



A Message from Interim Pastor Diane Curtis

A week before Christmas the water line to our house broke. The water company promptly came, installed a cut off in the street in front of our house and turned the water off except for a small trickle that allowed us to flush toilets. Fortunately, we had water line insurance! But, the process to actually get the contractor to come and fix the line took a week. Their solution for the week was to bring us eight cases of bottled water – very helpful for washing dishes and drinking, not so much for a shower.

Life doesn't always go as planned. We all know that. Generally, we take the bumps and pot holes in the road in stride. It is when the bumps pile up into mountains and the pot holes become chasms that we become overwhelmed.

Instead of having a pity party or pulling ourselves up by our boot straps, we have another choice. Ask for help. Yep, that's it – ask for help. Sounds so simple, yet it can be very hard. Asking for help is admitting we can't fix the problem ourselves, that our own efforts have failed. When the problem at hand involves our personal life, seeking help is a hundred times more difficult. Who can we trust enough to help in these situations?

The obvious answer is God. But, when we need a hug or a shoulder to cry on or someone to hold our hand, an unseen deity isn't enough. God knows that, in addition to him, we often need flesh and blood help. He created us to be relational people; to connect with one another, to have another human being to weep and to rejoice with us. This is what being the church is all about!

God brings us together not only to serve others and make the church function, but to be a living, breathing community of relational people. Building relationships, though, is risky. It requires one to be vulnerable, to learn to trust another person. But, we have help. *For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them (Matthew 18:20)*. Jesus promises to be in the midst of our relationships. He is the glue that binds us together.

So, put down your cell phone or tablet, walk away from the computer or the television and ask for help. Invite someone to join you for coffee or lunch or to take a walk. Or, take a bigger step and join a small group. Take the risk, reach out to another, build a relationship.

Faithfully,
Pastor Diane



Update from the Pastor Nominating Committee

The PNC members have been busy reviewing the Pastor Information Forms (PIF) from 62 candidates. Yes, you read that right - 62!! What a blessing but it's a lot to review.

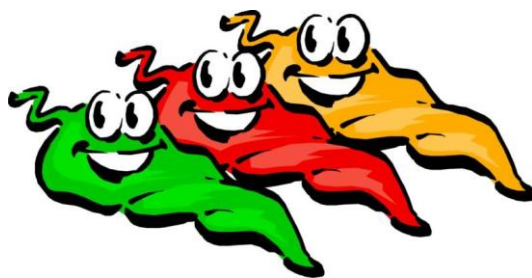
We have had initial interviews with four candidates which went well. We are planning to interview several more before deciding on those with whom we will have deeper discussions.

Continue to keep our committee in prayer that we may discern to whom God is calling to lead His church at Faith.

Spicy (Chili) and Sweet (Dessert) Cook Off!

Join us for spicy and sweet fun, food and fellowship after worship

Sunday, March 5



Bring your best chili or dessert recipe. Taste them all and vote for the winner. If chili isn't one of your specialties, sign up to bring a tossed salad or rolls. **Because we'll need to number the tasting cups ahead of time, this potluck requires an RSVP if you are bringing a chili or a dessert.** Help us out with a description of your dish such as "Turkey Chili with White Beans" or "Key Lime Pie." You don't have to bring anything other than your appetite but we could use extras like sour cream, shredded cheese and Tums!

An RSVP form will be in the bulletin the next three Sundays. Complete the form and drop it in the offering bag or contact Linda Mackey directly.



Sleep Mat Update

Hope you're sitting down because this is big. **We have 3 mats completed already!** Thanks to Joyce Schreiner for working all year round on hers and a big thank you to our partners from Lord of Life Lutheran Church for 2 more finished mats.

Join us every Saturday in February and March from 10 am to noon to help us make sleep mats for the homeless! No skills are necessary. There are many different tasks and we'll show you how to do them all.

Please note that we have more plastic bags than we can use or store. **We are no longer collecting plastic bags.** You can start returning your bags to the grocery store until next fall when we'll begin collecting again. Thank you to everyone who donated bags!





Chancel Flowers

It's a new year! Time to sign up to donate chancel flowers in honor or memory of a loved one. The signup sheet is on the bulletin board in the hall.

Home Knitters – We Need You!

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is celebrating its tenth year with a special outreach to south Jersey migrant workers. We plan to knit **500 pocket prayer squares** and attach scripture in Haitian Creole and Spanish. The squares will be distributed to workers by the Migrant Worker Outreach when they arrive in May. Since there are more than 6,000 workers, we need as many squares as possible! **If you can knit at home**, please contact Janet Sharpe. She will provide you with the yarn and instructions for the pattern.

Church Bulletin Board

Sunday, March 5: Sweet and Spicy Chili and Dessert Cook Off will be served up after worship. Contact Linda Mackey to sign up for this delicious competition.

Monday, April 17: Faith Church will host Lifeline Medical Screenings at the church. Watch the bulletin for an insert with details.

Sunday, June 4: We're planning a potluck to rejoice with all couples who are lucky enough to celebrate 50 or more years of marriage. Save the date!



Serving Breakfast – With Love!

Several members of Faith traveled to Seeds of Hope in Camden to serve the Saturday hot breakfast. Bob, Ann, Bruce, Sandy, and Jean all had great things to say about how well organized and rewarding their experience was.

Reservations to serve are made months in advance but we're planning to get on their calendar again. Watch the newsletter or bulletin for the next date. If you might be interested, please contact Bonnie Halle.





A New Way to Connect with Faith Church!

Faith Church is now part of a website called **"Faithstreet"**.

The URL is <http://www.faithstreet.com/search?lat=39.8741&lng=-74.809>. This takes you to the main page showing all Medford churches listed on Faithstreet. Notice that Faith is the first listing. Clicking on that link will take you to our page.

The website is <http://www.Faithstreet.com>. This is another way people can find us.

Our Website is <http://www.Faithchurch.org> .

Our Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/HopeGardenatFaithChurch/> or search Facebook for HOPE Garden - our Missions - Faith Church, Medford, NJ

Did You Know?

If you bank online, you can set up an automatic payment for your contribution to Faith Church. You'll never have to worry about forgetting your envelope!