

Transforming Power of the Lord



In the Church Sanctuary is the window of the cross with the crown of thorns. This window reminds us how Christ's love transforms the crown of thorns into a crown of glory. What the evil of that day tried to stop with hatred, our Lord conquered with love.

Just as that crown of thorns was transformed into a crown of glory we are transformed by the love of our Lord. We are given gifts we can never repay. Gifts of Faith, Hope, and Love. Such an experience calls us to live a life of generosity. Yet, there are moments when we can feel as though we are the ones "put upon" with nothing to give.

Jim Foster had such a moment after the strong storm this summer. He shared his story with some of us and gave permission to share with you.

"We lost power for 2.5 days. All the food in the refrigerator and freezer was lost. I worked as much as I could, much of the time, from my car in the driveway from a phone. So why share my experience this week? Because I wanted to say I moved from being angry about the tree to being grateful things were not worse, and it took great effort to make the transition. That tree was a sapling for nearly ten years and then took off in the last five years to be a beautiful, full tree. But the tree was more than a tree; for a moment it symbolized everything we as a country, as a congregation and as individuals are going through this year. I muttered around most of Tuesday wondering when all this "stuff" is going to stop. But I realized, many people had a worse week than we did. It is easy to be selfish and angry and petulant about our experiences, and I was.

So, I concluded, as long as we keep our faith in the Lord, keep a positive attitude, as long as we help each other, lean on each other and keep focused, we will get through whatever is next. Tuesday's tropical storm tested that faith and that thinking for just a moment. But the Lord provided his touch to help me be thankful for blessings, as he always does." wrote Jim Foster.

Indeed, the Lord does touch each of us in so many ways. Guiding us to use our gifts to help others. One such individual was the anonymous giver who throughout much of the pandemic has given \$100.00 cash in our mailbox. Who is this person? A friend of the church and most importantly a friend of Jesus. Someone who feels called to give freely, knowing that all we have is from God and God calls us to share in Christian love with others.

May Faith, Hope and Love Ring Forth from Cornerstone for the year 2021!

Every time I gaze at our beautiful sanctuary window I am overwhelmed with the power of the love of our Lord. Love that changes a crown made of ugly thorns into a crown of shining glory. I praised God that the same happens to you and I as we live out our faith. We are transformed and in the process of transforming in the Lord, our hearts cannot but respond with generosity.

The People Shout with Grateful Praise and Open their Hearts with Generosity

In the coming weeks I ask that you and your family prayerfully consider your pledge/commitment to the ministry and mission of God at Cornerstone. Each pledge/commitment ensures the ongoing worship, ministry, and mission of the church.

On Saturday December 19th, our 5pm service will be modified. We will gather outside for an abbreviated worship service with Christmas Carols, scriptures, prayers, and a special candle lighting service while we dedicate our 2021 pledges. Please join us even if only from your car. Let us together celebrate the wonderful gift of the birth of the Christ child!



Stewardship 2020

Ring Loud with Praise to God!

569 Harmony Road
Jackson, NJ 08527



CORNERSTONE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



CORNERSTONE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Harmony Bell Rings Loud with Praise to God!

One of the greatest moments we as a church family celebrated was when we moved into the Harmony Road Church. We were home at last and ready to open the doors to new and old friends. We have been blessed with so many faithful members who give of themselves in many ways. Our Property Committee is one such group. Currently Fred Van Looy is the Chair. Fred shared a few weeks ago in worship why we did the repair work on the steeple. “The deteriorating steeple did not reflect well on who we are as a church; a fix was necessary. I compare the appearance of our homes to the appearance of our church homes, our homes reflect how we value our family, our neighborhoods, our township. The same thing holds true with our church. We value our congregation, our church family, and we value our friendships. So, a steeple with peeling paint and missing shingles did not reflect how we felt about our church. We had the resources and while we were unable to use the building because of the state being shut down, it seemed the perfect time to resurrect this beautiful symbol of hope and love as it points to our great God in heaven.”

Fred came to Cornerstone through his wife Barbara encouraging him to come to worship. Fred said, “It took time, I became part of the group that helped set up the room and take it down when we were worshipping in the school and we had fun doing it! The congregation was warm, friendly, dedicated, and welcoming. Being an active member of Cornerstone is a privilege, a pleasure, and a blessing!”

Ring Loud with Gifts of Faith

Building Blocks of Faith >>>

There are many who help to assure that the children, youth, and adults of the church are given the opportunity to grow in the faith. One of our Church School teachers is Megan LaFontaine who spoke during worship about the creative ways we are guiding the church to deepen their understanding of God. “I became a member of Cornerstone about six years ago and I am now a member of Session and a member of Christian Education Committee. In the past few years, the church has added a few families with young children which is exciting. This spring due to Covid-19 we had to shut down the church school. During this time, we wanted to support our families. Kathe Morrison and I put packets for families to do at home. Allyson Moyer has done a great job keeping the youth connected.” Now we are offering, on sight and virtual learning. Our team of volunteers are outstanding. They live the call from Jesus “Let the children come to me” with enthusiasm and faith. As a church we pray for all our members going through these days yet we lift up our children, youth and college age students most for they are so young to have to adapt to so many changes. May 2021 bring restarts of educational opportunities and there may even be more ways for us to learn and grow in the Lord!

Ring Loud with Gifts of Hope

Hope Springs Forth in Malawi >>>

Our partnership with our brothers and sisters in Malawi continues to grow. On Sunday November 1st Elizabeth Hughes shared with us the exciting mission work that has been accomplished as we have partnered with Villages in Partnership. Elizabeth began by telling us that it was about 20 years ago that she moved to Jackson and found Cornerstone soon after arriving. “Cornerstone has been a real gift to me, providing a church family and a means of support. It has also given me a way to strengthen my faith. One of things that I always loved about Cornerstone is the dedication to mission and Villages in Partnership has always been dear to my heart.” Elizabeth said. Villages in Partnership works side by side with extremely poverty-stricken villages to help them to develop means to improve their lives. This partnership has a full-time staff of Malawians that work directly with the villages in their expertise to train and teach them to do for themselves. The priority

when VIP was founded was clean water. The villages dig the well and VIP provide the hardware to pump the water. There are now over 80 wells in just ten years! A great support to families is their program that gives a goat to a family, 1240 goats have been given away. The goats give needed milk to the children. As a goat has a kid the family then gives that kid to a new family. They have built schools and are currently working to build a clinic/hospital. As a congregation we have participated in 9 of the 10 Water Walks always raising over 2,000 dollars. This year we walked in the virtual walk and raised 5,000 dollars! Last year our VBS along with the generosity of our congregation was able to donate 7 goats.

However, outstanding these accomplishments are, they do not compare to when we supported Elizabeth and Annabel Hughes’ as our ambassadors to visit VIP in Malawi. This was one of our greatest moments of joy as they traveled with our over 150 pounds of needed donations.

Then later in the summer we welcomed a small group of Malawian VIP friends who joined us for worship, fellowship and of course a meal. To be together to praise God for the blessings of our partnership in the Lord was awesome. Elizabeth Hughes said it so well, “I believe that we are called to create God’s kingdom here. I think that is what VIP is doing in Malawi and what we are doing here as members of Cornerstone. I am grateful to be a part of that work and on that journey with all of you.”

Gifts of Hope Flow Next Door >>>

Cornerstone has always reached out to help neighbors in need. During the year there are several opportunities to give gifts to children and families. Our regular ongoing local mission is the Jackson Food Pantry that serves over 1200 families a year.

When Joy Rende the Director of the Pantry visited us during worship she told us “The Pantry partners with organizations to give away coats, scarfs, shoes and in the past Christmas gifts. This year will be gift cards only because of Covid-19. When we give food away it takes 15 volunteers. We want our clients to be able to choose the food they need. A list is given to them and they make their choices and then the volunteers pack it up and deliver it to their car.” Cornerstone members volunteer for distribution and many of our youth group members volunteer with the stocking of the shelves. Joy reminded us of the continuing needs of so many of our neighbors which inspires us to expand our weekly contributions. One of the items Joy asked us to donate was diapers in large sizes. We have donated close to 2000 diapers since February!

Gifts of Love Draw us Together as a Family >>>

Our Cornerstone Congregation has always had a vibrant caring ministry. Our Board of Deacons take their calling seriously, to minister to those who are in need. They regularly watch over our members, sending cards and making calls. They also coordinate food for a family when a person is in the hospital. However, the caring is not limited to the deacons. Gail and Dave Carlson spoke during worship about coming to Cornerstone. “Cornerstone is a wonderful congregation when we are all together. Dave and I have enjoyed being members and love supporting this church,” Gail Carlson said. Dave shared “We have always felt that we belonged here. I have had a few serious health problems over the years and I always ask Gail to call Rev. Tory to say a prayer. My prayer was, ‘Dear God, please give the doctors a hand, let them call upon the brains and the skills you gave them.’ Thank God I am still here, and thanks for my church family.” Gail and Dave reflect so vividly the love and support our church family gives to us. As we look to the new year, with prayerfully things returning to “normal,” our ministry of connecting and caring will be able to have new moments of fellowship and celebrations as we support one another in the ups and downs of life. Trusting always in the Lord that draws us together as one!