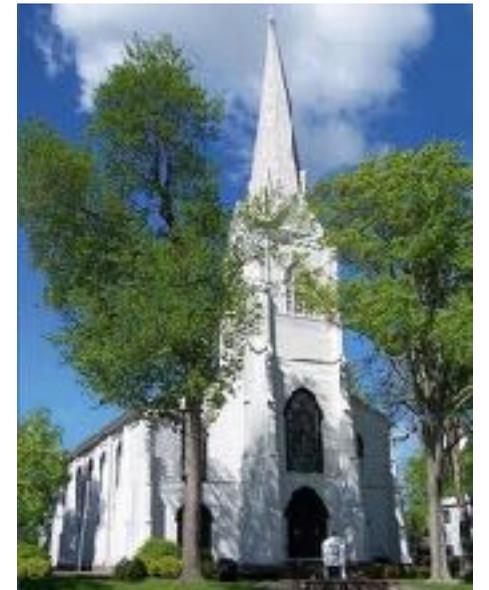


First Presbyterian Church  
298 Main Street  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

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

**DECEMBER  
2018**



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

**2018 SESSION**

**Class of 2018**

Sandy Archer  
 John Mark Wojcicki  
 Sandy Woolcock Patton

**Class of 2019**

Carl Erickson  
 Don Luques  
 Ryan Van Orden

**Class of 2020**

Jim Butts  
 Grace Clegg  
 Jim Simmons

**2018 BOARD OF DEACONS**

**Class of 2018**

Jen Bramley  
 Donna Erickson  
 Cynthia Luques

**Class of 2019**

Marge Conroy  
 Barbara Cors  
 Chris Roguso

**Class of 2020**

Patricia Butts  
 Gilles Djongang  
 Sharon Heil

**2018 HEAVEN SENT NURSERY SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**OFFICE: 852-2006**

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

**PRAYER LIST**

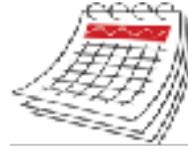
**Please keep the following in your prayers:**

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  
 Dee Fletcher, Dottie  
 Kapper's sister-in-law  
 Friends of FPCH  
 Terry Gretchen  
 Dorothy Knauer  
 Judy Kolwicz  
 Dotty Landiak  
 The Lee Family  
 Emily Ligarzewski

Maikuu  
 congregation,  
 Kibwezi Kenya  
 Diana Merzoian  
 Members of the  
 Armed Forces  
 Martin Nyland  
 Barbara Pace,  
 niece of the  
 Prestopines  
 Edith Payton -  
 mother of  
 Sharon Heil  
 Elizabeth  
 Robitsch  
 Lauren Scavo -  
 niece of Glenn  
 Ferguson  
 Fred Sentner  
 Shepherd/Quiroz  
 Families  
 Mark Tilney  
 Brian & Nancy  
 White



## DATES TO REMEMBER: DECEMBER 2018



- 01: Christmas Dinner Celebration - 5:00 PM, Chapel
- 02: Church worship and Chrismon Tree and Sunday School Pageant - 10 AM; fellowship
- 03: Blood Drive - 3:30 - 7:30 PM, Chapel
- 03: Special Session Meeting - 7:00 PM, Conference Room
- 05: Advent Study - 11 AM and 6PM, Conference Room
- 05: Yarn Girls - 1 PM in the Conference Room
- 06: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 06: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 08: Men's Breakfast at the Chapel - 8:30 AM
- 08: Stone Soup Symphony Concert - 3 PM, Sanctuary
- 09: Church worship and communion - 10 AM; Sunday School; New Members; fellowship afterward
- 11: Session Meeting - 6:30 PM, Conference Room
- 13: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 13: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 15: Ladies' Breakfast at the River Star Diner - 9 AM
- 15: Wreaths Across America celebration - 12:00 PM, Chapel
- 16: Church worship - 10 AM; Sunday School; Cookie Exchange; fellowship
- 18: Hackettstown High School Choral Concert - 7 PM, Sanctuary
- 19: Advent Study - 11 AM and 6PM, Conference Room
- 20: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 20: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 23: Church worship - 10 AM; Little Lights Sunday School Choir sings "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing;" Dedicate Christmas Joy Offering; Sunday School; fellowship
- 24: Christmas Eve Service - 7:30 PM
- 25: Christmas Day - Church Office closed
- 27: FPC Ringers - 6:40 PM in the Music Room
- 27: Senior Choir - 7:30 PM in the Music Room
- 30: First Sunday after Christmas Day; Lessons and Carols- 10 AM; Sunday School; fellowship
- 31: New Year's Eve

## A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

### Dear Friends,

Put on your purple—it's **ADVENT!** The Christian season of Advent begins December 2nd and ends December 24th. Our Sunday Advent observations will include the traditional themes of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Please plan to be a part of these Sundays as they help us understand the reason behind God's purpose in sending the child named Jesus to be born in Bethlehem. Check the Calendar and other articles in this newsletter for these events and other opportunities.

December is also the end of 2018, and I am both excited and sad about that. In November's *Light from the Steeple*, I wrote, "'Bittersweet' accurately describes the feeling of ending one life chapter in order to begin another." Most of 2018 was both sweet and sad as I realized I was participating in my last Lenten study, Holy Week, and Easter with you. The knowledge also encouraged me to really pay attention to what we were doing and saying, singing, and hearing. I expect our 2018 Advent preparations and Christmas Eve service will be more meaningful than ever!

Having said that, I look forward to opportunities to make new memories, start new traditions, and be with my family—especially our grandson Will—with the freedoms of time that retirement provides.

You, my faith family, have brought great joy and growth to my life and faith. I trust in God to be with you as you continue to seek God's purpose and direction for your ministry in 2019—and beyond!

Joy in God's Peace,

**Birda Buzan Ferguson**

## OCTOBER 2018 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.

	October	Year to Date
<b>Income</b>	\$ 14,829.75	\$169,888.60
<b>Expenses Paid</b>	\$ 12,750.81	\$154,479.95
<b>Net Operating Income/Deficit</b>	\$ 2,078.94	\$ 15,408.65
<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 October, \$0.00 was received for the Per Capita leaving the total received in 2018 at \$3,978.00 or 52% 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

**December 2:** Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence-FPCH Ringers  
The FPCH Ringers will open the season of Advent with the beautiful Advent hymn "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence".

As we decorate the Christmas tree today, the choirs will be joining the congregation in the singing of familiar Christmas carols.

**December 9:** Every Valley-Sr. Choir  
Good King Wenceslas-Joyful Noise Bell Choir

The senior choir sings an exquisite Advent anthem that uses the familiar text from Isaiah 40:4: Every valley shall be exalted.....

The Joyful Noise Bell Choir plays the Christmas carol "Good King Wenceslas" this morning - a favorite of one of our congregation members!

**December 16:** Hush-Senior Choir  
Do You Hear What I Hear? Grace Notes

The Senior Choir sings a wonderful spiritual that also incorporates quotes from "Angels We Have Heard on High", "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly", and "Silent Night"..

The Grace Notes sing a beloved Christmas song, "Do You Hear What I Hear?"

**December 23:** A Star-Senior Choir  
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing-Little Lights Sunday School Choir  
Our Senior Choir and our youngest singers provide anthems of the Christmas season this morning.



**December 24:** In our 7:30 pm candlelight service, the Senior Choir will be singing "Noel Peace Canon" a piece that skillfully combines "Dona Nobis Pacem" with "The First Nowell". They'll also sing "A Child is Born", and "O Holy Night" during our candlelight service. The FPCH Ringers will be playing a gentle and beautiful arrangement of the beloved Christmas carol "Away in a Manger".

**December 30:** Our choirs will take a well-deserved chance to sit in the congregation as music is provided by a soloist

## A NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE AT FPCH

We are excited to add another ensemble to our music groups here at FPCH. Children in grades 3 and up are invited to be part of the newly formed Unity Chimers. These students will be playing the chimes (yes, the same ones that the adults play!) and learning more about reading music, following direction, and sharing their talents. They rehearse on Sunday mornings from 11:30-11:50 (following the Joyful Noise rehearsal) If your child has wanted to try out the chimes, this is their chance!

## WARM UP A WINTER'S NIGHT

Want to warm up a cold wintery Thursday night? Why not consider coming to a rehearsal of the Senior Choir. We rehearse from 7:30-8:30 pm, and new voices are always welcomed. You don't need to read music, audition, or sing solos...just come and enjoy the fun, fellowship, and joy of singing your praises to God.

## FPC RINGERS LOOKING FOR MEN

We want to encourage anyone who would like to try ringing to join us at our Thursday evening rehearsal from 6:40-7:25 pm. And yes.....MEN can ring too! If you've been thinking about ringing with us, now is a GREAT time to begin. You don't need to be able to read music, and we'll teach you how to ring in no time at all! Rehearsals are Thursday evenings from 6:40-7:20 pm. If you have any questions, ask a member of the chime choir or talk with Lorinda!

## DECEMBER BIRTH-DAYS

2: Diane Hull  
3: Scott Annunziata  
7: Noah Ligarzewski  
8: Jackie Hammel  
10: Holly Pippas  
Birda Ferguson  
12: Dottie Landiak  
13: Cathy Van Orden  
15: Carol Miller  
24: Ani McDonagh  
22: Lee Synder  
26: Matt Erickson  
Mark Gulick  
27: Ruth Weber  
29: Jim Butts  
30: Glenn Ferguson

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1: Charles & Barbara Bell  
4: Stephen & Danielle Carpenter  
13: John Mark & Camerin Wojcicki  
20: Justin & Cynthia Hughes  
23: Chris & Jennifer Bramley  
27: Glenn & Birda Ferguson



## A NOTE FROM LORRAINE HOSKINS AND CHARLES LEE

Dear Reception Committee,

Charles and I would like to thank you for the wonderful reception you had for our Mom and Vicky. Having worked on this committee at my own church, I know how much is involved in the planning and execution of these luncheons. We appreciate all of the people who gave up their time to be with us in our time of sadness and grief. It was a relaxing atmosphere to gather with our family and friends to share memories.

Thank you for your meaningful ministry,

Sincerely,

*Charles Lee and Lorraine Hoskins*

## **GREETERS FOR DECEMBER**

**2: Jessica & Mike McDonagh**

**9: Jennifer & Chris Bramley**

**16: Winnie & Mark Slachetka**

**23: Pam Venturini & Beverly Saunders**

**24: Maria Koskulics & Russell Reed**

**30: Gwenn Bartku & Jan Courtright**



## **GOD'S LOVE ENDURES FOREVER**

Please keep the Lee family in your prayers. Mary Kate Lee, mother of Charles Lee and Lorraine Hoskins, entered the Kingdom of Heaven November 3, 2018. Mary Kate was born July 30, 1922. She was loved by 8 grandchildren, 2 Step Grandchildren, 9 Great-Grandchildren, one Step-Great-Grandchild, and one Niece, Suzanne Britten.

Let us give thanks for the God of the Resurrection, whose love brings us hope!



## **PLEFF MEETS AT PUB 517**

In November, the PLEFF group traveled to Tranquility to Pub 517 for our dinner. The PLEFF Group (Presbyterian Ladies Enjoying Food and Fellowship) meets once a month as we travel to local restaurants for a dinner out. We have separate checks to make everything easy, and we are always happy to welcome new diners. Please see Winnie Slachetka if you'd like to be included!



**Photo courtesy-  
Lorinda Ravo.**

## **LADIES WHO LUNCH**

The Ladies Who Lunch will be enjoying lunch at Teaberry's in Flemington on Wednesday, Dec. 5 at 12:30. The LWL group meets once a month at various restaurants for a Wednesday afternoon lunch. If you'd like to be included in the email invitation/reminders, please let Sharon Heil or Lorinda Ravo know.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND FPC**

Social media can be a terrific way to find out what's happening in your church and the church's nursery school, especially if you can't always make it to events, activities, and/or worship services.

The church website has information about what to expect at worship services. It had reminders of special programs happening. It has information about our congregation and our denomination.

Have you checked out either site yet? You'll want to! And if anyone has photos they'd like included please send them via text or email to Lorinda at [Lorinda.ravo@gmail.com](mailto:Lorinda.ravo@gmail.com).

Check out these pages that are regularly updated! On Facebook you can find us at First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown, and on the web at [fpchackettstown.org](http://fpchackettstown.org).

## DECORATE OUR TREE!

The first Sunday of Advent is always a special day at FPCH. That's the day that we, as a congregation, decorate the Christmas tree in our sanctuary with Chrismons: Christian ornaments that remind us of the events in Jesus' life. We hope that you'll be with us that day as we decorate the tree and watch our children recreate a Nativity Scene during the service.



## CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 16th

BY: SANDY ARCHER

It's the time of year when giving is prevalent and the joy of giving is upmost in our hearts. It's the time of the year when we give a little extra to our friends and family and "Why Not" our church.

The Christmas Joy Offering for the Season of Advent offers financial assistance to individuals and families who have dedicated their lives to the church. It also supports leadership development and education for students attending Presbyterian related racial and ethnic schools and colleges.

You will have two opportunities to share the joy by participating in our Cookie Exchange and our Christmas Joy Offering. On December 16th bring a batch of your favorite cookie;

we will then be selling 1 dozen of mix and match cookies for \$3.00. You get the JOY of baking the cookies and the JOY of eating different cookies. You can make a contribution anytime during the season by marking your donation "Christmas Joy Offering". The Christmas Joy Offering will be dedicated on December 23, 2018, to the Glory of our Lord this Christmas Season.

## STONE SOUP SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS AT FPCH!!

**Saturday, December 8, at 3 p.m. the Stone Soup Symphony will play in our Sanctuary, 298 Main Street!**

This concert program includes:

*Wizards in Winter; O Holy Night; Stille Nacht; Christmas at the Movies; White Christmas; Christmas Eve—Sarajevo; Once in David's Royal City; A Canadian Brass Christmas; and Sleigh ride.*

There's something for everyone!

The best part? The concert is FREE! The seats are not reserved, so come early. In order to encourage community attendance, we ask that musicians and able-bodied members of our congregation carpool or park outside our parking lot in order to keep spaces available for those with difficulty walking any distance. Thank you!

P.S. Ved Fernandez and Birda Ferguson will both appear in the orchestra. They appreciate your support!



## NEW ELDERS AND DEACONS ELECTED



At the Congregational Meeting held on November 18, the FPCH elected new members to the Session and Board of Deacons. Please join me in welcoming our class of 2021:



**Elders:** Sandy Archer, Erin Roguso, and Sandy Patton  
**Deacons:** Jennifer Bramley, Charles Nyland, and Justin Simmons

**Congratulations to all!**

## ASHLEY FARMS EARNS \$569.20

Thank you to all who supported the Ashley Farms fundraiser. Our sales were \$1423, and our profit was \$569.20. Half of the profit went to Family Promise of Warren County, and the other half went to support the Kasasule Medical Clinic in Kenya. Thank you for helping the Church in its outreach to both an international and a local mission.

## ROAST BEEF DINNER NETS \$2,220.63

BY: ELLEN BERGMAN AND DONNA ERICKSON

Our annual Roast Beef Dinner was held in the chapel on Saturday evening, November 3rd and it was very successful. We served appropriately 200 people including the scouts who helped serve the dinner. After reimbursing Carl Erickson for his purchase of the beef, gravy and marinate ingredients, we netted \$2220.63 for the church. This included money from the ticket sales, tip jars and donations given for leftover baked goods.

Thanks to Carl Erickson and Don Luques and their helpers for the delicious roast beef dinner. Many thanks to all other helpers who baked, set up, served, and cleaned up for our wonderful event. We must also thank the Boy Scouts of Troop 158 who did a great job waiting tables. What a great successful and enjoyable evening thanks to all who helped.

## WELCOME!

December 9th we will welcome **James Patton** and **Suzann Smith** to our faith family. They both come to us under Re-Affirmation of Faith but neither are strangers! They have worshiped with us and participated in our congregation's life for several years. Jim is married to Sandy Woolcock Patton. Suzann is married to Charles and is the mother of Sydney and Annie Smith. She has played in our Tone Chime Choir since its beginning. Welcome Jim and Suzann!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

### THANKS FOR THE CANDY

BY: LORINDA RAVO

Thanks to all of our Sunday School students and church family and friends who donated some of their Halloween candy to our collection for Operation Gratitude. We were able to ship 216 pounds of goodies to California where it will then be distributed to servicemen and women serving far from home!

### SUNDAY SCHOOL'S MILE OF PENNIES PURCHASES BENCH

Several years ago, our Sunday School children began a drive to collect a "Mile of Pennies." Church members of all ages contributed their pennies, and a few nickels and dimes and finally, FINALLY, we gathered enough to reach for one mile (if we lined them up). One mile of pennies is equal to \$844.80!



The Sunday School has chosen to purchase a new bench for the "porch" area outside the back door to the church, to replace the bench whose leg has rusted through. The new bench will be built of a material that will not rust and will be in a place where friends and strangers will be able to sit for a moment.

The Sunday School also intends to team up with the Heaven Sent Nursery School to paint the Youth Room with a fresh coat of green. The wonderful mural of the animals from Noah's Ark will be

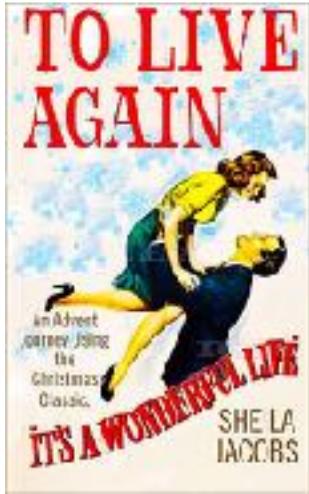
carefully preserved!

Thank you for your support which made these two projects possible.

## 2018 ADVENT STUDY!

Our 2018 Advent Study will begin Wednesday, November 28, at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and end December 19. Both sessions will be in the Conference Room of the Church building.

Our book, titled *To Live Again*, is an original Advent course written by Sheila Jacobs. It is based on, and inspired by, the film *It's a Wonderful Life*, starring James Stewart and Donna Reed.



Just as Christmas can promise so much and often deliver so little, our own lives can seem bittersweet when we consider dreams we may have had that never came to pass.

But, as George Bailey discovered in the classic Christmas movie, it is never too late to re-evaluate our lives, to find much to be thankful for, and to live again. This can also be a time to discover new hope in our relationship with God.

The four study sessions, are structured around key scenes from the film. Each section includes timing references for watching scenes from the movie on a DVD, questions for discussion, and suggested prayers. Join us to discover what it means to “live again” with faith.

### THANK YOU!!

Recently, we have had help from two good friends of this congregation who share their particular skills with us when we need them. **Doug Russack** is Peg Russack's husband. Doug worked for hours on a recent work day to repair the sink in the Conference Room. **Tony Venturini** is married to Pam. He has been replacing non-functioning lights in the Manse and the annex of the church for us.

Thank you to both of these saints who give their time and skills graciously and generously.

## Sharing God's Bounty

### Do You Have a Room?

*“And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7*

As these familiar words are read every Christmas, we repeat them in our minds. Having heard them so often, we know them by heart. And every year, pastors try to come up with novel thoughts about an age-old story. Sadly, as much as we love to hear the story, we too often put it out of our thoughts as soon as we put up the calendar for the New Year. Like the infamous innkeeper, we cannot find room for the newborn Baby.

We are creatures of habit, and it seems that it's quite difficult to change old habits, most of them not very beneficial. If we keep our focus on that simple message, though, we might be able to create new habits. Instead of hurriedly scanning our devotions for the day, we might make it a habit to remind ourselves that it is God speaking to us through his Word.

Instead of uttering a quick, “Morning. How are you?” we might actually take a few minutes to wait for the answer and offer encouragement and maybe even pray with a colleague, a friend, a family member. Instead of setting our own schedules, we might ask God to teach us to number our days so that we can go ahead in his wisdom (Psalm 90:12). What other good habits could we establish if we focused on “our Lord Jesus Christ, [who] though he was rich, yet for [our] sake[s] became poor, so that [we] through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9)?

Do you have room? By his grace, God will warm our cold hearts and give us the desire to be his stewards with room in our day to serve him, room in our finances to give what is needed, and room in our lives for him to work his will in and through us.

## THERE IS STILL TIME TO PLEDGE

BY: DEB GULICK-SHEPHERD

Thank you to all who have returned your 2019 pledge cards. It is not too late! The offering envelopes for 2019 will be distributed beginning the last Sunday of December. Please do not use them until January. If you have not returned a pledge card but wish to receive envelopes, please contact Deborah Gulick Shepherd, Financial Secretary.

## HOCKEY ANYONE?

The men's breakfast group is planning a Phantoms Hockey game in Allentown, PA. The date is Sunday, February 10th at 3:05pm. The tickets are \$19 each. If interested, please put your name on the sign up sheet on the dais in front of the church. Questions??? See Chris Roguso for details.



## YARN GIRLS KNITTING AWAY

BY: DEB GULICK-SHEPHERD

The Yarn Girls continue to create shawls, lap robes, baptismal blankets, chemo caps, and pocket crosses. Please remember to ask us if you know of someone who could use one of our gifts.

We use bulky or extra bulky weight yarn for our shawls and lap robes, generally Lion Brand Yarn Homespun. We also use Caron Simply Soft for the pocket crosses. If you would like to donate yarn, please first talk to a Yarn Girls member about your purchase. . Thanks!



**At left, the Little Lights Sunday School Choir sings "Make a Joyful Noise" at the November 25th service.**

**Photo courtesy of MaryAnn Simmons**

## DID YOU KNOW?...

BY: DEB GULICK-SHEPHERD

In the 1800s the Board of Trustees took their oath of office annually by being sworn in by a local Justice of the Peace. They met monthly mostly in the Reading Rooms of the Old Church (Sunday School) or at a store of one of the members. They called an annual congregational meeting in May to elect new Trustees and to approve the operating budget for the church. The committees varied, but in 1890 they included: Collection of Pew Rents, Sabbath Collections, Supplies/Oil, Church Grounds, Repairs, Renting Pews, Insurance, Collections to Parsonage Fund, and Ushers.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Our congregation will be celebrating Rev. Birda Ferguson's ministry with us and also celebrating her retirement, at a luncheon on Saturday, January 5 from 12-3 pm in The Chapel at 291 Main Street. More information will be coming to you, but we hope you'll save the date and help us as we say a bittersweet goodbye to our Pastor!

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Christmas spirit is alive and well at First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown. This holy season holds many opportunities for congregation members to be involved in the various church activities. Whether decorating the Christmas Tree, attending Advent Study groups, viewing one of the many Christmas concerts, or worshipping at Christmas Eve service, there is plenty to remind us of Christmas joy.



This season, remember to hold Christ close in your heart!  
May God bless you.  
MaryAnn Simmons