

New Beginnings Update **“Exciting Things Are Happening”** **September 1, 2016**

“Relationships.” That's the focus of our mission at First Pres. In fact, the way it's stated in our mission is: *“life-transforming relationships — with God and each other.”* In the twelve months since we embarked on our New Beginnings journey, many new and, indeed, transforming relationships have taken shape.

These relationships have been formed through participation in the New Beginnings process and participation in projects and endeavors that address the four themes of our New Beginnings study (outreach to the local community; nurturing the congregation; youth; communication) and are consistent with our established goal: *“Does this make us better disciples of Jesus in our community and in our church family?”*

Whether they began to take shape as a result of the energy that came from completing the New Beginnings process together, or if they had already begun to develop in anticipation of that energy, several new projects have already sprung up in the life of the church – new relationships – and your New Beginnings Advisory Board would like to highlight and celebrate them with you. As you read what follows think about what you are passionate about and what you are willing to work on.

Outreach to the local community:

☪ We are actively engaged in the merger with the Pleasantdale Presbyterian Church. The outreach of that congregation to First Presbyterian and the subsequent merger are expressions of our commitment to the community in which we live and serve.

☯ Sandwich Night at Intensive Therapeutics of West Caldwell will take place twice in the coming months. This project will start to develop a relationship with the organization and help the students in the program in a hands-on way. Intensive Therapeutics provides therapy services to children with special needs.

☯ Clare Mattern has found her passion in championing fundraisers for “Prelude to a Cure.” This is an organization helping to find a cure for lung cancer. The Mission Committee and Session have expressed support for a fund-raiser in October.

☯ Carol DeFrance has become certified as a yoga instructor and intends to help woman in need by using yoga as a vehicle for transformation.

☯ Ellen Johnson and the Mission Committee have established a new relationship with the Oasis Shelter in Paterson. This is a shelter for women and children.

☯ Lydia Spinelli’s heart lies partially in Monrovia, Liberia where she has worked to support the creation of the African Dream Academy. This school has grown to over 400 students. Samuel Enders, the founder, has visited our congregation. We raised \$3,000.00 the day of his visit.

☯ The Homeless Bus support has grown from 100 to 250 sandwiches on travel nights into New York City. This is another example of where the Church has partnered with others to provide support and encouragement without having to start the mission from scratch.

☯ Dad's With a Mission, Inc. is partnering with The Church World Services in exploring how to adopt a refugee family.

Nurturing the congregation:

☯ Plans are in process to provide video access to live events in the sanctuary. Detailed under "communication" below, this will nurture our congregation allowing members who cannot get to Church to still keep in touch with their Church family.

☯ Plans are under way to install a new gym floor that will allow more activities for all age levels in the Church and in the community.

Youth:

☯ Ben Mulick organized a project to have a fund-raiser for the Montclair Ambulance Squad. He and his friends are musicians and provided various performances for the event. It was youth created and youth run using the Church gymnasium. This happened on August 19th.

☯ New Beginnings has inspired the move to a rotational model for Sunday school where the students will hear the same messages in 4 ways over 4 weeks. They will be presented in different modalities - cooking, musical theater, science and Bible games.

Communication:

☯ Our communications specialist, Lauren Restaino, has been updating and improving our presence on social media. Events are categorized and information disseminated in ways that suit those categories. For large events, we advertise in the following

way. We place a slider on the website with a link to the info and Eventspot to sign up. It is placed on the calendar on the website as well with a link imbedded in it. We then post in First Press, the weekly email distribution, monthly newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, on Facebook group pages (I Love Living in the Caldwells, Caldwell / Verona Moms, my Verona, etc...) (all with hyperlinks). We also place notices on calendars of Patch and West Essex Now as well as send in articles for both Patch and West Essex Now and the Progress. Our paid advertising is now done by boosting posts on Facebook to directly reach people who may be interested.

✿ In active times of the year we have regular Instagram posts of what is happening in the Church and also for nostalgia Throw Back Thursday, and dedicated group pages on Facebook.

☯ Improvements have been made to the Church calendar to make it reliable.

☯ Plans are in process to create a sound booth in the balcony of the sanctuary that will include the installation of video equipment to live stream worship, baptisms, weddings and other live events. Jack Dusingberre is passionate about implementing this capability to provide video from the sanctuary and other parts of the Church. This is hoped to be a benefit to members of the congregation who cannot get to Church; those who have moved away but want to remain in contact with the Church; and, those who want to attend events but cannot be here in person. This will allow members away on weekends to still keep in touch with their Church family.

We know you have passions of your own. Don't you want your ideas and passions on this list? What would you add? This is

the time to make it happen. Do you want to change the world? This could be your launching pad. Let us help. Complete the sign-up form on the New Beginnings webpage.

<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07ed47ae52is7so1zf/a004is7x93z4/questions>