

**January & February 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

Seeking Permanent Pastor

Music Director: Kyle Blackburn

Christian Education Chair: Cathy Franco

Sexton: Open Position

Admin. Assistant: Patti Beirne

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

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

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

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

**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>

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



## INCLEMENT WEATHER CHURCH CLOSING PROCEDURE

As winter is upon us, if because of the weather we are unable to have a church service, you will be notified.

## THANK YOU, PASTOR RHONDA



Pastor Rhonda Myers has completed her responsibilities as our Interim Pastor. We honored her leaving and retiring, at a celebration following Worship on December 26, 2024.

FPCV was surely blessed with her leadership and guidance in the process of finding our new permanent pastor. We wish her well in her retirement. Party pictures can be viewed using this link.

(Hold down the ctrl key and click on the link)

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/xS9J43i87HZAVb887>

## REPORT FROM THE PNC

**The Pastor Nominating Committee** continues to invite and evaluate prospective Pastors for our Church.

The committee recently had a preliminary ZOOM meeting with one of these candidates and is scheduling a more in-depth interview in January. While, at the same time, we continue to evaluate and interview other candidates as well. Your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is dedicated to finding the right Pastor for FPCV and asks for your prayers during this process.

“During the interim, our Presbytery provides names of pastors who are willing and able to lead Sunday Worship, serve Communion, conduct Congregational Meetings and moderate meetings where necessary.”

The PNC respectfully reminds the congregation that we are bound to rules of confidentiality and cannot discuss any details about possible candidates, until a selection is made for the congregation’s consideration.

Yours in Christ and peace; Ernie Kiel and Kathy Dougherty, PNC co-chairs

## HR UPDATE

It is with great pleasure that the Human Resources Committee announces that Kyle Blackburn has accepted our offer to be our new Music Director. He completed his Interim position the end of December, and starting in January is now our permanent Music Director. The adult choir has been working with him this fall and he did a wonderful job of helping our Sunday School students create an interesting performance during the Christmas Season. We are looking forward to many more exciting things in the coming years.



Kyle Blackburn is a multi-faceted music educator and performer based in New Jersey. Kyle is regularly seen teaching everything from choir to music technology across the state. When not teaching, Kyle can be found working as a collaborative pianist for various organizations along with work across the greater New Jersey area as a music director, voice teacher, and vocalist.

James Shorten has been a huge help by returning as our Interim Sexton while he is home on winter break from College. He will be with us until 1/22/25 when he returns to school. The work of James and our many volunteers who have been pitching in to keep the buildings in good shape have been supplemented by students from West Orange High School. The students are in the work training program for those between 18-21 years old and are under the supervision of their Special Education Teacher and Job Coaches. This new ministry of the church provides the students with real life work training opportunities which the church is not allowed to pay for per the guidelines of the State of NJ. If you see these hard working students, please let them know they are appreciated.

We continue to search for a part-time Church Sexton. If you know of someone who is under-employed, or looking for part-time work, please have them contact Chris Kiel.

Chris Kiel and Cathy Franco

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Our Christmas Children's Workshop was another annual success with some new volunteers joining our seasoned ones. Thanks to all for their invaluable help in creating a fun learning experience for the children.

Happy New Year to everyone. Christian Education had another busy year helping our youth and adults grow in their faith under Reverend Dr. Rhonda Meyer's guidance. While we are sad to have said our good-bye's to her, she has left an indelible impression with us on how we conduct Christian Education for all. The children made her a mobile with words describing how they will remember her. They found her to be smart, kind, funny, a good story teller, calm, and nice. Riley and Cathy will continue to weave scriptures into the Sunday School lessons following the Presbyterian Lectionary for this year until a new Pastor is called to further guide us.

In the absence of a regular Pastor, the Christian Education Committee will work closely with Worship & Music (who arranges for pulpit supply) as well as our new Music Director Kyle to coordinate upcoming special Sundays and practice for those children interested in singing.

When our Pulpit Supply person chooses not to do the Children's Message, Cathy or Riley will take it on so that the children continue to gain comfort with being included in the service each week.

On Communion Sunday's we will have a slight change on children's participation. The older class will break from Sunday School lesson and continue to join the congregation for Communion, however our younger class will stay upstairs.

We will also explore possible avenues for continuation of adult study since this has been very popular. It will continue to be offered in a hybrid manner. If you have subjects that you would be interested in learning more about, please let Cathy Franco know.

Our 7<sup>th</sup> annual Sock drive is in full swing. The students counted our first 71 pairs of socks and Liz Koroluck has already delivered them to a shelter in Newark to start helping keep feet warm this winter. Please continue to generously donate socks for all ages through the end of February.



**Super Souper Bowl Sunday** will be on 2/9/25. Start collecting soup cans during Shop Rite's Can Can sale & save those dollar bills for our soup pots on

Souper Bowl Sunday. The items and money will go to Holy Spirit Food Pantry in town.

The Christian Education Committee will be meeting next on 1/12 to plan our activities for the year. We meet during coffee hour and all are welcome to come and share your ideas with us.

Cathy Franco, Chair, Christian Education Committee

## WORSHIP AND MUSIC

### Welcome Kyle Blackburn

Hi everyone! I'm so excited to be joining the worship team here at First Presbyterian Church of Verona. Although it skipped my parents, I'm happily carrying on a tradition of church organists and music directors in my family and look forward to sharing my growth with all of you. I currently work as a music teacher in Orange during the day, but when I have spare time I spend it with my wife and dog doing anything from baking (a gift I'm sure to share at various points in the year!) to hiking. I'm excited to get to know all of you and hope you'll consider raising your voices in harmony throughout the year, both in the congregation and in the choir! - Kyle Blackburn



### LOVE TO SING? JOIN THE CHANCEL CHOIR

Our rehearsals are fun. The music is simple.  
Rehearsals are at 9:30 on Sunday mornings prior to the worship service.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous opportunities for church friends to share their talents. With January comes a new church year. 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!

## BUILDING AND GROUNDS

There are still a few projects left over from 2024 that will be addressed in 2025.

**ADA Bathroom:** As of this writing, the bathroom is about 90% done. The sink, toilet and grab bars are yet to be installed. These things should be accomplished during January.

**Fire in Chamberlain Hall:** A small fire occurred in the wall of the stage in December. It was quickly put out by our local fire department personnel, but there is now a hole in the wall. Our Insurance Company, Church Mutual, and Serve-Pro are negotiating a settlement. Then, work will be done to repair the opening, and electrical plug in the wall, clean and revarnish the stage, wax the hall floor and possibly clean the curtains and drapery.

After the Myers move out of the manse in mid-January, an inspection will be done. The attic fan motor will need to be replaced also.

There is now a second Memorial Plaque by the church main entrance. It was expertly mounted by Bob Prout and his carpenters. A big “Thank You” goes out to them for an excellent job.

James Shorten will be with us through late January. During his time here he will be doing cleaning, garbage removal and other jobs as they come up. He is very conscientious about keeping the church in good shape.

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

## LAY READERS

	<b>January</b>		<b>February</b>
5 <sup>th</sup>	James Shorten	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Janice Tierney
12 <sup>th</sup>	Dotty Ostella	9 <sup>th</sup>	Dotty Ostella
19 <sup>th</sup>	Joyce Cougan	16 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Kiel
26 <sup>th</sup>	Pat Heyer	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Pat Heyer

## PLANSOEN GRANT

Once again, the First Presbyterian Church of Verona received a significant grant of \$ 50,000 for use in 2025 from the Plansoen Foundation. For many years, the Foundation has offered an opportunity for us to apply for a grant. 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 in 2019, 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. Currently, funds are being 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*

## Stewardship

is heart work



"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."  
Matthew 6:19-21

## 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.

Offering envelopes are available now. If you would like to contribute by envelope and haven't received them as yet, please contact Assistant Treasurer Donna

[Lauckner@verizon.net](mailto:Lauckner@verizon.net).



## HELP UKRAINE

Ukraine continues to need canned food items. The Shoprite Can Can sale usually takes place in January and that would be a good opportunity to bring in cans. Thank you for your continued support.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE THRIFT SHOP VOLUNTEERS

The Thrift Shop will be closed from January 5 - February 6.


We will reopen on Thursday, February 6.

**While we are closed we will be cleaning, restocking and organizing. No rest for the weary.**

**Thursdays during January we will be open from 10 to 1 to accept donations.**

**That is the only time donations will be accepted in January.**

- While we accept books there are some that do not move. Please do not donate the following.
- No cookbooks
- No foreign language books, except Spanish.
- No text books.
- No city/state tour books
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<b>CHANCEL FLOWER DONATIONS</b>			
		<p>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. <b>The church has begun a relationship with Anderson Flowers for the regular delivery of fresh flowers to the church for Sunday worship.</b> 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! <b>Contact the church office to check for the available dates. Or use the sign in sheet located outside Chamberlain Hall.</b></p>	
<b>January</b>		<b>February</b>	
5th		2nd	
12th		9th	
19th	In loving Memory of John Lenaeus/Nancy Baldyga	16th	
26th	In loving memory of Nancy Lenaeus/Nancy Baldyga	23rd	



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

## 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)!



### January

Patti Beirne 2  
Marcos Mercado 22

### February

Donna Lauckner-5  
Barbara Levenson 6  
Isabel Mercado-7  
Ernie Kiel- 8  
Dan Uniss- 10  
Nicole Shaw-22

## THE ACTS

**THE ACTS** is the Annual Report of the life of FPCV. This annual publication is distributed to church members prior to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. Reports are due by January 29<sup>TH</sup>. Send your reports to the church office. If you would like a computer print-out of last year's report, please let the office know asap.

### Articles needed for THE ACTS:

Administrative Assistant Report Administrative & Communications Committee Reports Board of Deacons Report Building and Grounds Committee Report Caring and Sharing Page Church Officers Page Christian Education Committee Report Clerk's Report Financials	Human Resources Committee Report Music Director Report Outreach Committee Report Plansoen Foundation Grant Report Session Council and Committees Sexton Report Staff Page Stewardship Committee Report Thrift Shop Report Worship & Music Committee Report
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## CALENDAR FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2025

(Dates are subject to change when necessary)

<p><b>Wed. January 7th</b> 7:00 pm Worship &amp; Music Committee</p> <p><b>Thursday January 9</b> 11:00 am Grandparents' Group- Zoom</p> <p><b>Sunday January 12 Holy Communion Sunday</b> 10:15 am Worship Service – Rev. Shelly Gardner</p> <p><b>Special Congregational Meeting to elect officers following Worship</b> Christian Ed Comm Mtg during Coffee Hour</p> <p><b>Sunday January 19</b> 10:15 am Worship Service - Rev. Jeff Leininger <b>Installation of Newly Elected Officers</b></p> <p><b>Monday January 20 Martin Luther King Day</b> Church Offices Closed</p> <p><b>Sunday January 26</b> Rev. Robert Mason 10:15 am Worship Service</p> <p><b>Wednesday January 29</b> 7:00 pm Session -Zoom <b>Deadline for articles for THE ACTS</b></p>	<p><b>Sunday, February 2 Holy Communion Sunday</b> 10:15 am Worship Service – Rev. Shelly Gardner</p> <p><b>Wed. February 5<sup>th</sup></b> 7:00 pm Worship &amp; Music Committee 10:00 am <b>Thrift Shop Reopens</b></p> <p><b>Sunday February 9 Souper Bowl Sunday</b> 10:15 am Worship Service – Rev. Jeff Leininger Christian Ed Comm Mtg during coffee hour</p> <p><b>Thurs. February 13<sup>th</sup></b> 11:00 am Grandparents' Group- Zoom</p> <p><b>Sunday February 16</b> 10:15 am Worship Service- Rev. Shelly Gardner</p> <p><b>Monday February 17 Presidents Day</b> <b>Church Offices Closed</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday February 19</b> 7:00 pm Session via Zoom</p> <p><b>Sunday February 23</b> 10:15 am Worship Service 11:15 am <b>Annual Congregational Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(Snow Date March 2<sup>nd</sup>)</b> <b>Sock Drive ends February 28th</b></li> </ul>
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***For Pastoral needs during the Pastor's absence, please contact Peggy Whiting-908-753-5882***

***Chancel Choir practice each Sunday at 9:30 am prior to the Service***

***Thrift Shop is Closed until February 6<sup>h</sup>, 2025 Accepting Donations on Tuesdays Only from 10 am to 1 pm***

**AA Meetings**

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

**Al-Anon Meetings**

Meeting in Julie Chamberlain Room

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TPAPNJ – To Be Determined

**WEST ESSEX MUSIC TOGETHER**

Music Together only has three classes for 10 weeks.

It will go longer due to 2 Monday holidays, to Monday, March 31.

Mondays. 9:30 to 11:30

Thursdays. 9:30 to 10:30