

The Pipe Organ

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
New Vernon,

VOL. 62 NO. 1

January, 2013

“I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the lamb.”

Revelation 21: 22

Rick’s Reflections

That passage is from the part of the book of Revelation where John is describing the New Jerusalem. There is no need for a Temple because God is everywhere. That is a wonderful dream. But there are times when we catch a glimpse of it in the present.

I was in a sacred place recently. It didn’t look like any temple or beautiful house of worship. It was a house that had been devastated by Sandy. There the worshippers gathered, not with hymnbooks and Bibles, but with saws and pry bars. Their prayer was in the form of the hard work of clearing away all of the damaged parts of the house, so that something new could take its place.

But another kind of newness was occurring there too. The people from our church were being transformed by the holy redeeming work of helping strangers without expectation of reward or repayment. They were there because the Spirit of God was present in them. We were being made new. The old damaged parts of our self-centeredness were being stripped away so that a new spirit of discipleship could take its place.

It seems to me that New Year’s came early to our congregation. The response to the storm has invigorated our faith. It has reminded us that God is not present only in the church, but also in the tears of our neighbors who now know that God’s people care.

So what’s left for January first and beyond? We must commit ourselves to continuing this new spirit

into the New Year. There will be many opportunities to be renewed by hard work and direct involvement in making the lives of God’s people better. Many of you have already been a part of this ministry. My prayer is that we will all continue to ask, “What can we do?” Let us continue in the process of being made new in Christ.

Peace,

Pastor Rick

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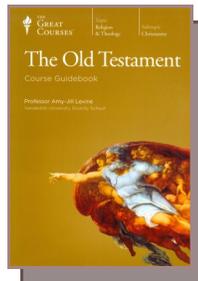
Prudy Sweeney

Anne Thomas

Eileen Urban

Monday Morning Women's Bible Study

**MEETINGS WILL RESUME
MONDAY, JANUARY 7
9:30-11:00 AM**



The venerable Monday Morning Women's Bible Study continues from 9:30 – 11 each Monday, resuming on January 7. We are currently using an excellent DVD lecture resource published by *The Great Courses* program.

The group has been making its way through the Old Testament touching on the great themes of creation, the patriarchs and matriarchs, God's covenants with Israel, the law and history. The informative and entertaining 30-minute DVD lectures by a professor of the Old and New Testaments at Vanderbilt University provide in-depth historical and textual background on the passages we are studying. This serves as a jumping off place for discussion of God's Word to us in Scripture.

On January 7, the group's discussion will be a continuation of our conversation about Israel's relationship with God as it was governed by covenant and law, particularly in the laws about diet and human relations. What did they mean in ancient Israel, and do they have any significance for the lives of modern Christians?

The Bible Study is led by Rev. Barbara Aspinall. Women who are members of the Church and friends of all faiths are welcome to participate. The coffee is hot and fresh!



Barbara Aspinall



DECEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



The following are highlights from the December 18, 2012 Session Meeting. The meeting began with Tom MacCowatt reading devotions.

Committee Highlights

Adult Education: Nooma programs and program on Islam will be presented in January. There will be a trip to New York on January 5 to see devotional art by Tiffany. Chris Taylor from Drew will talk on Arab Spring.

Congregational Life: The Christmas Luncheon was well attended. This was the first year attendees were asked to contribute a dish; we enjoyed a diverse array of side dishes and desserts. A trio of singers, including Ryan LaPré provided entertainment, which was enjoyed by all. We are grateful to Committee members Barbara Gill, Prudy Sweeney, Erin Castner, Kathy Sheeleigh, Robyn Brown, and Meg Richardson who did a tremendous job.

Stewardship: While most households have pledged, 43 households have not yet responded. Approximately, two-thirds of the congregation have sent in their pledges.

Membership: There have been eight listening sessions at members' homes. While all are enjoying dinner, members are encouraged to discuss concerns and make suggestions. Youth and young families are the predominant concern for all. Nine more sessions are planned for the new year.

Worship and Music: Several new members have been brought in to assist in rounding out the sound of the choir.

Nominating Committee: The new slate of Elders, Deacons and committee members was presented and accepted at the December 9th Congregational Meeting.

Youth Education: Susan Fischer did a wonderful job with the Christmas Pageant as always! Rick and Gordon hosted a Christmas gathering on Sunday, December 23rd for families. A movie was shown, and there was a special visit from Santa. Gordon has done a great job with All Hands on Deck; Rick would like to continue in this vein with the youth ministry in the future.

Finance: Pledges are about the same as last year. While we are below budget, we are doing better than last year. We will have a profit for the first time in four years.

Communion will be served on Sunday, January 6, 2013.

The next Session meeting will be on Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 7 pm.

Reverend Sweeney adjourned the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Coyle, Clerk of Session



Turn the Page

Galatians 6:9 *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”*

It's very clear that God calls us to care for each other, but what does that look like? There are obvious examples that come to mind, such as feeding the hungry, assisting the poor, and helping those in distress. However, there are other examples that are more subtle and exist in the grey area of ambiguity. Sometimes we have to walk into the darkness ourselves in order to bring light to those in need, even if it means going through a back door.

The recent tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, has struck a chord with almost everyone in this nation and the world. It was shocking and sorrowful and left more questions than answers. How could this happen? How can we protect society from these unthinkable acts of violence? Clearly, something needs to be done to help prevent these events from recurring, and it's easy to begin blaming individuals, groups... and even God... for such a heartrending loss of life. People speak of gun control, while others say stricter laws will not keep the guns from the criminals. Perhaps the answer, or part of the answer, lies in looking at how the way in which we care for those around us could serve to reduce these dreadful events from occurring.

When we think of school shootings, most of us think of Columbine, Virginia Tech, and, now, Newtown. Can you name any others? Can you name ten others? Would it surprise you to learn that since February 2, 1996, there have been 69 school shootings? These events resulted in 337 deaths and 216 injuries from shooters mostly in their teens, with the youngest being six years old. Plus, the vast majority of these shootings took place in schools and towns where people felt safe, places very much like Littleton, Colorado, and Newtown, Connecticut.

In these cases, it's not a matter of keeping the guns out of the hands of criminals, as we might conceive them to be; it's keeping guns out of the hands of children... **children!** So, if we are called to care for each other, how are we to care for these children who snap, who see no other course of action? Perhaps it means taking an unpopular stand. Perhaps it means speaking up when you see evidence of the underlying causes of violence, when you see a child struggling emotionally or socially in his/her peer group, when there is a suspicion of abuse in the home. Perhaps it means saying “no” when a child wants the latest video war game where satisfaction and a compulsion for improving scores is accomplished and rewarded by killing virtual opponents on the screen. The list of ways in which we can care for others in this manner goes on and on, but we have to be willing to stand our ground. We must be willing to restore a nation under God. We must give and maintain for our children and our youth a firm foundation that supports peaceful conflict resolution, non-violence, and a deep respect for human life... even if that life belongs to a person we find to be offensive and troubling.

We also need to look at our society and our rights. Yes, we have the right to bear arms, and I think we need to maintain that right within reasonable limits. Adult gun owners need to be held accountable if their firearms are used by their children or others to cause harm. We need to seriously question our society's obsession with firearms and need to own semi-automatic and automatic weapons. Perhaps having revolvers for self-defence or shotguns or break/bolt/lever-action rifles for hunting is enough. One way to care for innocent people is to reduce the damage that others can do by limiting their access to assault weapons. Yes, as long as firearms exists, there will always be people, adults and children, who commit unthinkable acts of violence, but if these people were forced to reload after one, two, or six rounds, the lives lost would be reduced. The idea is akin to lowering speed limits on our highways. We will always need to deal with fatal collisions, but the number of fatalities is significantly reduced by restraints. It's called responsibility, and we need to do a better job of upholding it as a society.

For all the parents in Newtown who feel like the world as they know it has come to an end, we grieve with you. December 2012 was purported to be the end of the world, perhaps, in a way, it was as we knew it. Could it be that the disastrous event in Newtown could be a time to turn the page, to enact a major culture shift, to care for others as we were called to do, to live responsibly with love as our guiding force, to seize this opportunity to turn this world away from violence and replace it with healing, forgiveness, and caring? Can we stand up to the darkness? Perhaps. It's up to us... with God's help.

More Moments of Celebration

We have been lifting up moments of celebration during worship. We will continue this into the New Year. If you have something that you would like to see us celebrate, let us know. It might be a special birthday or anniversary, an achievement or award. We would be happy to have the congregation celebrate with you.



New Old Windows!

What an amazing job has been done on the windows in our sanctuary. They are not only beautiful, they are also in keeping with the historical character of our beloved sanctuary.

Our great thanks go to Don Vellekamp and John Thomas for their tireless work on this project. Stay tuned for more information and a dedication of the new windows coming soon.

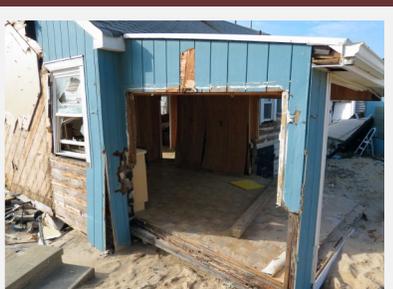
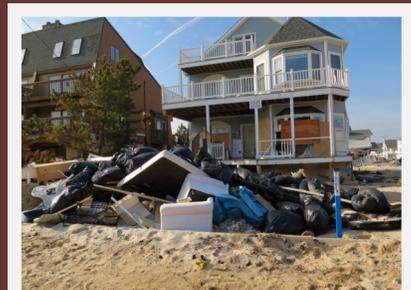
New Vernon Presbyterian Nursery School

is now accepting enrollment for January admission to their 2½-year-old-class. The school is a non-denominational educational program offering a warm and nurturing environment that helps your child prepare for kindergarten. The Nursery School supports busy parents with optional early morning drop-off, Stay 'N Play until 3 pm, Summer Camp, and enrichment programs. Most importantly, their kids and parents have fun!

The Nursery School is also accepting enrollment for our 2½-3- and 4-year-old classes for the 2012-2013 school year. Established in 1985, the Nursery School is located in Fellowship Hall of the New Vernon Presbyterian Church at the crossroads of Village and Lee's Hill Roads. Please call Director, Laurie Ptalis at 973-326-9839 for a tour and visit their website at www.nvpns.org.



All Hands on Deck: NJ Shore Relief Project



All Hands on Deck: NJ Shore Relief Project



FPCNV's **All Hands on Deck** mission project, which assists residents of the New Jersey shore who suffered damage and devastation from Hurricane Sandy, hit a milestone just before Christmas. We officially have 99% of the FPCNV households involved in this effort in one way or another! Plus, if you take into account that many households contributed in more than one way or sent multiple family members on a work trip, our involvement is closer to 180%. That's amazing! Plus, it's a spectacular Christmas present our church members gave to themselves!

During our most recent work trip, we were allowed on the barrier island just north of Seaside for the first time where the devastation was unimaginable. Some of the photos on these pages attest to the damage our group encountered. One volunteer who had been in the marine corps compared the scenes he witnessed to the photos of bombings during World War II. The work was accomplished through a contact we have at The Presbyterian Church of Toms River, and we also had members of other churches joining us on this effort. People from varying denominations worked side-by-side tearing out sheetrock and flooring on houses owned by people of different faiths, yet all were united in a common bond and a desire to help our brothers and sisters in need.



While we have crept very close to 100% household involvement, we're certainly not done! Work trips will begin again in mid-January, and people can continue to become involved in various ways. Gift cards can be donated, prayers can be said for the volunteers and home owners, monetary contributions may be made, dust masks and other items can be supplied, volunteers can sign up for work trips, and lunches can be made for those on the trips. If you would like to be involved, please contact Gordon. We expect there to be a need for volunteers throughout the winter and into the spring. Thank-you to all who have put their faith into action and played a role in this tangible, significant mission project, **All Hands on Deck!**



FPCNV Book Club

January Meeting, Meeting Dates, and Book Selections



**January: *Mighty Be Our Powers*
By Leymah Gbowee**

WINNER OF THE 2011 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
In a time of death and terror, Leymah Gbowee brought Liberia's women together—and together they led a nation to peace.

As a young woman, Leymah Gbowee was broken by the Liberian civil war, a brutal conflict that tore apart her life and claimed the lives of countless relatives and friends. Years of fighting destroyed her country—and shattered Gbowee's girlhood hopes and dreams. As a young mother trapped in a nightmare of domestic abuse, she found the courage to turn her bitterness into action, propelled by her realization that it is women who suffer most during conflicts—and that the power of women working together can create an unstoppable force.

In 2003, the passionate and charismatic Gbowee helped organize and then led the Liberian Mass Action for Peace, a coalition of Christian and Muslim women who sat in public protest, confronting Liberia's ruthless president and rebel warlords, and even held a sex strike. With an army of women, Gbowee helped lead her

Meeting Dates and Book Selections

Where: Library **When:** 7:30 pm

JAN 8	<i>Mighty Be Our Powers</i> by Leymah Gbowee
FEB 12	TBD: <i>The Garden of Beasts</i> by Erik Larson, or <i>Dosha</i> by Sonia Meyer
MAR 12	<i>The Innocents</i> by Francesca Segal
APR 9	TBD
MAY 14	TBD
JUN 11	TBD

New members are welcome.

nation to peace—in the process emerging as an international leader who changed history. *Mighty Be Our Powers* is the gripping chronicle of a journey from hopelessness to empowerment that will touch all who dream of a better world.

Stewardship Campaign Reminder

The 2013 **Step Up to the Plate!** Stewardship Campaign concluded on December 24th.

For those of you who made a pledge, we thank you!

For those of you who have not, it is not too late to make a pledge for 2013. Please send in your pledge card today or contact the Church Office.

Please make your pledge today, so the Finance Committee can prepare the final budget for 2013.

In addition, if you have not already done so, please fulfill the balance of your 2012 pledge prior to the closing of the books on January 15th.

More December Highlights



Samuel Gan Thorpe, pictured here with Pastor Rick, James and Cheryl Thorpe, was baptized during the 5 pm Christmas Eve Service.



Santa paid a surprise visit to the children who participated in the special family gathering on December 23 in Fellowship Hall.

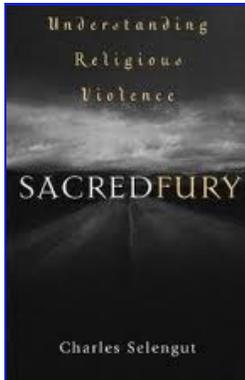
Photos submitted by Gordon Ward

ADULT EDUCATION Louis C. Tiffany & the Art of Devotion Trip Saturday, January 5

Museum of Biblical Art, near Columbus Circle
Followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.

For those who have already signed up for this trip,
we will meet in the church parking lot at 9:00 am,
and should return at approximately 3:30 pm.





Islam & The West

Dr. Charles Selengut ~ Sunday, January 27 at 11:30 am

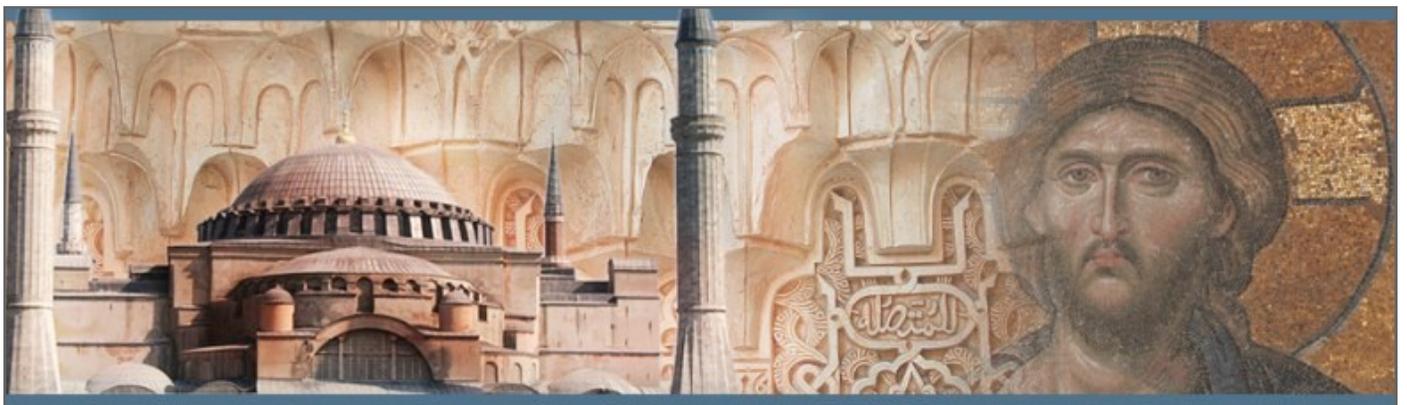
There are many different strains in Islam, many of which support peace. However, there are some strains that theologically support violence. Adherents to these strains of Islam believe they have a moral and religious imperative to participate in acts of violence.

Dr. Selengut will discuss the theological basis for some of these beliefs. He will consider how Christians and other non-Muslims can appropriately respond to these positions and he will share his insight into the nature and variety of Islamic belief and culture and its conflict, sometimes violent, with the West. He will discuss the contemporary radicalization of Islam, the dangers to Western democracy, and ways of dealing with the current crisis. Why is there such enmity between Islam and America? Why is the Middle East such a cauldron of violence?

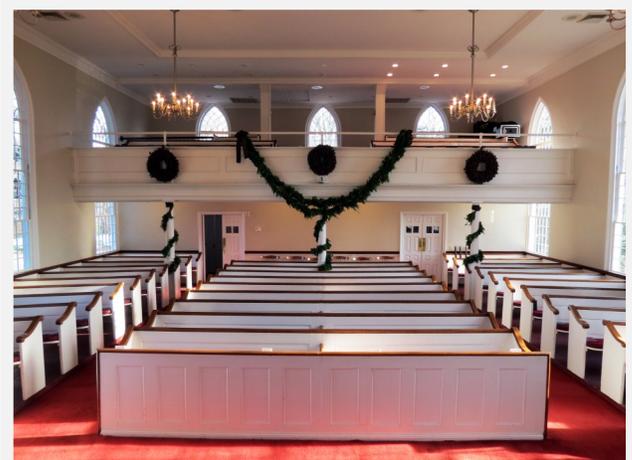
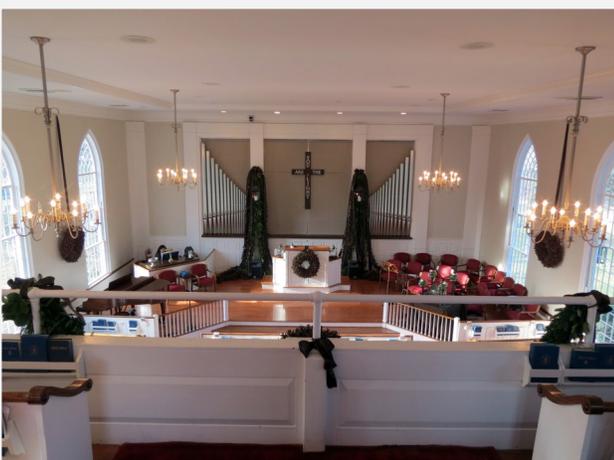
Dr. Selengut is the author of many scholarly studies on the rise of Fundamentalism and New Religious Movements in the Middle East who foresaw, early on, the advent and intensity of the current strife in Israel and around the globe. He received his B. A. degree from Brooklyn College, M.A. from the Graduate Faculty, New School University, and his Ph.D. with highest honors from Drew. He is the author of *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence* that analyzes fundamentalist religious conflict in a comparative international perspective.



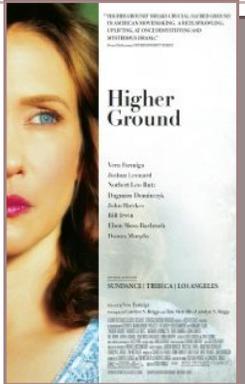
He has been a member of the McArthur Foundation-sponsored University of Chicago "Project on Fundamentalism" and a visiting scholar at universities and conferences across Europe, Asia, and the US. He was a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at Harvard University and a 1997 finalist for the Carnegie Professor Of The Year award. Dr. Selengut has been active in inter-religious studies and is the editor of *Jewish-Muslim Encounters: History, Philosophy and Culture*, a volume of essays based upon an international conference of Muslim and Jewish scholars in Cordova, Spain. He is also the author, with Paul Brezina and Robert Weyer, of *Seeing Society: Perspectives on Social Life*, among other works.



Our Church at Christmas Time



The Newtown, CT victims were remembered during the worship service on Dec. 23 with candle holders displaying each one's first name. They lit the front of the Church on Christmas Eve. The decorations this year showcased the beauty of the restored windows with external lanterns that reflected light softly in the antique glass. Inside, pine cone wreaths, garlands, and roping created an atmosphere of understated elegance. — Photos submitted by Jane Kendall and Gordon Ward



January Movie Night Wednesday, January 30 7 pm at the Chaneys'

HIGHER GROUND (2011) R 112 minutes

Vera Farmiga stars in and directs this sensitive and searching chronicle describing one woman's lifetime journey of faith -- one that initially leads her to join a fundamentalist sect and then leave it again years later.

Cast:

Vera Farmiga, Joshua Leonard, Dagmara Dominczyk, Norbert Leo Butz, Michael Chernus, McKenzie Turner, Donna Murphy, John Hawkes, Bill Irwin, Taissa Farmiga

Thank You

Dear Members of the New Vernon Presbyterian Church,

Thank you, thank you again, for allowing Christmas Is for Children to ask for your help in making Christmas "happen" for needy Morris County Children.

This year we are delighted to report that all of the children at Homeless Solutions were able to enjoy a very happy Christmas, thanks to your kindness and generosity.

We Truly appreciate your continued help.

Sincerely,

Ellen Donoghue

Christmas Is for Children

De-stress with Chair Yoga

Join MJ Turnbull, certified Yoga instructor and inspiring teacher, on Wednesday mornings at 10 o'clock at the Library for the perfect antidote to the winter doldrums. Give yourself the gift of a straighter spine, muscle tone, and renewed energy!

A \$10 fee is requested but not obligatory; pay what you can. Any questions? Talk to enthusiasts Emmie Corbin, Bernice Paton, or Anne Thomas. Suitable for all levels from novice on up.



Min Kwon's New CD



This Is My Father's World ***Spiritual Reflections for Solo Piano*** **CD Sales to Benefit PCNV Piano Fund**

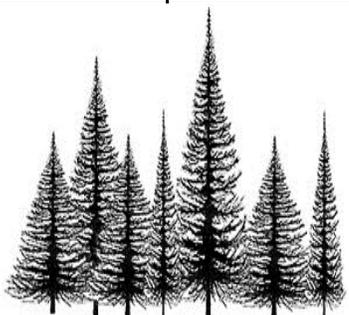
Min recently recorded a CD that was released in December. It is a meditative collection of hymns and spiritual music for solo piano.

Titles are: *Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us, The Old Rugged Cross, Great Is Thy Faithfulness, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, Just a Closer Walk with Thee, I Am Thine, O Lord, Open My Eyes That I May See, Beneath The Cross of Jesus, Psalm 23: The Lord is My Shepherd, My Jesus, I Love Thee, Amazing Grace, Poor Wayfaring Stranger, Through the Love of God, Our Savior, Come Thou Fount, How Firm a Foundation, and This Is My Father's World.*

Min recorded this CD with the intention that all proceeds from its sale will be donated toward the purchase of a new piano for the Sanctuary. They will be available at Coffee Hour and in the Church Office. These also make thoughtful gifts. The price is \$20 per CD.

CD Sales to Benefit FPCNV Piano Fund

January 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	No Bible Study	1 Church Office Closed HAPPY NEW YEAR !	3 Church Office Closed	3 Bible Study 8:30-9:30 am Youth Group Dinner & Cook- ie Ministry 6-8 pm Choir 7:30 pm	4 AA Meeting noon	5 Adult Ed NY Tiffany Trip 9:00 am-3:30 pm
6 Communion 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee Hour	7 Women's Bible Study 9:30-11 am	8 Book Club In Library 7:30 pm	9	10 Bible Study 8:30-9:30 am Choir 7:30 pm	11 AA Meeting noon	12
13 9:00 am Confirmation Class 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee Hour 12-2 pm YES: Wall Climbing	14 Women's Bible Study 9:30-11 am Adult Ed Comm. 5 pm Deacons Meeting 7 pm Finance Com. Mtg 7 pm	15 Session Mtg 7 pm	16 Youth Group Dinner & Movie 6-8 pm	17 Bible Study 8:30-9:30 am Choir 7:30 pm	18 AA Meeting noon	19
20 10 am Worship Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons 11 am Coffee Hour	21 Women's Bible Study 9:30-11 am	22	23	24 Bible Study 8:30-9:30 am Choir 7:30 pm	25 AA Meeting noon	26
27 8:45 am Confirmation Class 10 am Youth Sunday Service 11 am Coffee Hour 11:15 am Islam & the West Dr Charles Selengut-Library	28 Women's Bible Study 9:30-11 am	29	30 Movie Night At the Chaney's' 7 pm	31 Bible Study 8:30-9:30 am Choir 7:30 pm		

January Worship at FPCNV, 2013

Sunday, January 6

Epiphany of the Lord
Communion

Preacher: Dr. Sweeney

Sermon: *It Can Now Be Revealed*

Text:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Sunday, January 13

Baptism of the Lord

Preacher: Dr. Sweeney

Liturgist: TBA

Sermon: *Miserable Christians*

Text:

Isaiah 43:1-7

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Sunday, January 20

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Preacher: Dr. Sweeney

Liturgist: TBA

Sermon: *The Gifted Class*

Text:

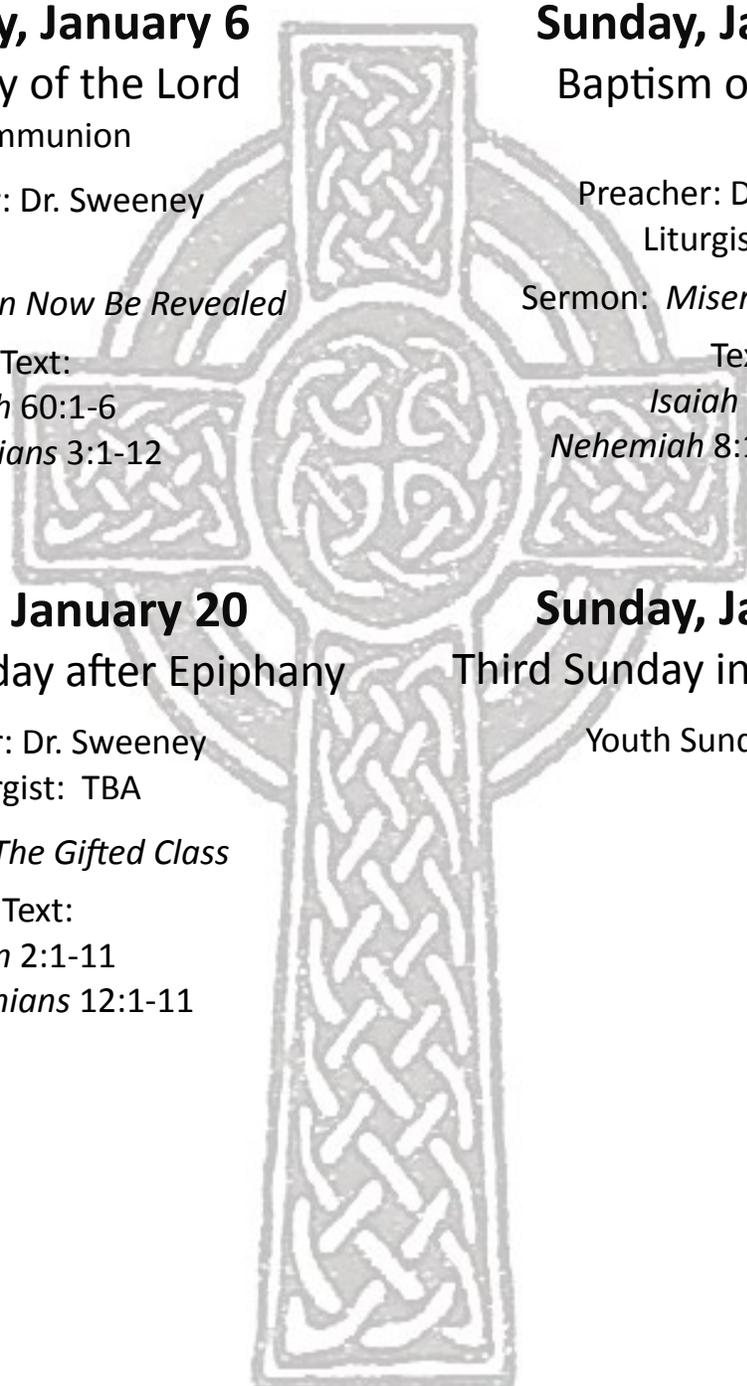
John 2:1-11

I Corinthians 12:1-11

Sunday, January 27

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Youth Sunday Service



The Pipe Organ

First Presbyterian Church
2 Lee's Hill Road, PO Box 218
New Vernon, NJ 07976-0218

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

January 20

Ordination of Elders and Deacons

January 27

Youth Sunday Service
Dr. Charles Selengut's Presentation on
Islam and the West



E-mail Addresses

The Church Office is still collecting and correcting e-mail addresses from our members. If you would like to be included in various e-mail mailings, please e-mail Office@pcnv.org or call 973-538-8394.

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