

---



# CONNECTIONS

*The Newsletter of the Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church—June 2022*



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

*A righteous man who walks  
in his integrity - how blessed  
are his sons after him.*

PROVERBS 20:7

### **Our Vision**

**Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church is called to be a church where people seeking hope find the light and love of Christ, and together, joyfully serve the community with abiding love and purpose.**

### **Our Mission – As a church**

- **We find and share the light and love of Christ in prayer, in worship, in fellowship, and in service.**
- **We welcome the rainbow of God’s children, and we embrace our differences.**
- **We gather to develop relationships with God, with each other, and with the world.**
- **We are inspired by the Word of God as proclaimed through music, and our love of music strengthens our relationship with the community.**
- **We empower others to embody grace, mercy, justice, and peace, guided by the light and love of Christ.**
- **We purposely demonstrate compassion, understanding, and generosity to others, inspired by the love of Christ.**
- **We open our hearts and our doors to those seeking hope, wholeness, wellness, acceptance, and a place to be seen.**

# CONGREGATIONAL DIALOGUE

*Please join us for a very special discussion on Sunday, June 5, after Worship, one which will bring us one step closer to calling a new pastor.*

The Visioning Team has completed the Mission Study and is seeking your reactions and, we hope, your acceptance and support, for the three most important sections of this document. These sections are available to you in the June newsletter, *Connections*, and a few copies will be printed and made available onsite.

Once Session approves our Mission Study, it will be forwarded to the Committee on Ministry at the Presbytery for their review and approval and, once they approve we can form a Pastor Nominating Committee.

We look forward to having you participate in this special discussion!

The Visioning Team: Sandra Austin, Barbara Brezak, Joanne Durham, Rick Durham, Don Lovett, and Ralph Sims

## **The Visioning Team**

Dear Members of ECPC:

Below are excerpts from our Mission Study, the document that will be forwarded to the Committee on Ministry at the Presbytery in order for them to approve our request to form a Pastor Nominating Committee. We share these sections with you now. The Visioning Team will host a Congregational Dialogue after Sunday worship on June 5<sup>th</sup>. We would like to know your thoughts about these sections. The entire document will be distributed after Session has approved it, but we felt that these sections were the most important for you to review. We are seeking your reaction as to whether you feel these sections accurately represent the direction in which our church should be going.

Thank you.

The Visioning Team

## **Our Vision Statement**

Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church is called to be a church where people seeking hope find the light and love of Christ and, together, joyfully serve the community with abiding love and purpose.

## **Our Mission Statement**

As a church,

- we find and share the light and love of Christ in prayer, in worship, in fellowship, and in service.
- we welcome the rainbow of God's children, and we embrace our differences.
- we gather to develop relationships with God, with each other, and with the world.
- we are inspired by the Word of God as proclaimed through music, and our love of music strengthens our relationship with the community.

- we empower others to embody grace, mercy, justice, and peace guided by the light and love of Christ.
- we purposely demonstrate compassion, understanding, and generosity to others inspired by the love of Christ.
- we open our hearts and our doors to those seeking hope, wholeness, wellness, acceptance, and a place to be seen.

*adopted by ECPC Session on April 27, 2021*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Who We Are***

Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church (ECPC) is the new creation of two congregations with rich histories – one founded in 1707 and the other in 1947 – that formally blended in 2020 to become one body of Christ. As a designated Matthew 25 church, we have resilient and faithful followers of Christ who are committed to serving the less advantaged in our community (and beyond) and to seeking social justice. The dedicated and passionate members of this church generously give of themselves in terms of their leadership, caring for others, and their time. Our congregation is financially secure with sizeable reserves and endowments and an active cemetery. However, we are an aging congregation that includes few younger members or families with children.

Each of the two former congregations experienced trauma and loss. Although we suspended in-person worship for more than a year because of the of the Covid-19 pandemic, we never stopped offering worship services, pastoral care, or outreach to those in need. Beyond the pandemic, we experienced even more trauma as a newly blended congregation. The years of internal turmoil have taken their toll, created disappointment and yielded substantial member loss. We have come out of all these experiences with hope to build a new future together.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

### ***Who We Want to Become***

We seek to embody our new Vision Statement and Mission Statement, which capture the direction in which we want our congregation to go. We want to encourage members of our church to further develop a personal relationship with Christ. We would like to see our social justice programming grow. To guide us toward these goals, the Visioning Team distilled the feedback received at two congregational retreats in 2021 to define our strategic planning priorities and to identify specific actions needed to attain these priorities. The following were selected as the three strategic planning priorities that would be our focus:

- Create inclusive worship services.
- Improve communications, both internally and externally.
- Strengthen engagement of the members of the congregation in their service to each other and to the broader community through its ministries.

### ***New Opportunities***

- **How can we make our Vision Statement a living document of Christian discipleship?** We hope to utilize training by advocates from the PC(USA) Vital Congregation Initiative to help us bring our message of faith and hope out into the community.
- **How can we engage more of the congregation in our support of Trenton-area missions?** Although some of our lay leaders regularly offer hands-on support to the Trenton community and others do help occasionally, there is

more that could be done. These could be exciting mission activities for our congregation, but they also could engage youth, young families, the unchurched, and those who don't yet know us—and thus creating new bonds.

- **How can we be more *public in our inclusivity* of the unchurched, the LGBTQ+ community, and returning citizens?** Although we are known as a friendly church, we don't have specific practices in place to welcome visitors or any group that is checking us out. We need to be more intentional in implementing these practices.

### ***Challenges We Face***

- **How do we bring healing to our members?** There are many in the congregation who are upset over the unexpected resignation of Rev. Ann Schoonover. There remains deep grief among former Covenant members over the loss of their building, their own congregation, and their sense of identity. Former Ewing members struggle with the controversy over the sanctuary.
- **Does the entire congregation truly understand and support the Vision and Mission statements?** Although much of the lay leadership is enthusiastic about the new Vision Statement and Mission Statement, it is not known how widely these are fully embraced by members of the congregation. Taking opportunities to communicate the Strategic Planning Priorities and the action steps identified at the retreats would help.
- **How might we balance the care and support of our elderly members, while simultaneously attracting new members?** We have a lack of members under the age of 50, and very few members have young children. Since we no longer have the position of Associate Pastor for Elder and Pastoral Care, we also have the challenge of serving our large proportion of elderly members. However, we do have our Care Team Ministry and our Parish System to provide some of this care.
- **How do we get everyone comfortable with adopting new technologies?** Paid staff, as well as lay leaders and congregants, need to be on board with accepting technology. Because of the pandemic, we were forced to offer remote and then hybrid Worship services. Currently, some members believe we should not continue hybrid services because these encourage people not to come to church and participate in its activities, while others argue that hybrid services are essential for bringing in new members.
- **How do we re-imagine use of our facilities in order to maximize mission effectiveness?**

## **OUR PASTORAL SEARCH**

### ***What We Seek in a New Pastor***

We seek a pastor who

- has strong interpersonal and leadership skills.
- is enthusiastic about continuing our congregation's commitment to being a Matthew 25 congregation and, in particular, is dedicated to working with the congregation and the community to address racism, poverty, and social injustice.
- is trained in vitality ministry and will lead our church to grow.
- will help us to discern God's call to this church.
- is passionate about leading our congregation to living into its Vision and Mission Statements and about fostering those changes that should follow.
- will challenge us to move out of our comfort zone.
- invites and encourages volunteers and will work to expand the number of people in leadership.
- is committed to being open, accepting, and welcoming to a diverse range of individuals and seeks to make our congregation a home to those who do not yet know us.

- can reach out effectively in many modes of communication, including social media.
- is good with relationship building and conflict resolution and can recognize divergent points of view and bring them together.
- can inspire from the pulpit, articulate a clear theology, and relate the Bible to issues in our daily lives.

### ***What ECPC Has to Offer to a Pastor***

ECPC offers a warm, friendly, helpful congregation, eager to welcome a new pastor (and their family). The congregation has been operating on its own, without a minister, since January 2022, but a well-functioning committee system has kept the congregation running, and the highly-effective Parish System and Care Team have provided extensively for the members of the congregation.



## **Save the Date for Our Ice Cream Social!**



The Ice Cream Social is set for **Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.** The Blawenburg Band will be entertaining us with their wonderful music as we listen, eat, and enjoy one another's company on a September evening. More information will be coming as we near the date!

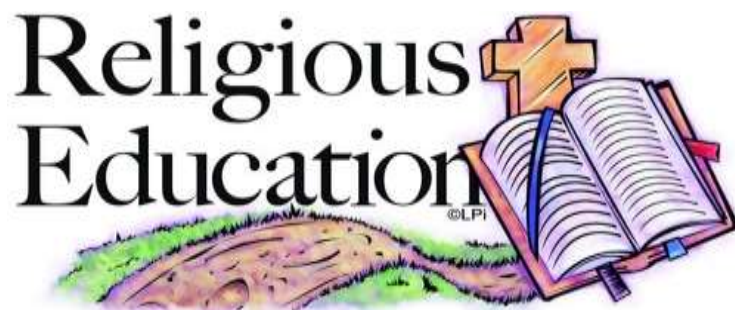
# Happy Father's Day!



## *Another Way to Give to the Community*

We are honoring all of the men who have repaired our lives when we were hurt or afraid. They also repair broken things around the house and do building. **That is why we honor or memorialize our men with the church's Father's Day Card.** Please give what you can to express your love and gratitude to the men in your life. We support our local **Habitat for Humanity** with donations from this card.

Please make your check out to "*Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church*" and put "*Father's Day Card*" on the memo line with the name you would like to remember or honor in a note or email to the church office.



## **Adult Education in June**

As we near the close of the program year, please join us for these stimulating discussions!

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| May 29 | Memorial Day weekend, no class   |
| June 5 | Pentecost - Another exciting surprise! See how the Holy Spirit moves among us<br>11:00 Congregational Dialogue<br>11:30 Adult Ed |



### Worship Assistant

Since Rosa has completed her internship with us, we have needed to provide a Worship Assistant to the Preacher of the day. What does a Worship Assistant do, you ask? A Worship Assistant leads the congregation in the Unity Candle, Call to Worship, Call to Confession, Assurance of Pardon, Passing of the Peace, Affirmation of Faith, Offering, and the Prayer of Dedication.

The Prayer of Illumination and Old Testament are read by the Lay Reader.  
The Lay reader and Worship Assistant can be the same person.  
The Preacher does the New Testament, Sermon, and the Benediction.

We have made the Lay Reader and Worship Assistant Signup sheet, one and the same. You may sign up for one only, or both! It is located outside the worship space. Trust me, if I can do it, **ANYONE** can do it! Please help us out by participating!!

Pam Miller



**Mark your calendar**



**Annual All Church Picnic**

**Sunday, June 12th following Worship**

Please join your church family and friends for our Potluck Picnic.

Hamburgers, hotdogs, and waters will be provided, but please bring a side dish if you are able.

A signup sheet is posted on the back table in the worship space

Any questions, call Carol Hecky 609-273-4848

Come join the company of others on the front lawn. Bring a friend!

## THANK YOU ALL WHO DONATED TO THE HOMEFRONT'S DIAPER CHALLENGE

### Our Giving was a Success!

This Lenten season we participated in 3 giving projects, and you were very generous. We collected 105 packages of diapers and wipes for *HomeFront* exceeding our goal!

\$2001.00 was collected for *OGHS*, and \$525.00 worth of blankets were given to *Church World Service*. Father's Day will be an opportunity to give to *Habitat to Humanity*. Thanks for your generosity!



### 2022 Anchor House Ride for Runaways – Please Donate!

Hi Everyone! I will be participating in the Anchor House Ride for Runaways again this year. (This is my fifth year!). For those of you who are not familiar with this great organization, Anchor House supports homeless, abused, runaway and at-risk youth, including those who are aging out of the child welfare system, in the Trenton area. Anchor House's programs help connect youth to support systems where they live and help them gain the skills they need to become productive and independent adults. To learn more about Anchor House, please visit <https://www.anchorhousenj.org/>.

This year's ride will be a bit different for me as I am volunteering on the support crew instead of riding due to my broken ankle (I would ride my bike with crutches if I could!). If you would like to support this great organization and make a donation, please visit my webpage at [Donate - Classic Ride - 2022 \(rallybound.org\)](https://www.rallybound.org/) or send your donation to my home address (10 Blackfoot Road, Pennington, NJ 08534) and I will forward to Anchor House.

I can't say enough good things about the staff at Anchor House and all the good they do in the community. Thank you in advance for your continued support this year. I'm always so touched by your generosity.

Sandy Pezzillo



To keep the prayer list timely, listings will remain for 2 editions of the Newsletter and then be taken off.

In the event you desire a listing to run longer,  
or for a shorter time, please advise the church office.

Prayer Request	Note
Alice Haines	<i>By church family</i>
All people suffering because of the War in Ukraine	
Anthony Patricelli	<i>Head Start student</i>
Betty Ranson	<i>By church family</i>
Chuck Easton	<i>Joanne Easton Durham</i>
Dick Anthony	<i>By church family</i>
Kevin Hecky	<i>By church family</i>
Louise Burroughs	
Marjorie Burtis	
Ruth Palmer	<i>By church family</i>
Shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas,	
Wayne Allen	<i>Now home</i>

### Presbyterian Women

Ruth and Tabitha Circles will be meeting at 6:30 on Wednesday, June 8th in the Adult Lounge. We will be enjoying an end of the year pizza dinner, finishing the study of Ruth, having devotions and of course lots of good fellowship. The meeting is hybrid so join us in person or online. We are happy to provide a ride if you need one.

Mission sewing will meet at 10 am on Tuesday, June 14th in the Adult Lounge. The group will be going over the results of our sale table at the Ewing Community Center on June 11th, hoping that the efforts were successful, and a large donation can be sent to Friends for Health in Haiti. Bring a sandwich, beverage and dessert will be provided.

## Updates From Operations

The Operations Committee is very happy to announce that the construction project on the Church Office Building porch is officially finished!! This project included the complete reconstruction of the front porch, the front and side steps, with the installation of an ADA compliant wheelchair lift, the reconstruction of the rear porch of the church office building, and the replacement of the pre-existing interior wheelchair lift in the entry foyer of Fellowship Hall.

All aspects of the work have been completed, and all final inspections by the Ewing Township Code Enforcement Office have been conducted and have successfully passed.

The members of Session will be planning a formal dedication and celebration of this very exciting milestone in the life of our church. This event will be happening later this summer. Details will be shared in the future as the plans are finalized.

Until then, please stop by and enjoy the new porch!

Sincerely,

The Buildings and Grounds Committee

Laura Wallin  
Mike Hecky  
Don Lovett  
Bob Kull  
Buzz Dakin  
Dave Pollison

# Happy Father's Day!

Traditionally a Father's Day offering is gathered to honor and in memory of Father's who have brought so much to each of our lives. The donations benefit Habitat for Humanity who bring shelter and hope to families and communities all over the world from Trenton and the United States to some of the far-flung communities in the world. Our offering goes to the local Trenton Habitat which partners with families, volunteers, businesses, and professionals to offer affordable housing and community services. Send your offering into the office or drop it off at Church with the names of those whom you wish to honor or memorialize. The names in honor of or in memory of will be published in the July newsletter and bulletin. Signup sheets located outside worship space.



Please refer to the worshipping schedule portion of this newsletter for all Zoom and phone-in connections.

**JUNE 2022**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>2</b> 6:00 -7:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 – 9 Regular Choir Worship Space	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> Worship 10am 11:00 Congregational Dialogue 11:30 Adult Ed	<b>6</b> 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 6:30-8 pm Ruth/Tabitha Circle Adult Lounge	<b>9</b> 6:00 -7:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30-9 Regular Choir Worship Space	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Worship 10am 11:30 Picnic & Dedication	<b>13</b> 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space	<b>14</b> 10am-Mission Sewing Adult Lounge 1:30-3:30 pm ESWA Mission Service Group Lower Lounge	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 11:45-1:30 Lunch Together Lower Lounge 6:00 -7:30 Bell Choir Rehearsal worship space 7:30 -9 Regular Choir Worship Space	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> Worship 10am FATHERS DAY 	<b>20</b> 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Worship 10am	<b>27</b> 11:30-1:00 Echo Line Dancing Worship Space	<b>28</b> 1:30-3:30 pm ESWA Mission Service Group Lower Lounge	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		