

First Presbyterian Church  
298 Main Street  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
298 MAIN STREET  
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ 07840  
REV. BIRDA FERGUSON  
OFFICE: 908-852-4011  
e-mail: fpchnj@gmail.com  
Church website,  
<http://www.fpchack-ettstown.org>

Light  
from the



**JANUARY  
2019**



Steeple

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
HACKETTSTOWN, NJ  
CHURCH OFFICE: (908) 852-4011**

**Pastor:** Rev. Birda Ferguson  
**Choir Director/Organist:** Lorinda Ravo  
**Treasurer:** Al Ravo  
**Financial Secretary:** Deborah Gulick Shepherd  
**Head Usher:** Kim Newton  
**Church Secretary:** Mary Lightfoot  
**Sexton:** John Mark Wojcicki

**2019 SESSION**

<b>Class of 2019</b>	<b>Class of 2020</b>	<b>Class of 2021</b>
Carl Erickson	Jim Butts	Sandy Archer
Don Luques	Grace Clegg	Erin Roguso
Ryan Van Orden	Jim Simmons	Sandy Woolcock Patton

**2019 BOARD OF DEACONS**

<b>Class of 2019</b>	<b>Class of 2020</b>	<b>Class of 2021</b>
Marge Conroy	Patricia Butts	Jenn Bramley
Barbara Cors	Gilles Djongang	Charles Nyland
Chris Roguso	Sharon Heil	Justin Simmons

**2019 HEAVEN SENT NURSERY SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**OFFICE: 852-2006**

Dan Gardner - 2018	Ginny Plumbo - 2019
Carl Erickson - Session Liason	Connie Quinn - HS Parent

**PRAYER LIST**

**Please keep the following in your prayers:**

Rachel Becker,  
 Floyd Smith's  
 granddaughter  
 Jeff Beddow  
 Richard  
 Bodycomb  
 Mary Brodt  
 Eris Bunnel  
 Jenny Buzan  
 Barbara  
 Courtright  
 Pam Covert &  
 her dad Jim  
 Alisa Dartnell's  
 mother  
 Lauren DelPlato  
 Maria & Garry  
 Ferguson,  
 Birda's In-Laws  
 FPCH  
 Sharon Heil  
 Janette Hendershot  
 Friends of FPCH  
 Terry Gretchen  
 Dorothy Knauer  
 Judy Kolwicz  
 Dotty Landiak  
 The Lee Family  
 Emily Ligarzewski

Maikuu  
 congregation,  
 Kibwezi Kenya  
 Jessica McDonagh and Family  
 Diana Merzoian  
 Members of the  
 Armed Forces  
 Martin Nyland  
 Barbara Pace,  
 niece of the  
 Prestopines  
 Sandy Patton  
 Edith Payton -  
 mother of  
 Sharon Heil  
 Elizabeth  
 Robitsch  
 Peggy Russack  
 Lauren Scavo -  
 niece of Glenn  
 Ferguson  
 Mark Tilney  
 Brian & Nancy  
 White



## DATES TO REMEMBER: JANUARY 2019



- 01: New Year's Day: Church Office closed.
- 02: Yarn Girls - 1 PM in the Conference Room
- 03: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 03: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 05: Pastor Birda Ferguson's Retirement Celebration - 12-3 PM in the Chapel
- 06: Worship and communion - 10 AM; Install/Ordain Officers, 10 AM; All Annual Reports due!
- 10: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 10: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 12: Men's Breakfast - 8:30 am in the Chapel
- 12: Newton Presbytery, Oak Ridge Presbyterian, 10 AM
- 13: Worship - 10 AM; Baptism of Leon Stark; Sunday School; fellowship
- 15: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room, Dave Harvey moderating
- 16: PLEFF Dinner - 6PM at Pasta Grill by Enzo, 1916 Rte 57, Hackettstown, NJ
- 17: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 17: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 19: Ladies' Breakfast at the River Star Diner - 9 AM
- 20: Church worship - 10 AM; Jeanne Radak preaching; Sunday School; 2018 Annual Reports distributed; fellowship
- 22: Deacons Meeting - 6:30 PM in the Conference Room
- 23: Ladies Who Lunch - 12:30 PM at Toscana, Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ (across from Hometown Hardware)
- 24: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 24: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 27: Worship; Little Lights Choir sings; Sunday School 10 AM;
- 27: Annual Congregational Meeting - 11 AM
- 31: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 31: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room

## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Friends,

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!** As our new year begins, I'm sorting, discarding, storing, and packing—not nearly fast enough. Anyone who has downsized knows how difficult it is to discard items with sentimental connection to people and/or events of importance in our lives.

But sometimes we have to do that, and I'm doing my best to get tough. One of the most difficult things is to say good-bye to a congregation that has been my extended family for 9 years and witnessed many changes in my life.

During the almost decade since I arrived at First Presbyterian, my husband retired and our daughters--Kirstin and Abby--married. We gratefully received your support throughout Glenn's critical medical challenges in 2015 and my mother's death in 2017. Last May with sweet Will's birth, Glenn and I became grandparents. This coming year, the house we purchased in South Carolina will become home.

I'll get used to *not* writing sermons for Sundays, *not* moderating session and congregational meetings, and *not* getting calls to open the church or the chapel for groups or individuals.

I will miss Choir practice, laughing through Tone Chime rehearsals, finding new ways to honor the seasons of the Christian year (especially the Trinity), and our Advent and Lenten studies. Most of all, I'll miss interacting with you on a regular basis! My heart is full!

We all need to accept and *practice* the guidelines of the Presbytery of Newton's "Separation Ethics Covenant" for retiring pastors and for their congregation. These include: Refraining from all pastoral contact the first 2 years, (no weddings, funerals, discussions about what's happening regarding the church life; or social media (Facebook, emails, etc.). I hope you will celebrate and respect my retirement as I will support your new pastors. Let us seek God's will in all we say and do every day.

May God's love fill you with peace and joy,

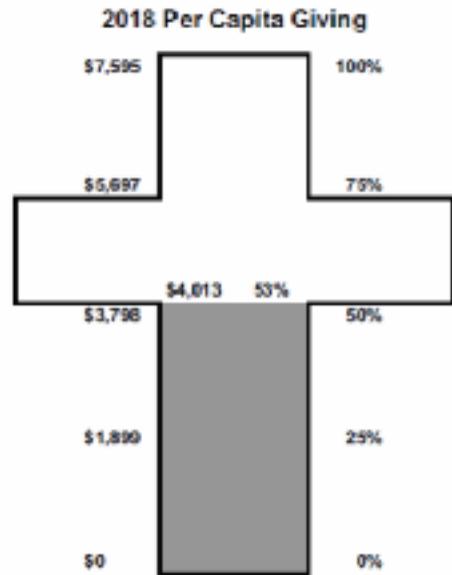
**Birda Buzan Ferguson**

# JANUARY 2019 FINANCIAL \$NAPSHOT

BY: AL RAVO

The Expenses Paid and Income amounts below do not include the funds transferred from the Endowment to meet the church operating expenses.

	NOVEMBER	Year to Date
<b>Income</b>	\$13,798.44	\$183,687.04
<b>Expenses Paid</b>	\$16,380.61	\$170,860.56
<b>Net Operating Income/ Deficit</b>	(\$ 2,582.17)	\$ 12,826.48
<b>Amount Needed from Endowment</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00



The 2018 Per Capita is \$35.00 for each of the 217 members of our Church. The total amount due in 2018 is \$7,595.00 or \$632.92 monthly. In November, \$35.00 was received for the Per Capita making the total received in 2018, \$4,013.00 or 53% of the annual amount due.

**The 2019 Per Capita is \$37.00 for each member of the Church.**

Please contact Al Ravo if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Church's operational finances, the Endowment Funds or Per Capita.

# CHOIR NOTES

BY: LORINDA RAVO

## January 6:

I Am the Bread of Life-Grace Notes

This beautiful hymn is found in our hymnal, and as the notes in our hymnal tell us, "the first four stanzas and refrain are quoted from Jesus" (John 6:35, 44, 51, 53; while the fifth stanza draws on the world of Martha - John 11:27).

## January 13:

My Son, the Beloved-Senior Choir

The Heavens Opened-Joyful Noise Bell Choir

This Sunday, we celebrate "Baptism of the Lord" Sunday, and the choir sings a beautiful new anthem, based on John's account of the Baptism of the Lord. Isaiah's prophecy, as recounted in Luke 3:4.

The ever delightful Joyful Noise Bell Choir plays an original piece called "The Heavens Opened"- a piece that allowed the children to learn both the music and the story of the baptism of Jesus.

## January 20:

Come! Live in the Light!-Sr. Choir

Today's anthem recognizes our denomination's designation of this Sunday as Racial and Intercultural Justice Sunday. Our Glory To God hymnal notes tell us: "The refrain of this hymn is based on

the well-known challenge of Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God."



## January 27:

Servant of All-Little Lights Sunday School Choir

Trinity Fanfare-FPCH Ringers-Our Sunday School students

remind us this morning that in

Mark's gospel, we are told that if we want to be great in God's kingdom, we must first learn to be a servant. (Mark 10:44). The FPCH Ringers will be playing a bright and lively piece titled "Trinity Fanfare" this morning.

## LITTLE LIGHTS SUNDAY SCHOOL CHOIR

Our Little Lights continue to bring us so much joy! Each month, the children are learning songs that come directly from scripture. In January, they'll be learning a message from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, verse 44 "And whoever would be first among you must be a servant of all."



## JOYFUL NOISE RINGERS & UNITY CHIMERS

Hooray for young people learning new things and leading worship! I am so proud of our two instrumental ensembles for children here at FPCH: the Joyful Noise Ringers and the Unity Chimers. The kids are so very faithful in their attendance at rehearsals, and take their music very seriously! A reminder that while I'd love to welcome

## WELCOME THESE ELDERS AND DEACONS!

Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, the Day of the Epiphany of the Lord, we will ordain and install elders and deacons to serve on the Session and the Board of Deacons. These women and men were elected by the congregation at the Congregational Meeting of November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Please give your prayers and support to these members of the Session Class of 2021: **Sandy Archer, Sandy Patton, and Erin Roguso**; and to these members of the Board of Deacons, Class of 2021: **Jen Bramley, Charles Nyland, and Justin Simmons**.

Justin Simmons and Erin Roguso will be ordained on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The others were previously ordained, and will be installed on that day.

**Thank you for serving  
our Lord and our Church  
in this way!**

*Elders & Deacons*

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

4: Winnie Slachetka  
6: Dana Carpenter  
10: Donna Ghetti  
16: Muriel Stellingwerf  
17: Robert Roome  
21: Britney Gulick  
22: T.C. Zellars  
25: Jeff Newton  
26: Rebecca Ruballos  
28: Morgan Gelsing  
31: Emma Rabuano  
Matthew Gelsing  
David Ryan

*Happy Anniversary!*

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

14: Fred & Sandy Sentner



## FYI: Change of Address

Many of our congregation members know Michale Ort. He was a constant presence at all of our worship services and gatherings at the Chapel. Unfortunately, he has moved down to Virginia with his brother. To that end, we encourage you to send him a little note wishing him well. His information is as follows:

Michael Ort,  
c/o Tom Ort  
396 Davis Drive  
Boydton, Virginia 23917



## GREETERS FOR JANUARY

06: Jim Patton and Sandy Woolcock Patton

13: Chris and Erin Roguso

20: Russell Reed and Maria Koskulics

27: Suzann Smith

A rectangular logo with a black background and a gold border. It features a white cross symbol on the left and the word "GREETER" in gold, uppercase letters on the right.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS

Are you, or someone you know, interested in serving on the **Church Nominating Committee, the Financial Review Committee, or the Heaven Sent Board of Trustees?** Contact Elder Jim Butts, the Moderator of the Nominating Committee.

### Position descriptions:

**FINANCIAL REVIEW** Elected by the congregation for one year to review the finances of all boards and organizations under session purview. No active elders may serve. Meets at the beginning of the year to review previous year.

**CHURCH NOMINATING COMMITTEE** Elected by the congregation for one year to nominate congregation members to serve in various leadership positions of church. Six elected by congregation; two from session; one from deacons. Meet as needed before congregation meetings.

**HEAVEN SENT BOARD** Elected by congregation to support and guide Nursery School Staff. Three church members. Two elected by congregation. One from Session. One parent from enrolled students.

## CALL FOR THE 2019 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Session moved to call the Annual Congregational Meeting of First Presbyterian Church for **Sunday, January 27, 2019**, immediately after worship for the following:

- Receive the **2019 Budget**, for information only;
- Receive the **2018 Annual Report**;
- Elect three members to the **Financial Review Team** for a one-year term;
- Elect four members and two alternates to the **Church Nominating Committee** for a one-year term;
- Elect one member to serve on the **Heaven Sent Nursery School Board of Trustees** for the Class of 2021;
- Hold a meeting of the **Corporation** of the First Presbyterian Church; and
- To discuss any other information to properly come before this congregation.

Public notice of this meeting will be posted on two successive Sundays.

Sandy Archer, Clerk of Session



## 2019 PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM

The 2019 Presbyterian Youth Triennium is a gathering held every three years for high school age students in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Youth from all churches (across the sponsoring denominations) come together for this life-changing, life-giving, faith-growing gathering!

Five days help to form a younger generation of active Presbyterians. Five days help to shape the leadership gifts and deepen the discipleship awareness for a generation who are already achieving a strong presence in this church and this world.



### EVENT ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- DATE:** Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
**LOCATION:** Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN  
**AUDIENCE:** Entering freshmen through graduating seniors; adult advisors must be 21 plus years
- THEME:** "Here's My Heart"  
**REGISTER:** Until May 2019  
**FEE:** Youth: \$555.00; 18 years and Older: \$575  
(Registration includes all programming, food & lodging. Everything but travel (check with Newton Presbytery))
- WEBSITE:** [www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org](http://www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org)

First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown will help any member who wants to go as a youth or an adult advisor with the finances! Check the Newton Presbytery website for more details!

## SCHOOL NEWS

### YOUNG PRESBYTERIAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Did you know that TWO students in our congregation can be nominated to receive an annual scholarship worth up to \$19,000 for a four year total of \$76,000? (Westminster College in PA)

#### Requirements for Eligibility:

- Be nominated by a member of the pastoral staff or congregation;
- Be a member of a PC (USA) congregation;
- Have a GPA of 3.5 or higher

#### Program Deadlines:

- February 1: Nominations Due
- February 15: Student Applications



### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL "COOKING UP CHARACTER AT THE VBS BAKERY!"

WHAT????? We've just entered the deep of winter, and you're talking about Vacation Bible School? Yes indeed! It takes months of planning and pre-work to create a program that involves over 100 people. And it's going to be VERY hard to top last year's "All Aboard the VBS Express". This year, we'll be using a "bakery" theme as we reflect on the Bible verse from John 6: 35: "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry."

To highlight our church's commitment to spread the message of anti-bullying, each of our daily themes will reflect character traits like tolerance, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and fairness." If you would like to be a part of this year's VBS in any way - teacher, classroom aide, snacks, recreation, clerical help, general assistant - please keep an ear out for the planning meeting dates-and bring your ideas!

# GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

- Our prayers surround **Janette Hendershot**, whose husband **Donald Hendershot**, 77, left this life December 1st. Don is also survived by his sons Michael and Robert, grandson Ethan, and brother Richard. A member of our Church, Don and Janette served on a monthly counting team and were always in worship. He was also actively involved in the American Legion. For over 17 years, Don was in charge of the Hackettstown Memorial Day Parade, making certain the float from First Presbyterian Church was near the front of the procession! He also made the arrangements for and directed the post parade program at Union Cemetery, honoring fallen service men and women. We celebrated Don's life and the Resurrection Faith at our Church December 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Remember **Peggy Russack** in your prayers. Her mother, **Mary Alice Sheldon**, died December 2<sup>nd</sup>. She is also survived by sons Jim and Scott, Peg's sister Patty, many grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Mary Alice was remembered for her love of family and community, and making people feel welcome in her home!
- Please keep **Sandy Patton** and her family in your prayers. Sandy's mother, **Eulalee "Betty" Coke**, died December 19<sup>th</sup>, in Florida. Betty was born in Jamaica, West Indies in 1934. She is survived by her five children, 18 grandchildren, (including **Skylar and Larson Jones**), several great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, six siblings, and many friends. A Celebration of Life service will be held Saturday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at Grace Fellowship in West Palm Beach, Florida.
- Let us keep **Sharon Heil** in our prayers. **Elsie Marie Zebrick**, 95, an aunt of the late **Ron Heil**, died December 20<sup>th</sup> in her residence at the House of the Good Shepherd. A celebration of Elsie's life was held at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Hackettstown, December 29<sup>th</sup>.



**May we find comfort, peace, and hope in the promise of the Resurrection Faith!**

# CONGRATULATIONS, BIRDA!

BY: LORINDA RAVO AND MARYANN SIMMONS

What can one say about a woman who has devoted her entire life to service of her Lord and Savior and nearly a decade to the congregation in a small town in Northwestern, NJ? Well, plenty.

Birda Buzan Ferguson - Pastor, wife, mother, grandmother - has served the Hackettstown Community for the past nine years at First Presbyterian Church, located on Main Street in Hackettstown. To that end, she has been a devoted preacher who has always put the members of her congregation first. In so doing, she has lived her favorite verse from scripture: "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Pastor Birda began her path in the ministry at Illinois Wesleyan University and then continued at Princeton Theological Seminary where she received her MDiv and met her future husband, Glenn. She then served God and the Presbyterian Church as an interim pastor in many places, including Ford City, PA; Spring Church, PA; Kearny, Bloomfield, Orange, and Elizabeth, NJ. Then, she found her home at FPC Hackettstown.

Upon arrival to FPCH, Birda served the community in a number of ways. Leading worship each Sunday, conducting Advent Study and Lenten Bible Study Groups during those seasons, singing and ringing in the church choirs and playing the bass in the Stone Soup Symphony, serving as official photographer during Vacation Bible School, and conducting countless weddings, funerals, baptisms, and confirmations were just a few of her duties. In addition, she found time to paint, sing, play her string bass, and photograph the many activities that took place at the church and when with her family.

She has always lived by her mission statement of faith: "Wonderfully created...we are freed to love ourselves and one another. ...Fed by the Word and inspired by the Spirit, we joyfully respond to God's love."

May God spread his love upon you and your family, Birda, as you move on to your next journey in retirement with your loving husband Glenn in South Carolina.



Photo courtesy Birda Ferguson

## LADIES WHO LUNCH

The Ladies who Lunch group has become a monthly event for us! In December, we enjoyed a delightful outing to the place where we first started LWL: Teaberry's in Flemington. During the winter months, we like to stay a little closer to home, so we'll be visiting a new Hackettstown restaurant, Toscana's, located on Main Street. We'll be getting together on January 23 at 12:30 pm. Please let Sharon Heil or Lorinda Ravo know if you'd like to join us for this luncheon!



## Sharing God's Bounty

### Giving More than Money

For many, giving is associated with money. Giving includes money, but, as faithful givers, we first give ourselves, and the giving of our gifts and resources will follow (2 Corinthians 8:5). We all have different gifts and blessings to share. God has blessed us with gifts of wood-working, sewing, serving, teaching, singing, gardening, leading, cleaning, etc. Whatever our skills or gifts, we can use and give them to extend the kingdom and help others. Through faith, we are compelled to give because we know that God is the source of all of our blessings (2 Corinthians 5:14). Giving expresses our gratitude to God for what he has given to us.

In the third chapter of Acts, we find a lame beggar at the temple in Jerusalem, pleading with people to give him money. Peter and John were entering the temple, and they heard the beggar's plea for help. Perhaps the beggar saw Peter with his hand in his pocket, but the hand came out empty, dashing the beggar's hopes. *"Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk' "* (Acts 3:6). Peter's pocket was empty, but he was willing to give what he had, and he had something worth far more than a pocketful of money.

God wants us to give more than our money. He wants us to give of ourselves, our hearts and our lives, and to share our time and talents. We have been blessed to be a blessing. Thank God Peter had more to give the beggar than money. In order to use our gifts and blessings effectively in service for others, let us ask God for guidance as to how to best use and give what he has given us. Through faith, we can be confident that God will open our eyes and hearts for opportunities to give and share what he has entrusted to us.

## PLEFF GROUP ENJOYS DINNER AT

The PLEFF group last met on November 27th at Pub 517 in Andover. Now they are getting ready to prepare for their next outing to be held on Wednesday, January 16th at Pasta Grill by Enzo's on Route 57 in Hackettstown. The ladies will meet at 6 pm. Please be sure to RSVP to Winnie Slachetka at [h\\_o\\_o\\_v\\_e\\_r\\_c\\_c\\_m@com-cast.net](mailto:h_o_o_v_e_r_c_c_m@com-cast.net).



## CHRISTMAS CARD THANK YOUs

A special thank you to the following parishioners who sent Christmas greetings to the church. They were put on display on the wall of the ramp at the back entrance of the Church.

Bruce & Ellen Bergman  
Jan Courtright & Diane Hull  
Terry Gretchen  
Lyman Gulick  
Sharon Heil  
Barbara Henning  
Sang & Haeja Kim  
Brian, Kim, Emily, & Noah Ligarzewski  
Sandy Lindstedt  
Al & Lorinda Ravo  
Fred & Sandy Sentner  
Ron & Deborah Gulick Shepherd  
Jim, MaryAnn, & Justin Simmons  
Dan & Barbara Yankiv



## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members:

As the new year rolls into play, we will see many changes within our church. New members are joining, new Deacons and Elders have been elected, and a new pastor will be installed. On behalf of the congregation, I wish Birda a wonderful retirement and best wishes for a happy life in South Carolina!

God bless you.

MaryAnn Simmons

## DID YOU KNOW?...

BY: DEB GULICK-SHEPHERD

Our church was the first church in Hackettstown and served the surrounding areas. Several churches were started throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century by members of this church who wished to worship closer to home. During the tenure of Rev. Dr. Joseph Campbell in the early part of the century, the Danville Church was established. Later churches were planted in Rockport (1855), Schooley's Mountain (1875), and Beattystown (1882).

## CHURCH & CHAPEL LOOK AWESOME

BY: DIANE HULL

Back in late October and early November, the Building and Grounds Committee sponsored two clean ups of the church and its grounds. A special shout out to all of those members who participated in these activities.

On October 27, 2018, the following "clean up activities occurred: Church / Annex Cleaned, including all of the Pews, Closets and Windows. In addition, Plumbing Repairs occurred with the Heaven Sent toilet and the sink in the Conference Room, as well as Electrical repairs to the light switch in the Music Room and all rooms in Heaven Sent were "re-lamped" and had a new ballast installed and a flat screen TV was mounted onto the wall in the Chapel.

During Clean Up #2 on November 10, 2018, the crew cleaned out all areas of the Chapel and threw out numerous items on all floors. Chip Cochran generously donated a dumpster for the removal of all said items.

In addition, radiators moved from the Annex to the Narthex and Lyman (Bucky) Gulick will install them at a future date.

The committee would like to thank the many volunteers who completed all of this work. It could not have gotten done without your assistance.

Thank you, one and all, for a job well done!