

Branches

141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, NJ 08848
908-996-4333
Web: www.alexpres.org
<https://www.facebook.com/alexpres.org/>

Volume 59
May 2024
Issue #5



ALEXANDRIA FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Note from Nick

Dear Friends,

I fully recognize that I often sound like a broken record. I continually preach about the love of God. Week after week I call on us to love our neighbors. Time and time again I challenge us to live into the call of Matthew 25 and care for the least. But the reason I repeat these ideas is because Jesus was clear on how we are to faithfully be disciples. His message was simple, and his commands were concise. Yet each of us needs constant reminding – myself included!

Another common phrase you probably are sick of hearing me say is “invite a friend.” From the pulpit I constantly encourage you to invite a friend. You’ve heard me say phrases like . . . invite a friend to worship; invite a coworker to a fellowship event; invite a family member to bible study; invite a neighbor to a mission project. Why do I keep saying this? Because the power of a personal invitation is so incredibly important! When Jesus wanted others to follow him, he didn’t put up a sign. He didn’t post a flyer in the local library. He didn’t share a Facebook post. When Jesus wanted others to follow him, he personally invited them.

Jesus began his ministry by inviting others to follow him. His first disciples were offered the simple invitation, “Come and see.” Can we follow Jesus’ example and invite someone to church? Data suggest that out of those that are unchurched, 82% are more likely to come to church if they are personally invited.

My journey of faith started when I was in high school and someone invited me to youth group. It was a small, simple invitation, and yet my life was transformed through that invitation. I often wonder where I would be if I had not received that invitation? Would I be a minister? Would I know the love of God? Would I be actively striving to be a disciple? I hope I would be able to answer “yes” to each of these questions . . . because God’s call on our lives can be just that strong. But thankfully I don’t have to wonder what could have been . . . I was invited!

Can you think of someone you can invite to church or to a fellowship event? Can you think of a family member, neighbor or friend that you could invite to help with a ministry?

Friends, God’s love for us is real. That love was witnessed again this Easter as we remembered that Jesus died and rose for us. Let’s now live into that love as we share it through a simple invitation. An invitation to “Come and see.”

In Christ,

Pastor Nick

The Rev. Nicholas Hatch

141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, NJ 08848

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908-996-4333



CHURCH FAMILY HAPPENINGS



2	Juliana Soos	6	Athena McDowall	16	Marlena Vastola
3	John McDowall	8	Evelyn Cameron	28	Laurie Gregory
4	Mary Goldman	12	Cathy Torre	28	Kelsey Kunich
6	Kyle Kunich	14	Karen Pardonner	28	Kelsey Pardonner
		16	Jane Pursell		

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 May that Madison Renae Butz, Lyla Virginia Fritsche, Alexis Rose Gunderman, James Monroe Hansen Jr., Nora Lynn Hatch, Charlotte Taylor Hatch, Lauren Elizabeth Lawson Koeller, Kelsey Ann Pardonner, Amelia Ann Schaefer, Tyler Magee Unkert, Keira Nicole Vogel and Sara Rose Wardach were baptized. Congratulations and blessings upon being a child of God!

April Flowers

April 28: Given to the Glory of God by LuAnn & Pat Keefe.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS



Congregational Meeting – May 5, 2024

Call of the Meeting: The Session has called a congregational meeting for May 5, 2024, immediately following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to act on a recommendation of the Session to amend AFPC Bylaws regarding the number of elders and deacons per class. (Reminder all changes to the church bylaws must be voted on at a congregational meeting).

Recommendation: The Session recommends changing our current structure of 15 elders (divided into 3 classes of 5 elders) to a new structure that consists of 9 elders (divided into 3 classes of 3 elders). Likewise, the Session recommends changing our current structure of 12 deacons (divided into 3 classes of 4 deacons) to a new structure that consists of 9 deacons (divided into 3 classes of 3 deacons).

Rationale: The nominating committee has had an increasingly difficult time in recent years finding both elders and deacons, resulting in numerous vacancies for both boards. As a result, we have been operating without a full slate of elders or deacons for many years. To better reflect the size of our church and the number of active members the Session recommends a smaller Session and Board of Deacons. It is hoped that with fewer members being asked to serve each year that we will be both able to fill the slates and also reduce the necessity of drawing on the same members every year. The smaller Session and Board of Deacons also more adequately represents the size of AFPC.

The drawback to operating with fewer elders is that there will no longer be the option of having two elders on each team. One advantage of having had two elders from different classes serving as team chair and vice-chair was that it facilitated the training of new session members as the rotation of elders occurred. To help compensate for this drawback, Session recommends that each outgoing ministry team chair remain on the ministry team as a member-at-large for the year following the end of their session term to train incoming team chairs.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

PRAYER GROUP MEETINGS

Intercessory Prayer Group

If you are feeling the "pain of the world", you will find one answer to the question "What can I do?" by joining our intercessory prayer group. All are welcome! No preparation is required; no special skills are needed.

*Attend any or all
of the sessions.*

This is an opportunity for you to become an agent of change in a war-weary world!

As we near the end of the April Wednesday morning prayer sessions, we have decided to continue meeting on the 1st and last Wednesdays in May and June.

ALL are welcome! No membership requirements, no preparation, no special skills needed, no sign-up required.



**First and Last
Wednesdays
in May & June
At 9:00am
In the
AFPC Gathering Room**

**If you have any questions,
contact Nancy Schumann at
908-735-0479.**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

WHY WE WEAR RED

PENTECOST

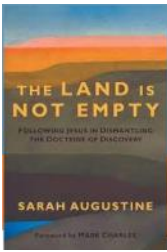
Day of Pentecost May 19th

As we celebrate the coming of the holy spirit everyone is encouraged to wear something RED to church on Sunday May 19



For Christians, Pentecost is a holiday on which we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early followers of Jesus. Before the events of the first Pentecost, which came a few weeks after Jesus' death and resurrection, there were followers of Jesus, but no movement that could be meaningfully called "the church." From a historical point of view, Pentecost is the day on which the church was started. This is also true from a spiritual perspective, since the Spirit brings the church into existence and enlivens it.

Pentecost is the church's birthday. As you might expect, there are a wide range of Christian celebrations of Pentecost. Some churches do not recognize the holiday at all. Most churches at least mention it in prayer, song, or sermon. Some churches go all out, with worship focused on remembering the first Pentecost and praying for a similar outpouring of divine power. Churches that employ liturgical colors generally use red on Pentecost as a symbol of the power and fire of the Spirit.



MISSION TEAM NEWS

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

PART III - “The “Land Is Not Empty: Following Jesus in dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery”

As we continue to discuss “The Land Is Not Empty” (Sarah Augustine) book study, please review the origin and existence of the Doctrine of Discovery by clicking on [March-
here](#). To read how Presbyterian and Christian world leaders attempt to answer the call to dismantle it, click [April-
here](#). In May’s article we’ll discuss the Delaware Valley River American Indian heritage and the origination of Indian Boarding Schools.

Lenni-Lenape of Delaware Valley: From an excerpt at www.njskylands.com/hslenape we learn, “*The valleys of Northwest New Jersey eventually became home to the first paleo Indians around 8600BC after glacial retreat, beginning a native American history from the archaic period to the woodland culture of the Lenape, or Delawares. An Algonkian speaking people, the Lenape tribe was one of the most advanced and civilized in the eastern US. The culture flourished until the first European fur traders arrived in the mid 1600s.*”

Treatment of Native Americans is viewed by most historians as horrific. They were systematically excluded from having a true voice during European exploration and colonization, as well as after the United States was founded. Their non-Christian spiritual beliefs went against the religious doctrine of the early explorers, and European settlers viewed them as nothing more than savages. Despite this view, the Dutch and English had a sincere desire to trade with the Lenni-Lenape from the Garden State, but during the eighteenth century, the relationship with the colonists continued to deteriorate. Land ownership became a major issue throughout New Jersey as the English took over control and established their dominance. Several Lenape chiefs attempted to secure land deals with the New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware colonies (culminating in the Walking Purchase of 1737), and numerous tribes, including the Lenape of New Jersey, signed the Treaty of Easton of 1758, which, in part, stated if the Lenape avoid alliances with the French during the war and forfeit their eastern lands, in return the British promised to stop expeditions into Indian territory west of the Alleghenies. But promises were broken and by the early nineteenth century most of the Lenni-Lenape either integrated into the local communities in New Jersey or left the state for Canada, the Kansas Territory or joined with the Cherokee in New York state. Others ventured west to “Indian territory” which is today Oklahoma. Despite this migration history, ancestors of the Lenni Lanape *do still reside in New Jersey*, and a fascinating history can be found by exploring [Microsoft Word - We Are Still Here - Nanticoke and Lenape History Booklet \(nlltribe.com\)](#)

U.S. Indian Boarding Schools: By the nineteenth century, Native Americans had no choice but to assimilate in order to survive. Beginning with the Indian Civilization Act Fund of March 3, 1819 and the Peace Policy of 1869, there were more than 523 government-funded - and often church-run - Indian Boarding schools across the U.S, whose policy goal was to reprogram American Indian and Alaska Native children and to abolish Native cultures and communities. Indian children were forcibly abducted by government agents, sent to schools hundreds of miles away and subjected to a variety of abuses when they spoke their native language. Generations of native children were deprived connection to their families, culture, tradition, land and identity. A similar context was seen in Canada with the Indian Residential School System that included over 150 institutions and impacted over 150,000 children. In 2008 Canada initiated an historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Compiled testimony from residential school survivors and centralized tribal resources produced a series of 94 calls to action. to which Canada has responded through that Commission. While such a commission addressing the impacts of the US Indian Boarding School Policies has been sought here in the US, the government has yet to comply. In 2001 Congress *did* pass the No Child Left Behind Act, to raise the relatively low academic achievement of minority students, including Native Americans. While achievement has risen for every student group under that Act, the *exception* is the Native Americans. While over 70 schools still remain open today, fortunately, despite the troubled past and all the work yet to be done, ***there is a reverse trend which provides a rich, holistic education in a safe environment.*** Goals include providing a quality education for Native American children, encompassing mind, body, heart and spirit where culture, language and native ceremonies are taught alongside the Catholic tradition. Parents are drawn in and embraced, peopling Parent Advisory Committees to provide insight and feedback on the programs and services. Also, despite the challenges wrought by the boarding school trauma, native nations are resilient and are actively working to revitalize cultures and languages, heal from inter-generational trauma and seek truth, justice and healing. Go to <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-scjpp;-history> for more info.

In June “Branches”, you’ll find a fourth and final summary and a few questions to help us discern how we might each unknowingly support the Doctrine’s continued oppression. Please 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.

MISSION TEAM NEWS

Did you know? We collect for the food pantry all year round. While you are doing your “Spring Cleaning”, consider any pantry items for the local food pantries. If you have any items, there is an area in Fellowship Hall where you can leave your items or you can drop them off at the church office.



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

HIGHLIGHTS

FELLOWSHIP



Did you know?? Lunch bunch is a fantastic opportunity for fellowship, we also get spoiled with fabulous desserts! Just bring your smiling face and your sandwich or salad, we provide drinks, chips and dessert!

We also provide good conversation, strengthening of our fellowship and (of course) many laughs! Our next gathering is Thursday May 16th, we hope to see you there!!



Thursday May 16th


LUNCH


Meets at
12:00 pm

BUNCH

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

HIGHLIGHTS

WORSHIP



On Sunday April 21st, Alexandria First Presbyterian Church Pastor Nick Hatch was honored to perform the baptism of John Sebastian, son of Olivia and Alexander Janssen with his Grandmother, Robin Pulsinelle, as worship assistant.

A beautiful moment was shared by all.



What a joy to baptize and welcome John Sebastian into the AFPC family of faith!

HIGHLIGHTS

FELLOWSHIP—SPRING HIKE

AFPC's Spring Hike



Some of our church family gathered for a Spring hike at Riegel Ridge on Saturday April 21st after Worship. All enjoyed taking the time to absorb the colorful changes of nature during Spring and to be together in fellowship.



HIGHLIGHTS

AFPC YOUTH

Senior High Youth Group Hike the Milford Bluffs



On Saturday April 28th our AFPC Senior High Youth Groups enjoyed a warm spring day hiking the Milford Bluffs.



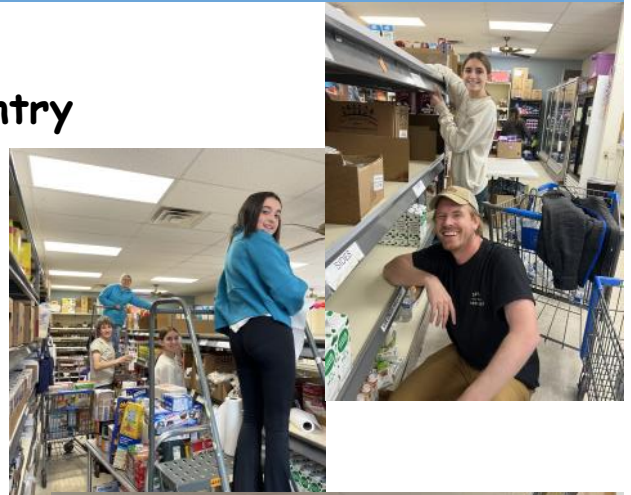
On April 25th Nora Hatch participated in *Bring Your Child to Work Day* and came into the office with Pastor Nick for the day. Nora helped with a variety of tasks around the office and had a great day with her Dad!

HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH SUNDAY/MISSION TRIP

Middle & Senior High Youth Group Volunteers at the Flemington Food Pantry

On Saturday, April 27th, 13 youth from both the Middle School and Senior High Youth Groups participated in an afternoon of service at the Flemington Area Food Pantry. The trip was possible through the support of Youth Group leaders Nick Hatch and Mary Goldman with support from Gayle Hatch and Laurie Croasdale as drivers. Our church donated 125 pounds of food and diapers to those less fortunate! Thanks to all who donated food for the pantry - especially the MacWilliam Family for their generosity!



Thank you to everyone that donated food items for us to bring to our volunteer opportunity at the food pantry! We collected 125lbs!!!

HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH SUNDAY/MISSION TRIP

Middle & Senior High Youth Group Volunteers at the Flemington Food Pantry

For our day of service, we were led by Pantry volunteer Chris Piparo, who was extremely knowledgeable and led our youth on a tour of the facility and explained how people in the community are served. Throughout the afternoon, our youth were busy sorting, cleaning and organizing shelves, tossing expired food, and labeling food by date to make it easier to serve the community. The pantry has expressed a desire to keep working with our youth in the future!



YOUTH GROUP NEWS

MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER

Spring Cleaning? We will take it!

★ CLOTHING DRIVE ★

We have an ongoing clothing drive to support our high school students' annual mission trip.

Items can be dropped off in Sunday School Room #6,
Monday – Friday: 9am – 12pm and Sunday mornings: 9:30am – 11:30am.

Items accepted are men's, women's and children's clothing, boots, shoes, sneakers, belts, purses, jewelry, and outerwear. You can also donate children's toys, games, books, sports equipment, and bedding in good condition.



We have raised \$682.92
since January 1, 2024!

Thank you for
your generous support!



Thanks to your generous donations, the clothing drive raised \$682.92 since January 1, 2024 to support the Youth Group Mission Trip. Let's hit \$1,500 in! You can drop off clothes anytime in Sunday School Room 6.

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 NEWS

MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE:

Mission Trip Fundraiser Breakfast

**YOUTH MISSION TRIP
FUNDRAISER BREAKFAST**
SUNDAY MAY 19TH - DIRECTLY FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Everyone is invited to celebrate our youth
and encourage them as they prepare for
their trip to Ohio in July

JOIN US

**SUNDAY
MAY
19TH**

Please join us for another fantastic breakfast fundraiser to support our Youth Group Mission Trip to Ohio this summer.

TO ALL WHO MOTHER

Happy Mother's Day

**“And now these three remain:
faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.”
1 Corinthians 13:13**

For all the mothers and the mothers-at-heart on earth, as well as the moms in heaven. Thank you for your love, care and kindness. In honor of all mom's we extend to you our most sincere wishes for a Happy Mother's Day!



STEWARDSHIP CORNER

PER CAPITA MONTH

April was Per Capita Month at AFPC! During this month we had special Minute For Missions highlighting exactly what Per Capita is and how it benefits us. We also learned and sang a Per Capita song each week to get us in the Spirit! If you have not yet paid your Per Capita, there is still time!

Per Capita is \$42.50
for each member

Please send your \$42.50 per member (including confirmed teens and young adults) to the church or use one of the special Per Capita envelopes in the pews and simply put it in the offering plate.

Let's try to beat last years Per Capita giving at AFPC!

To learn more about Per Capita
please visit:

pcusa.org/percapita



Memorial Day May 27

This month Americans honor those who have given their lives in service to our nation. On a day when we remember those who gave their lives for our country, we are called to remember the fact that Christ laid down his life for us. Thank you soldiers—past and present—for the freedoms you protect. And, because of those freedoms, we can tell the Good News of the gospel of the perfect One who laid down His life for us all.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS



Nominating Team Called as Disciples

Are you interested in serving as a Deacon or an Elder? Do you know someone that you would recommend to the Nominating Team?

As the Nominating Team begins their work this spring, please pray about your calling to serve and reach out to Craig Bender (craigbender@gmail.com) or Nick Hatch (pastornickhatch@gmail.com) if you would like to recommend yourself or someone else.

Nominating Team

The Nominating Team is hard at work and would like your help in discerning the leadership of our church. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please complete this slip and place it in the offering plate

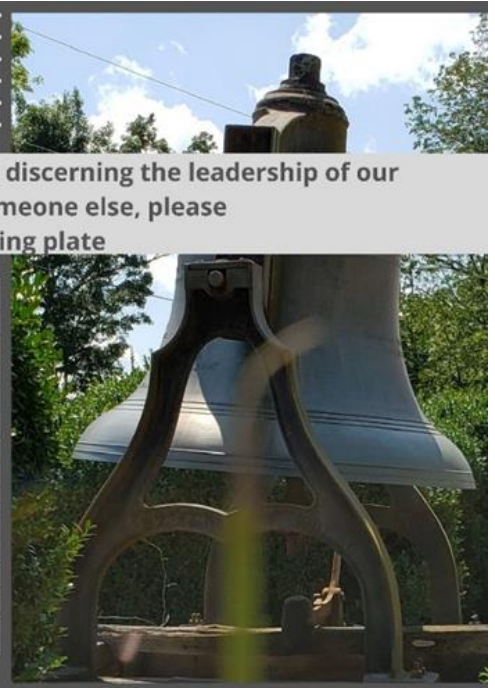
I am recommending the following person(s)
for Church Leadership:

Name(s): _____

Circle One:

Elder

Deacon





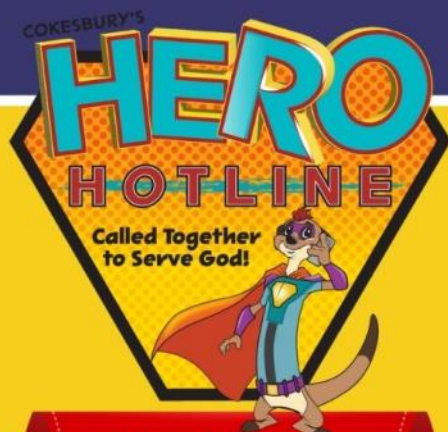
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JUNE 17-JUNE 21
9:00am - 11:30am

\$10 per participant - \$30 max per family
(Please send checks to AFPC)

**ALEXANDRIA FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**141 LITTLE YORK - MT PLEASANT ROAD
MILFORD, NJ**



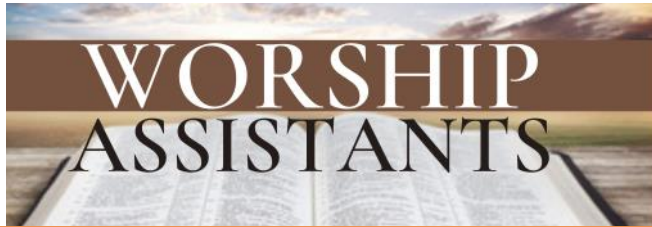
**REGISTER
NOW**

**Participants:
Preschool (potty trained) -
Rising 5th graders**

**Volunteers:
Rising 6th Graders and Up!**

[HTTPS://ALEXPRES.MYCOKESBURYVBS.COM/](https://alexpres.mycokesburyvbs.com/)

SERVICES



May 5: Craig Bender
May 12: Greg Hedden
May 19: Flora Nielsen
May 26: Nancy Schumann



May 5: Lainey Johns & Evelyn Cameron
May 12: Carol Van Norman & LuAnn Keefe
May 19: Tammy Sassaman & Christina Heilig
May 26: Chris Hammerstone & Becca Smith



May 5: Steve & Evelyn Cameron
Craig Bender & 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



Deacon of the Week

May 5: Carol Van Norman May 12: Pati Tiedeman
 May 19: Chris Hammerstone May 26: Brad Bondor

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:00AM Prayer Group 7:00PM Deacon-Meeting	2	3	4
5 10:00 Worship COMMUNION 11:00 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING	6	7 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	8 7:00 Session	9 ASCENSION DAY	10	11
12 MOTHER'S DAY 10:00 Worship	13	14 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	15 7:00 Christian Education meeting	16 12:00 Lunch Bunch	17	18
19 PENTECOST 10:00 Worship 11:00 Youth Group Mission Trip Fund-raiser BREAKFAST	20	21 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	22 7:00 Building & Property meeting	23 9:00 June Branches Deadline	24	25
26 10:00 Worship	27 MEMORIAL DAY OFFICE CLOSED	28 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Chancel Choir	29 9:00 Prayer Group	30	31	

Thursday May 16th

LUNCH BUNCH

Meets at 12:00 pm

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

YOUTH MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER BREAKFAST
SUNDAY MAY 19TH - DIRECTLY FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Everyone is invited to celebrate our youth and encourage them as they prepare for their trip to Ohio in July

JOIN US SUNDAY MAY 19TH

Intercessory Prayer Group

All are welcome! No preparation is required; no special skills are needed; Attend any or all of the sessions. This is an opportunity for you to become an agent of change in a war-weary world! No membership requirements; no preparation; no special skills needed; no sign-up required.

WHERE: AFPC Gathering Room
 WHEN: First & Last Wednesdays 9:00am (5/1-6/26)

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