

Presbyterian Post

VOL 1

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HACKETTSTOWN

SUMMER 2022

ENGAGING, INSPIRING, AND CHARISMATIC

Have you met Pastor Erin Hayes-Cook? If you haven't yet you should make a point of it. Within moments of meeting the new minister of First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown you'll feel you've found a friend, one you may not have even known you were missing. But you'll be thankful for her. Pastor Erin is caring and a great listener, and she's knowledgeable and has an uncanny talent for remembering you. It's in that personal relationship that she so easily creates that you welcome her to join your spirit.



There once was a time when families would go to church on Sunday mornings to hear a message of God. Often people would reflect on how that very message was personal to them. How it inspired them or how the message somehow connected emotionally to an inner struggle. So many families don't gather for Sunday services the way they used to.

A change of the times? A fluid world where so many other things, mundane or not, have taken people to a different front seat, rather than a pew? Or maybe the messages that were being spoken from the pulpit were no longer captivating or lacked a message from God that inspired.

Maybe families don't gather the way they used to, but God has never gone anywhere. The Sunday services at the First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown are inspiring. Pastor Erin Hayes-Cook is engaging, delivering messages from the pulpit with charisma and leaving you with a feeling of joy. She serves our little diverse community in a big very diverse world. There's something here for everyone and the church is open to all.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday mornings at 10 am, where together, we can share in God's message. Come and meet Pastor Erin Hayes-Cook-you'll experience the warmth, and your soul will thank you.

Renovations Complete!

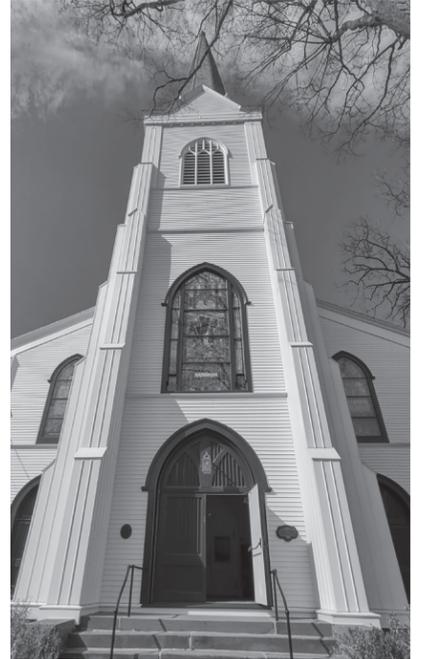
In 1861, a beautiful, majestic church was built and added to the landscape of Main Street in Hackettstown. Since that time, the church has been exposed to many years of external elements causing the building to deteriorate. In 2019, with the agreement of the Hackettstown Historical Society, the Session and members of the First Presbyterian Church, a capital campaign, "Building on Generosity", was launched to begin raising funds for a restoration project to completely side the exterior of the church and place protective glass on the stained-glass windows.

Construction began in March of 2020 and was completed in August of 2020.

Coupled with restoring the exterior of the church, the exterior shingles of the steeple needed to be replaced along with two lightning rods. This project began in April of 2021. Due to the ever-changing weather conditions, the project had a number of delays and was completed in September of 2021.

Through the generosity of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church, our church has been restored to its original stature as it was in 1861, with all costs paid in full.

We thank all who have helped in immeasurable ways to restore the beauty of our church.



Public Prayer Garden

Everyone needs prayer, and our Prayer Garden is open to everyone in the community. We support those who are lost and hurting with prayer, encouragement and spiritual guidance.

Used as a quiet place to relax and recharge, our prayer garden is a place of peace and spiritual enhancement. It's personal space with no right or wrong.

Located on the right side of the church we welcome you to come and enjoy this space, say a prayer or leave an anonymous prayer request for our congregation.

As the weather warms, keep an eye out for the transformation of the Prayer Garden as there are lots of ideas in the works to make this space even more beautiful and inviting.

For live streaming of Sunday Service
and current event information

Visit us online
www.fpchackettstown.org

OUR MISSION Strengthening families; Sowing friendships; Serving Community;
In the name of Jesus Christ.

Heaven Sent Nursery School

Heaven Sent offers students a developmental preschool curriculum in a loving environment and Christian nursery school.

***We believe that all children are unique and wonderful creations of God,
and need to be treated with dignity, love, and respect.***

Heaven Sent does everything with our school's motto in mind:
"Childhood should be a journey, not a race."

Please contact us to learn about Heaven Sent program options and registration.
Also, be sure to check out Heaven Sent Nursery School's Facebook page.

*Heaven Sent is a ministry of The First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown, NJ, and is fully
licensed by the office of licensing of the NJ Division of Youth and Family Services.*

We are located at 298 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

908-852-2006

Get involved...

Christian Education:
Sunday School,
Confirmation Class,
Bible studies

Make a joyful noise:
Perform with the choir or the FPCH Ringers and children can be part of the Little Lights Sunday School choir, bell choir, chime choir and the wind ensemble

Work behind the scenes: Assist buildings & grounds, help at Church dinners with set up and clean up or join a committee

Join a group: Women's Association, Yarn Girls, Men's or Ladies Breakfast

Community outreach...

Prayer Shawl Ministry
Backpack Programs
Souper Bowl of Caring
Outreach Fundraisers
Adopt-A-Family Ministry
Free Markets
School Lunch Programs
Food Drives

Various groups use our facilities throughout the year including:

The Boy Scouts Troop 158
Scout Troop 143,
Cub Pack 164
AA Meetings
NA Meetings
The Blood Center of New Jersey - Blood Drives
Colonial Musketeers
Stone Soup Symphony

Here for you...

Please contact us if you would like to hold an event

Weddings
Baptisms
Chapel Rental

The First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown is a Christian Church and a member of the Presbyterian Church USA

THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN BURYING GROUND

Cemeteries are important landmarks in our towns as they provide a resting place for our relatives and friends. Our very own FPCH Cemetery next to the chapel, known as the Old Presbyterian Burying Ground, has been in disrepair for quite some time, but this past year, in an effort to resurrect the beauty of our historic landmark, John Mark Wojcicki has been working diligently to restore headstones and unearth many others that have sunk into the ground.

The Old Presbyterian Burying Ground was actually the first one in town. An agreement for the land was made with Obadiah Ayers in 1786 for the burial ground which was located adjacent to the meetinghouse (now known as the Chapel). Burials began



there in the 1760s and ended in 1861 when the cemetery was full. At that point the Union Cemetery was opened between Mountain and East Avenues.

Wojcicki has been no stranger to the Old Burying Ground. In 2001, he began his Eagle Scout project to erect a stone wall on the west side/uptown side of the cemetery. That was the only side that did not have a wall. Recently, beginning in 2021, he began a new project - cleaning and locating buried headstones so that the memories of the deceased can be resurrected.

Why do this, one might ask? Wojcicki has many relatives buried in the Old Presbyterian Burying Ground, including his 6th and 7th time removed grandparents on both his mom's and his dad's sides. In addition, he has a huge interest in genealogy and wishes to maintain the memory of his family, particularly his relatives from the Pool, Hance, and Leigh families.

So what does the process involve to clean each headstone? Eight steps are required which take approximately one hour from start to finish. First, he wets down the headstone. Then he scrubs it with a nylon brush. After scrubbing, he must rinse again with water. Next, he applies D2, a chemical that is used to clean monuments in our national cemeteries and costs \$100.00 per gallon. That application must remain on the headstone for 15 minutes. Then, he scrubs the headstone once again and rinses it with water. Finally, he reapplies the D2 and allows it to sit on the stone to work with the weather conditions - rain, heat, snow, and hail. Once one headstone is finished, he begins the task again. He can be found there either once or twice a week cleaning these headstones.

How many headstones must John Mark Wojcicki clean and unearth? According to FPCH church historian Deb Gullick-Shepherd, a deep search revealed there are 800-1000 bodies in our cemetery, but only a portion of the headstones remain. Many graves were originally marked with only wooden crosses. All 27 Revolutionary War soldiers buried there survived the war and were able to come home. Rev. Dr. Joseph Campbell, the minister from 1809 to 1838, is buried beside his wife in the old churchyard.

In the 1930s the General William Maxwell Chapter of the DAR compiled a list of graves. The list has about 225 inscriptions. If there are any other records for the cemetery, they have not yet been discovered. John Mark Wojcicki intends to clean, unearth, and repair as many of the 225 headstones as possible.

We at First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown are blessed that John Mark Wojcicki has a passion to beautify our church burial ground.

WHO WE ARE Many faces, diverse backgrounds, all ages, one faith.

The Little Pantry

Over the years, we've experienced many "where were you when...." moments-moments that are deeply etched in our memories. Where were you when JFK was shot? Where were you when the Twin Towers were attacked?

And all of us will never forget when the world shut down on March 13, 2020 and we entered a world of masks, social distancing, school closures, serious illnesses, zoom meetings, and businesses closing or adapting to a new normal. Along with the new normal came hunger, as people had their hours at work cut, or even lost their jobs.

With that in mind, First Presbyterian embarked on a new community outreach: our Little Pantry. Located on the steps of the chapel at 291 Main Street, the Little Pantry began with a single bookcase, repurposed with a fresh coat of paint, and filled with about a dozen canned food items.

The concept was easy: take what you need, leave what you can. And it helped. And it grew. Now there are 3 cabinets along with a galvanized can for pet food. But the concept is still the same: take what you need, leave what you can. It has grown from being solely supported by members of the church into a community project. It has grown from just food to now including personal care items as well.

Allowing people the dignity to get food at any hour of the day or night, without having to ask anyone or fill out paperwork, has been a blessing for those in our community. And somehow, the shelves are rarely complete emptied. Even as people come and take what they need, before long, the shelves are restocked with generous donations.

We'll all remember when COVID changed our lives, but we'll also remember with pride how FPCH found a creative solution to help our community.

All Are Welcome!

Hosted by the
First Presbyterian Church
of Hackettstown

**AROUND-THE-TABLE
FREE COMMUNITY DINNERS**

5:30PM on the Second Saturday of Each Month

A look back...

When the area around Hackettstown began to be settled by European immigrants in the early 1700s, a number were of the Presbyterian faith. This group began requesting supply ministers from the New Brunswick Presbytery as early as the 1750s. The first church structure known as the Yellow Presbyterian Church of Lower Hardwick was constructed in 1763-64. The land was deeded to the congregation by Obadiah Ayers in 1764. The first called supply minister was Rev. Francis Peppard in 1772. He shared his time with the Upper Hardwick church. In 1786 the Board of Trustees was incorporated and that same year an agreement was made with the Ayers family for the burial ground next to the meetinghouse. That year also the Rev. Peter Wilson was called at an annual salary of 50 pounds plus a house and parsonage.