into a new future, with new pastoral leadership, our prayer is that you will choose to support the church in fulfilling its calling to grow in faith and mission as together we give of our time, talent, and treasure.

Each member is asked to give an additional amount of \$38 to cover the per capita that our church is responsible to pay to Presbytery.

Presbytery puts this money to good use and we need to support it. If the money is not given by the individual members, it will become an additional expense in our church budget. Thank you all for helping with this.

Donna Lauckner

NEWS FROM THE THRIFT SHOP

Good News – The Thrift Shop will be open all Summer

Regular Hours

10:00 am to 1:00pm

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

Thrift Store Shopping- Things to Always Buy at the Thrift Shop

Seasonal Décor: The Thrift Shop has an all-year Christmas Section
Books: If you have a favorite author, check with Christina.
Frames, Pictures, Paintings, Small Furniture, Tables, Shelves,Lamps,Salt & Pepper Shakers
Glasses, Cups, Mugs, Leather Belts, Leather Purses,Bags, Totes, Candlesticks,Mirrors, Baskets
Power Tools, Hand Tools, Garden Tools, Mirrors, Wood Trays, Jewelery and Jewelry Boxes
Vases, Cast Iron, Baking Trays and Pie Pans, Luggage, CDs, DVDs, Albums

HOPE 4 UKRAINE

Привітання та щасливого літа.

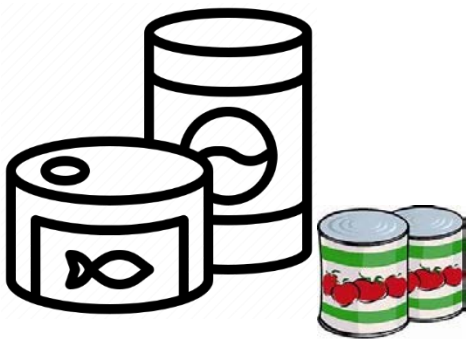
There is a need for Canned Foods. Vegetables, fruit, pie filling, yes, even pet food.

Please Leave the food in the Ukraine Container in the Church foyer. If anyone would like to notes for drawn pictures that would be awesome

Все, що ви робите одному з найменших братів моїх, те ви робите мені.

Thank you all who donate and volunteer to make this happen.

Our Church Member, Dick Crawford, routinely drops off the Ukraine Goods to a central location in Northern NJ to be delivered aboard.



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. However, you may leave donations here at our Church. Each Tuesday Dick Crawford brings them over to Holy Spirit. Please consider writing a check to: Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit with "food pantry" in the memo line.

GRANDPARENTS' GROUP



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

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

CHANCEL FLOWER DONATIONS 2025



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. **Chancel Flowers** may be ordered through the church office for delivery from Anderson's Florist in Verona. \$ 32 for one bouquet and \$ 64 for two (A slight Increase for 2025) . When using

Anderson Florist, we can generally use them for more than one week unless you specify otherwise. **Please sign up using the Flower Chart outside Chamberlain Hall or contact the Church Office by calling 973.239.3561 or emailing veronapreschurch@gmail.com.** Your order must be into the church office by the Wednesday prior to delivery. **Contact the church office to check for the available dates. Or use the sign in sheet located outside Chamberlain Hall.**

July		August	
6th	Peggy Whiting	3rd	
13 th		10th	
20 th		17th	
27 th		20 nd	
		27 th	

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)

	July Cathy Franco 1 Julia Dawson 9
	August James Shorten 4 Andy Turner 18 Pat Heyer 26

CALENDAR for July and August

(Dates are subject to change when necessary)

Wednesday July 2

7:00 pm Worship & Music Committee

Friday July 4 **Independence Day**

Office Closed

Sunday July 6 **Holy Communion Sunday**

10:15 am Worship Service – Pastor Erik Simon

Monday July 7 **TPAPNJ**

begins Monday through Friday 9am to 2pm.

Ends August 22

Thursday July 8

11:00 am Grandparents' Group- Zoom

Sunday July 13

10:15 am Worship Service – Rev. Susan Friedl

Sunday July 20

10:15 am Worship Service –Pastor Erik Simon

Thursday July 24

7:00 pm Session –Zoom

Sunday July 27

10:15 am Worship Service – Pastor Erik Simon

Sunday August 3 **Holy Communion Sunday**

10:15 am Worship Service – Pastor Erik Simon

Wednesday August 6

7:00 pm Worship & Music Committee

Sunday August 10

10:15 am Worship Service- Pastor Erik Simon

Thursday August 14

11:00 am Grandparents' Group- Zoom

Sunday August 17

10:15 am Worship Service-Pastor Erik Simon

Friday August 22 **TPAPNJ** ends August 22

Articles Due for September/October Newsletters

Sunday August 24

10:15 am Worship Service- Pastor Erik Simon

Thursday August 21

7:00 pm Session – Zoom

Sunday August 31

10:15 am Worship Service –Pastor Erik Simon



WEST ESSEX MUSIC TOGETHER

Music Together has three classes for

Starting June 30

for 6 weeks

Mondays. 9:30 to 11:30, Thursdays. 9:30 to 10:30, Saturday 10:30 to Noon

<p>AA Meetings</p> <p>Meeting in Chamberlain Hall- Tuesdays 8:30pm-9:30pm</p> <p>Al-Anon Meetings</p> <p>Meeting in the Parlor during the Summer - Fridays 12:30pm – 1:30 pm</p>