

Branches

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ALEXANDRI FRST PRESBYTERIAN CHRUCH

Volume 59

A Note from Nick

March 2024
Issue #3

Dear Friends,

As you know, in December our friend and brother in Christ, Oscar Philkill passed away. His passing was one of sadness and joy. Sadness because we lost a very devoted member of our family of faith who will be dearly missed. And joyful because Oscar lived a very full life, and at his passing we claimed the promise of the resurrection for Oscar and celebrated the glory that awaited him.

Oscar passed away on his 101st birthday and for many of us, he was the first person we ever knew who was 100 years old. We have fond memories of Oscar sitting in the back left hand side of the sanctuary. He was always quick with a smile and a kind word. And remarkably because he was in such good health, we often forgot that he was actually 100 years old. In fact, he was such a fixture here in our church that none of us can possibly ever remember a time when he wasn't a part of the life of AFPC. January 12 was the 90th anniversary of when Oscar joined the church! He joined AFPC in 1934! Can you imagine that . . . 90 years of worshiping and serving God at the same church?! Think of all of the pastors that he knew, the many members that came and went, and all of the hymns, prayers and scripture that was lifted up to God in worship during those 90 years!

One thing you may not have known about Oscar is that he loved to paint! He was a big fan of "paint by number" paint kits and would spend hours each day methodically and lovingly working on each painting. Oscar loved to share his painting with others, showing them off in his house and gifting them to family members and friends. And before he died, Oscar offered two of his painting to the church with the hopes that they could be sold to raise money for the Youth Mission Trip. So, we are going to honor his wishes and continue his faithfulness by auctioning off these two paintings (see below). Beginning on March 10 during our Youth Sunday Fellowship time you will be able to place a bid in a silent auction for each of the paintings. We will keep the silent auction going for two weeks and then announce the winners during worship on March 24th. Remember, this is a fundraiser and there would be no better way to honor Oscar's legacy at our church than bidding generously and raising lots of money for our Youth Mission Trip! Plus, what a treasure it would be to have an Oscar painting hanging in your house to remind you of our devoted friend who worshiped faithfully at AFPC for 90 years!

In Christ,

Pastor Nick

The Rev. Nicholas Hatch



Paintings by Oscar Philkill to be auctioned on March 10th as a fundraiser for the Youth Mission Trip

CHURCH FAMILY HAPPENINGS

March BIRTHDAYS



5	Christina Heilig	9	Robert Fennell	19	Jason Abelman
5	Marion Pursell	11	David Mac William	20	Danica Doyle
6	Lauren Koeller	11	Jenn Vastola	20	Jake Norgard
8	Marty Gunderman	13	Sue Lawson	24	Eugene Geissinger
8	Robin Pulsinelle	15	Helen Grundmann	24	Rylan Koeller
		17	Sharon Solomon		

Baptisms

Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible event: the reconciliation of people to God. We rejoice with those who are celebrating their baptism anniversary this month. It was January that Nicholas Mahlon Folmar and Elena Grace Hedden were baptized. Congratulations and blessings upon being a child of God!

February Flowers

February 11: Given to the Glory of God in loving memory of ones that have passed
by Laurie Gregory

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

SPRING AHEAD!
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
ENDS MARCH 10TH



Coming up, join us for Youth Sunday!

**YOUTH
SUNDAY
MARCH 10**

Join us Sunday March 10th for a spirit filled hour of worship as the children and youth of our church lead us in this annual service. The kids will usher, collect the offering, lead prayers and host the children's sermon. Show your support for the youth of our church and attend. Refreshments will be provided after worship!

The Church Office will be closed Monday April 1st.



CHURCH OFFICE



**MONDAY
APRIL 1**

MISSION TEAM NEWS

MARCH

Meet Dixon

If you were at church on February 18th, you have already been introduced to Dixon Ntwiga, our friend from near Nairobi in Kenya. Dixon, who is working at Bobolink Farm on Stamets Road, has been worshipping with us since last summer. It didn't take him long to become involved in the life of our congregation. Dixon is a member of both the Chancel and Chime choirs, and did a great job as worship assistant a couple of weeks ago. He has attended several fellowship events, and is a regular at Lunch Bunch, as it coincides with his day off from his duties at the farm.



Dixon is 27 years old and is one of three siblings. He has a degree in Agriculture and Biotechnology, and is enjoying many aspects of the farm work at Bobolink Farm. He spends his days milking cows, making cheese and bread, and learning the ins and outs of farming in rural Hunterdon County. The last Sunday of each month, he travels to Jersey City to meet with other members of the Kenyan community, who are also here in the U.S.

Dixon has an adventurous spirit, and is always up for a new experience. He has been roller skating, swimming, and has enjoyed seeing fireworks, Halloween costumed children, homes lit up for the Christmas season, and especially snow! His family doesn't own a car, but he just got his permit and is learning how to drive. If you would like to invite Dixon on an adventure, or just get to know him, feel free to ask!

Until recently, Dixon thought he would need to go back to Kenya at the end of March, but he recently found out that his immigration counselor was able to get him an extension to stay here for the time being. That is welcome news, indeed! Join us at coffee hour, after worship on March 3rd, and introduce yourself to Dixon. You will find him to be a warm and friendly fellow.

MISSION TEAM NEWS

FEBRUARY

In February, Doug Bondor collected 107 units of food and 86 personal care items from Fellowship Hall and delivered them to the Frenchtown Food Pantry.

On behalf of those who run the food pantry, thank you so much!



If interested, there is an area in Fellowship Hall where we collect the following.

Items Needed Include:

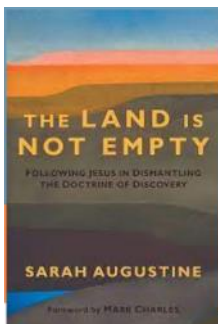
- Canned fruit
- Chunky-Style Soups
- Dinty Moore Beef Stew
- Coffee (one lb. cans)
- Juices
- Snack Items
- Salad Dressing
- Laundry Detergent
- Shampoo



Paper Products - tissues, toilet tissue, paper towels

MISSION TEAM NEWS

“The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery” Book Study



As we continue to lean into the vision of being a Matthew 25 church, your AFPC Mission Team (MI), continues to explore opportunities that invite us to engage in the Matthew 25 tenets we've promised to uphold: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating poverty. Recommended by our Presbytery (PC USA), “*The Land Is Not*

Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery” by Sarah Augustine, was offered as a book study in October, 2023. Nine church members participated, finishing in January, 2024.

It is frank and unapologetic. It tackles the historic evolutionary oppression Indigenous People suffered (and continue to suffer) at the hands of Christian ideology because of a collection of Papal Bulls and decrees identified as the Doctrine of Discovery.

The book navigates the reader through Ms. Augustine's own tribal heritage journeys. She introduces the origins of injustices plaguing Indigenous people while thoughtfully reconciling her Christian faith amidst the atrocities the Doctrine ignites. After finishing this important book, we study readers agreed that, at the very least, we owe it to Ms. Augustine and the Indigenous Peoples' nation, to open the discussion.

What is the Doctrine of Discovery?

Ms. Augustine, a Pueblo (Tewa) descendant, is founder and co-chair of The Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition. This Coalition seeks to dismantle 500+ years of international policies that unfairly took advantage of Indigenous Peoples globally. In Ms. Augustine's own words on page 27, she teaches us: *“Legitimized by a misreading of Scripture, justifying that a land can be considered “empty”, therefore free for the taking, if inhabited by “heathens, pagans and infidels”, this Doctrine is a theological legal framework, dating as far back as the 1400's, that justified enslaving, seizing land and possessions of anyone who was not a Christian. Over time, these decrees dictating who was able to own land in colonized countries, became the basis of international law which most Western countries incorporated into their own national laws and policies.”*

Why We Need to Know About It:

The Doctrine's tenets continue to oppress. It's the architect of the congressional boundaries in which Indigenous Peoples still exist, here in America and globally. It mandates their freedoms, their rights and their livelihoods. Land ownership is non-existent. Almost 400 Indian boarding schools that assimilate native children out of Native American culture *still exist today*. Vast sacred tribal sites originally promised within reservation-legalese, are being rescinded and auctioned off in the name of mining, fracking and extractive industry - all to benefit the quality of non-Indian lives, while advancing global climate change at dangerous rates. We can read about the Arizona San Carlos Apache's on-going effort to preserve the Oak Flat site from Australian Copper Mining decimation here, <http://apache-stronghold.com> For the timeline, look here, <https://apnews.com> South America's Suriname, a vast rain forest geodome intrinsic to our global climate preservation, is at risk due to mining efforts as the government pushes thousands of Indigenous and tribal people into the capital city, denying their existence as rain forest people. They are not included in their census records because there is no “category” under which to list them. As a result, their ancestral lands are declared “empty” and “available for the taking”, the essence of the centuries-old Doctrine rhetoric.

How Can We Help?

Sarah Augustine has made it her life's work to repudiate the injustices this Doctrine has historically imposed, and suggests it requires renouncement by the Christian world. In future “Branches”, we will not only explore how our Presbyterian and Christian world leaders are attempting to answer that call, but address our own local heritage, how we, as Christians are still complicit in the Doctrine's continued oppression, and we'll seek ways to help change the Doctrine's trajectory.

We all need to learn more.

Visit <https://dismantlediscovery.org> for more info as we attempt to follow Jesus in dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery.

Copies of the book can be found on the Conference Room shelves.

For questions or discussion, please contact Marie Knapp or Lainey Johns.

WORSHIP

SELF MINISTRY

OUR DAILY BREAD



Our Daily Bread
Ministries™

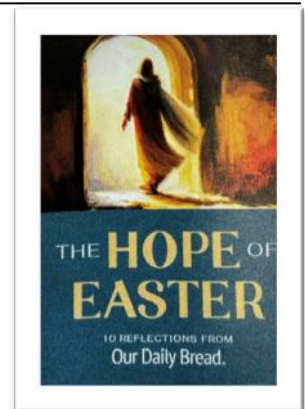


The new quarterly issue and a 90 day introductory issue of the daily personal devotional Our Daily Bread will be available in the narthex, fellowship hall or by the offices for each family. Please check the brochure rack and take a copy home with you to study. The daily devotional can also be found on line at www.odb.org. Both versions are available at no cost to you.

SPECIAL DEVOTIONAL

The Easter season is upon us, and no matter how dark the night, we can have hope for tomorrow. *The Hope of Easter: 10 Reflections from Our Daily Bread* is a devotional that will inspire hope in believers and the spiritually curious alike.

Pick one up March 24th from the Narthex , Fellowship Hall or outside the church office.



If you are aware of any senior citizens that are experiencing food insecurity, please share the following information. Food Stamps for Seniors guide, a great meal

program that is available to low-income households to encourage healthy food choices:

<https://www.retireguide.com/social-security/benefits/food-stamps-for-seniors/>

HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY

A Special Lunch Bunch



We gathered on Valentine's Day for a special Lunch Bunch. Thank you Carol for baking the lovely cake!!!



HIGHLIGHTS

SCOUT SUNDAY

Scout Sunday

Our community scout members joined us to Celebrate Scout Sunday and helped lead us in worship.



Youth Mission Trip Fundraising Efforts



So far this year the fundraising for the Youth Mission Trip is over \$2,000. The Breakfast Fundraiser, Krispy Kreme Donuts sale, and online donations are included in that total. I want to thank the congregation and the youth for their help and support! More fundraising opportunities are coming together this spring to prepare to send our teens and adult volunteers to help other less fortunate, in West Virginia now instead of Ohio.

We appreciate your support! -Julie Lyons

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER



Items Accepted

- Men's clothes
- Women's clothes
- Children's clothes
- boots
- shoes
- sneakers
- belts
- purses
- jewelry
- outerwear
- children's toys
- games
- books
- sports equipment
- bedding (good condition)

**Please drop off donations in
Sunday School Classroom #6
Mon-Fri 9am-12pm or
Sundays 10am-11am**

The Clothing Drive Continues

Spring will be here before we know it! Clean out your closets to help fund the Youth Mission Trip!

Thanks to your generous donations, the clothing drive raised \$1,537.30 in 2023 to support the Youth Group Mission Trip. Let's hit \$1,500 in 2024 too! You can drop off clothes anytime in Sunday School Room 6, but it would be helpful to have Spring and Summer items by February 15th.

Stop in at **We Kids** and **The Consignment Shop** in Flemington and **Country Chic** in Frenchtown to thank these businesses for their support.

Karen Pardonner can also arrange pick-ups at your home. Please reach out to Karen for details (kpardonner@gmail.com).

YOUTH GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

JR HIGH

Lots of fun at the Jr. High Youth Group rock climbing outing!



CHURCH FAMILY

HAPPENINGS



Our pastor, youth and members enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of board games and pizza after worship.



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

SERVICES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Help Us Prep for the Egg Hunt



SPRUCE UP THE LORD'S HOUSE



- Raking up sticks/leaves in the church grove
- Applying second coat of stain on the picnic tables
- Repairing overhead pergola along the ourtyard entrance
- Power wash exterior
- Prepping the courtyard gardens in preparation for mulch
- Painting the exterior sanctuary lift

March 23
9AM - 12 PM
(Rain Date: March 30th)

Questions? Check with Marty Gunderman or Jim Hansen,
our Building and Property Team Elders



CARE TO SHARE - MAUNDY-THURSDAY

March 28th, 7 PM - Fellowship Hall

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat" - Matthew 25:35

AFPC's Care to Share Lenten Service Project is a long-standing tradition to help meet the needs of families in our community. On Maundy-Thursdays before Easter we gather to assemble 100s of bagged lunches for Milford, Frenchtown and Flemington Food Pantries. Helping the food insecure locally in and around Hunterdon county.

Tags can be found on the cross in the Narthex indicating items needed. Take as many as you wish! Please drop off your donation in Fellowship Hall by Palm Sunday, March 24th and please join us on Maundy Thursday, March 28th at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall to assemble the bags.

We will begin with a brief Communion Service prior to packing our bags.

**ONE GREAT HOUR
of SHARING
Making A
Difference!**

Care to Share



**MAUNDY
THURSDAY
MARCH 28
7:00 PM**

Care-to-Share is our huge Lenten service project. Join us as we prepare 200 lunch bags for Milford, Frenchtown and Flemington Food Pantries. It is amazing to watch God's people come together for such a great cause.

Food Tags Available in the Narthex



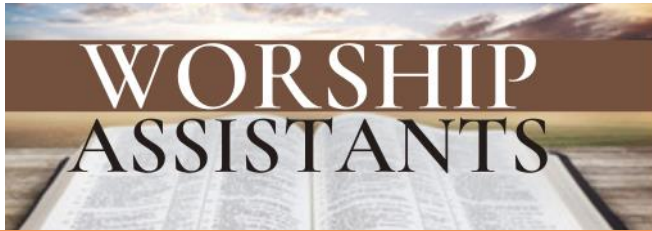
**QUESTIONS?
CONTACT:**
MARIE KNAPP
KNAPTME@VERIZON.NET
LAINEY JOHNS
JOHNSFAM@PTD.NET

Spring is here and with it comes Easter!

Time to brush off that Easter bonnet, dig out that Easter dress and shine those shoes. Easter is a time of celebration to be enjoyed by everyone of all ages. Children especially enjoy good old fashioned Easter Egg Hunts. We will be hosting an Easter egg hunt for **children 12 and under** on Easter morning, March 31st directly after worship. **In the event of rain, we will hold the hunt in the Fellowship Hall.** Children are welcome to **bring their own baskets, but we will have some additional for any children who need one.** We hope you can join us!



SERVICES



March 3: Lainey Johns
March 10: Youth
March 17: Pat Keefe
March 24: LuAnn Keefe
March 31: Nancy Schumann



March 3: Kelsey & Steve Pardonner
March 10: Youth
March 17: April & Margo Abelman
March 24: Chris Hammerstone & Becca Smith
March 31: April & Margo Abelman



March 4: Steve & Karen Pardonner
Christina Heilig & Lainey Johns

CHURCH STAFF

Reverend Nicholas C. Hatch, *Pastor*
Stefanie Watson, *Director of Music Ministry*
Marci Nardone, *Administrative Specialist*

Our Ministry Team

Officers

Personnel

E- Flora Nielsen
D- Karen Pardonner

B&P

E- Jim Hansen*
E- Marty Gunderman*
D- Doug Bondor
D- Tammy Unkert

Christian Ed.

E- Mary Goldman*
D- April Abelman
D- Athena McDowall

Worship & Music

E- Flora Nielsen*
D- Karen Pardonner

Evangelism & Membership

E- Lois Bondor*
E- Christina Hielig
D- Carol VanNorman
D- Christine Hammerstone

Stewardship & Finance

E- Craig Bender*
D- Brad Bondor

Mission & Interpretation

E- Marie Knapp*
E- Lainey Johns
D- Laurie Gregory
D- Pati Tiedeman

Nominating

E- Craig Bender*
E- Vacant
D- Carol VanNorman

* Denotes chair or co-chair

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church



March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Deacon of the Week March 3: Karen Pardonner March 10: Athena McDowall March 17: Pati Tiedeman March 24: Chris Hammerstone March 28: April Abelman					1	2
3 10:00 Worship COMMUNION	4	5 10:00 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	6 9:30 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Deacons	7	8	9
10 10:00 Worship YOUTH SUNDAY	11	12 10:00 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	13 9:30 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Session	14	15	16
17 10:00 Worship	18	19 10:00 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	20 9:30 Lenten Book Study	21 9:00 <i>Apr Branches</i> <i>Deadline</i> 12:00 Lunch Bunch	22	23 9:00 SPRUCE UP THE LORD'S HOUSE
24 10:00 Worship PALM SUNDAY	25	26 10:00 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	27 9:30 Lenten Book Study 7:00 Building & Property meeting	28 7:00 CARE TO SHARE EVENT	29 7:30 Worship GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE	30
31 10:00 Worship EASTER SUNDAY 11:00 EGG HUNT	1 OFFICE CLOSED	2	3	4	5	6

Thursday March 21st

LUNCH BUNCH

Meets at 12:00 pm

Bring your own sandwich and we will provide chips, a drink and dessert

SPRING AHEAD!
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
ENDS MARCH 10TH



ALEXANDRIA FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



Palm Sunday March 24

10:00 a.m. Worship
Palm Processional

Maundy Thursday March 28

7:00 p.m. Communion
“Care to Share”
Lenten Service Project

Good Friday Mar 29

7:30 p.m. Tenebrae Service
with Special Music by the Choir
(Activities for Children during
the Service in Fellowship Hall)

Easter March 31

10:00 a.m. Worship and Communion
11:00 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt



ALEXANDRIA FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



EASTER LILY ORDER FORM

THE WORSHIP AND MUSIC TEAM IS
COORDINATING EASTER LILY ORDERS.

The last day to place an order is:
SUN MARCH 24 2024

Pick-up for ordered lilies will be available
after the 10am Easter Service

Approx # of Blooms 6-7	Plant Cost \$11.00	Quantity _____	Total \$ _____
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Order #1	In Honor Of	
	In Memoriam	
Order #2	In Honor Of	
	In Memoriam	

Name	
Phone #	

Please send completed form along with a check to:

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

Place order forms in the white envelope in the narthex or mail to:

Address: 141 Little York-Mt. Pleasant Rd. Milford, NJ 08848