

The Congregator

First Congregational Church of River Edge, New Jersey

a congregation of the United Church of Christ

January 2018

Volume 69, Issue 1

ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars! Date for the Annual Meeting is Sunday, February 11, 2018

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Any decision to cancel Sunday worship service and classes due to inclement weather will be posted on our website www.fccriveredge.org by **8:30 am Sunday Mornings**. We will also update our church office voicemail greeting (201-261-1712 x100) with such a decision.

First Congregational Church

109 Continental Avenue

River Edge, New Jersey 07661

CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION

Phone (201) 261-1712

Website – www.fccriveredge.org

Church Office e-mail – office@fccriveredge.org

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Dennis TeBeest Pastor	dtebeest@fccriveredge.org 201-390-5548
Gloria Norton, S.M.M., Minister of Music	glorinor@aol.com
Nicole Babington Christian Education Support	nbabington@bergen.edu 201-956-3435
Administrative Assistant Anne Cooper	office@fccriveredge.org 201-261-1712

FIRST THINGS

Manifestations

I write precisely at sunset, 4:31 p.m. on this Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year. I often think of it as my favorite day, because— from here on out for the next six months— everything grows brighter! Even as winter deepens, each day is a little more illumined than the day before. And for that I give thanks!

As you read this, late in the twelve days of Christmas, and leaning into Epiphany Day (and with sunset already fifteen minutes later into the day!), things have grown brighter. And for that I give thanks. Darkness gets defeated bit-by-bit, even when we don't yet realize it!

That is what Epiphany is all about—the manifestation of God's light and life in even the darkest of places. The season of Epiphany was called the *Festival of Lights* as many as seventeen centuries ago. This season is about us—and the world—being illumined with the radiance of Christ's glory, and about our very selves shining that glory to the ends of the earth a little more each day.

On Epiphany Sunday, January 7, our worship will vividly reveal just how much light Christ brings to the world, through the story of the Visit of the Magi. Please join (and especially include children) in this multi-layered story of God-Made-Manifest, and of the gifts we can all bring to the Christ Child.

Miriam Therese Winter, a creative hymn-writer and composer has written this Epiphany prayer. It is my prayer for us, that the light of the world will be more manifest to and through us each new day of 2018:

L
ight of the world,
we bow before You
in awe and adoration.
Bless us
and our simple faith
seeking understanding.
Epiphany means manifestation,
lifting the veil,
revelation.
Reveal to us then
what we need to know to love You,
and serve You,
and keep Your word
with fidelity and truth,
courage and hope,
this day and always.
Amen.

Godspeed,
Dennis

...and a Welcome Manifestation in 2018!

For many months, our faithful Search Team for a *Minister for Faith Formation* has worked diligently to build a job description and search for a staff person for the educational ministries of FCC. During this time, church member Nicole Babington has creatively and energetically provided support to these ministries.

On December 19, our Leadership Council unanimously affirmed the Search Team's recommendation that we hire Nicole for the half-time position of *Minister for Faith Formation*, beginning January 1. Nicole is a wonderful choice. With her sincere Christian faith, her abundant relational skills, and her passion for children and families, she is our best fit to "develop and sustain faith formation and discipleship ministries for children, youth and families, in cooperation with the Christian Education Team." And she is a joy for me to work with as pastor.

The job responsibilities are challenging, including the revitalization of youth ministry (one of our stated priorities from our recent *Dialogue and Direction* process). But Nicole has shown that she understands and shares our vision, and that she is ready to pour herself into the commitments of a professional Christian Educator.

Nicole will be successful in her new job . . . as long as we all realize that *we are part of that success*. Her job will be to "equip us for the tasks of ministry;" our gifts and our support will be necessary for renewal of these education, formation and discipleship tasks that have historically been a hallmark of the First Congregational Church of River Edge.

Nicole, WELCOME to this new chapter in your faithfulness to Christ and the Church!

Pastor Dennis

Cong Con 2

Our ***Congregational Conversations*** continue! On occasional (every six weeks-or-so) Sunday mornings, following worship (11:25-12:05), those who wish will gather in the Parlor to hear and discuss an issue . . . with the help of a presenter (hopefully from FCC) who has some experience in the topic.

Cong Con #2 will come on January 28. Pastor Dennis will share experiences and insights from his study experience in *Israel and Palestine* in the Spring of 2017. Last summer many of us shared the initial presentation on the trip. This follow-up *conversation* (smattered with pictures) will focus more specifically on the current experience of conflict and division in the West Bank territories. The strain and conflict of the West Bank is a complicated morass. Is it rooted in religious issues . . . or are other things going on here?

Mission Team – Your help is requested

Family Promise -We are hosting again on **Tuesday, January 30th, 6:00 – 8:30 pm** at St. Peter's. Young people are very welcome. Please sign up at Fellowship time to help - cook, serve, clean up, entertain the children. These homeless working families need our support to give them a warm place to stay and a warm meal on a cold January night!



Second Sunday - A note from Second-Sunday participating organization *Spectrum for Living, River Vale* – “Many thanks for all you do. Our residents enjoy Second Sunday so much, God Bless you.”

All Wrapped Up – Excerpts from thank-you letter from the *Visiting Homemaker* program, through which we get our list of senior Christmas gift recipients. “Visiting Homemaker and the CHEER Program are so thankful to have your support in gift giving to our clients...for another year...your members make our community a wonderful place to live. Edith, Helen, Willie, Adeline, Flora, Dominick, Layton and Lou Ann... **thank you.**”

Children’s Aid and Family Services –Some of the funds that you give with your regular pledge are allocated by your Mission Team to this worthwhile organization. Excerpts from their thank-you letter to you: “Thank you for helping to empower the children, teenagers and families we serve. Your generous gift of \$500 makes a world of difference in their lives, whether it is a child in

foster care learning to live in a healthy family environment, a young mother getting the help she needs to build an independent future, or a teenager with autism learning vital social skills...We couldn’t do this important work without you. **Thank you...**”

LEGACY OF FAITH

A meaningful way to remember/honor loved ones and friends is to make contributions to the Memorial Fund, Renovation Fund, Music & Arts Fund or the General Fund of the First Congregational Church of River Edge.

MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory of Mrs. Leonila Frani

Efren and Louie Fran

BUILDING RENOVATION FUND

In Memory of Kathleen Keehn

Carlos Knight Garrison

Bob & Evelyn Fialko

Claudia & Robert Drummond

Premier Associates LLC

Robert & Sheila Blochlinger

J. Vincent & Theresa Toscano

Thomas & Lydia Powers

Russell & Noreen Van Wetering

Wai & Nancy Chiang

George & Deborah Hagl

Joseph & Patricia Paul

Elizabeth &McLaughlin & Family

Kathy & Gary Beresky

Laurie Keehn’s CO-Workers at NJEDDA

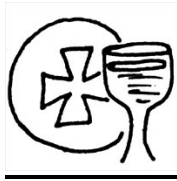
Rob & Eileen Stevenson

MUSIC AND ARTS FUND

In Memory of Joan Ledgerwood

Gloria & Jon Norton

WORSHIP TEAM



The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated on **Sunday, January 7**, during the 10:00 am. Worship Service. (The Communion bread is gluten-free.)

*

JOYS & CONCERNS LIST

Each Sunday, on the table to the right of the double doors to the Sanctuary, there is a place for you to write any prayers requests that you might want included during the service.

Janet Arena
Worship Team - Leader

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FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY

The first Sunday of each month is Food Pantry Sunday. We receive monetary donations to support the community food pantry through the Center for Food Action. Donation envelopes are in the bulletin each first Sunday of the month.

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CHILD CARE AREA

There is a dedicated space for child care. Babies and toddlers up to three years of age may be brought to Pilgrim Hall on Sunday mornings. Cribs, furniture, toys and books have been selected for this area so that children will be comfortable while parents are attending worship. Ask an usher or greeter for assistance.

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Fellowship Time Hosts and Greeters are needed for the New Year. Please sign up at Fellowship Time or contact Russell Van Wetering at 201-261-1795 or at aprilsky@optonline.net

MUSIC THANK YOU!

A BIG thank you to all the musicians of our church who added so much beauty to our Advent and Christmas services of worship. Chancel Choir, Cantata Choir, Carol and Nowell Choir, Pilgrim Ringers, vocal and instrumental soloists-- all helped to make our worship joyful and meaningful. Also, thanks to Diane Lento and Wayne Placek for their excellent narration of the Cantata on December 10.

A new year is beginning.....it's a good time to think about joining a choir. There are opportunities for every age and ability. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Reports are due in the Church Office by Wednesday, January 10. Please forward an electronic copy to the Church Office.

The next regular meetings of the Shawl Ministry will take place on:

Tuesday, January 9, at 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 11, at 1:00 pm

All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us in making shawls...or bring your current yarn project and spend a relaxing afternoon in the Parlor with us. Everyone is welcome. For information, please contact Alice Rushforth at 201-265-1062.

CONGREGATOR DEADLINE

The deadline for the February 2018 issue of the Congregator is Friday, January 19, 2018.

JANUARY 2018

CONTAINERS NEEDED



Anyone that has leftover containers from Chinese food or likewise, please donate them to Second Sunday for packaging leftover food after our dinners. You can leave them on the counter in the kitchen marked “for Second Sunday”.

Thank you,
Betty Hogan

UPDATE!

**NEW JERSEY DEVILS
vs.
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING**

Come and join us for a night of Hockey, Fellowship and Fun as we cheer on the New Jersey Devils’ game against Tampa Bay Lightning on Saturday, March 24, 2018, 7:00 PM at “The Rock” Prudential Center, Newark, NJ. There are 10 tickets available at \$52.00 each, Section 123, Seats 5-9 in both rows. Please sign up at Fellowship Time or contact Russell Van Wetering at 201-261-1795 or at aprilsky@optonline.net.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to donate altar flowers for one of our worship services, please contact our Flower Coordinator, Carole Meeks at 201-262-3020. The donation for flowers is \$25.00. Flowers can be taken home after the service or given to one of our shut-ins. The deadline for ordering altar flowers is the Sunday prior to their being placed on the Altar.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Chrismon Service

The Christian Education Team would like to thank everyone who helped and participated in our 45th Chrismon Service! The church looked festive, the children looked beautiful, and our congregation's generosity shined. We collected coats, hats, mittens, clothes and over 120 toys that were donated to children in need in Bergen County. The offering that was collected to support our Child Sponsorship program was also outstanding. Thank you!

Church Un-decorating

The Christian Ed and Worship Teams will be taking down the holiday decorations on Thursday, January 4 at 6pm. Please consider volunteering some time un-decorating the trees, removing the garland, and packing away our memories of this holiday season. Any help is much appreciated!

Plastic Storage Containers Needed

If you happen to have a Rubbermaid type storage container that you have no use for, please consider donating it. Many of our Chrismon supplies are still being stored in cardboard boxes which do not block out odor. I would love to have everything fresh and ready to go next year! Please leave containers outside my office. Thanks!

Co-Teacher Needed

A teacher is needed to assist with the Junior Youth class beginning in January. In order for me to perform my duties as the Minister for Faith Formation, I will need to transition out of teaching before the 2018-2019 Church School year. The Jr. Youth class is a wonderful group of young people who are inquisitive and willing to participate. Please consider investing time in the faith formation of our children. Touch base with me if you are willing to help out.

Children's Message

Our weekly children's message plays an important part in getting our children involved in the service of worship. It also gives the members of the congregation an opportunity to show our youngest members that we have a lot to teach them and that we care about their faith development. I will be reaching out for volunteers for the Spring, so please consider giving 5 minutes to our children. There will also be a sign-up sheet during Fellowship time.

Childcare 2017-2018

The Christian Education team is in need of volunteers who are interested in helping out with childcare. Volunteering will allow parents the opportunity to worship while their young children are being properly supervised. Depending on the willingness of all of you, we are looking at possibly 2-3 Sundays/volunteer throughout the year. This is a very small commitment that has an extremely large effect on our congregation. Supporting young families will help us grow! Please contact Nicole at nbabington@bergen.edu and say you will help!

January 2018

Jan. 7 Alice Frylinck
Jan. 14 Ronnell Kearns
Jan. 21 Kim Shirk
Jan. 28 Nadia Orendain

Children on a Mission

It is important for us to teach our youngest members the impact our help and donations can have on people in need. In an effort to show that "every little bit helps," our church school program has started **Change for a Change**. Please look out for our offering jar during Fellowship time to make a donation. We are currently collecting for the **Center for Food Action**. Thanks to all who have contributed to our almost \$100 donation at this point. We will be collecting through 2/4.

~Nicole Babington

WORSHIP TEAM

Welcome to the New Year 2018! On Sunday, January 7th we will hear the Epiphany story and partake in communion. Come and celebrate with us.



Lent will begin on Wednesday, February 14th. We will again usher this special time in the Church calendar with a Soup and Bread Supper at 6:00PM in Fellowship Hall and then move to the Sanctuary for the Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00PM. If you would like to participate in the preparations (preparing soup or setting up Fellowship Hall on the day of the Supper), please contact Carole Meeks (201-262-3020).

The poinsettias on the altar shined with the beauty of the Christmas season. Many plants were delivered to those unable to attend the services. Special thanks to Carole Meeks and those who supported her - Joanne Hernandez, Pat Canzani, Adria Brown, Frank Meeks, Cindy Fordham and Janet Arena.

The Worship Team will have its monthly meeting on Monday, January 8th at 7:00PM in the Board Room.

JANUARY JOY!

8th Annual Indoor Church Picnic.

Sunday, January 21, 2018 immediately following Worship.

Please plan on attending this First Congregational tradition!

Volunteers are needed too, so please sign up at Fellowship Time or contact Russell Van Wetering at 201-261-1795 or at

aprilsky@optonline.net

FOOD – FOOD – FOOD

Church will supply: Hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, condiments, paper goods, soft drinks, ice tea and lemonade.

You Supply: A side dish or dessert to share.

Lots of Games and Prizes

When: Sunday, January 21, 2018

CAN YOU HELP?

Saturday, January 20 at 3:30 pm to set up Fellowship Hall.

Sunday: Be a food runner.....



Set up drinks

Set up food tables

Be a game helper

Be a judge

Help clean up after the picnic

Please RSVP no later than Tuesday, January 16, by returning the form below to the Church Office or call the Church Office at 201-261-1712.

Church Picnic

Name _____ Phone# _____

I can help with _____

Attending: _____

What will you bring? Side Dish _____ Dessert _____