

Dear Congregants and Friends:

New Year Blessings! On **Sunday, January 12, 2025**, Our Ministry Relations Officer, Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelley will be our guest preacher and lead a workshop/luncheon after the service. For the next four months Ellie will be working closely with the Session to help us make decisions about our sustainable future. Everyone is invited to hear Ellie's presentation during the workshop.

The Session has entered into a covenant agreement with the Presbyterian Foundation. We are committed to praying and studying the book, The Sailboat Church, while we are working with Ellie and the Foundation. Please plan to be present for this very important presentation.

There is also a very important training event occurring that same Sunday at the First & Central Presbyterian Church sponsored by the ALCU. I am asking that those who are interested in attending the training Event plan to attend our workshop here at Hanover first. We will try to move through worship and begin the luncheon/ workshop by 11:45 a.m. We can do both of these important things on the 12th. Thank you.

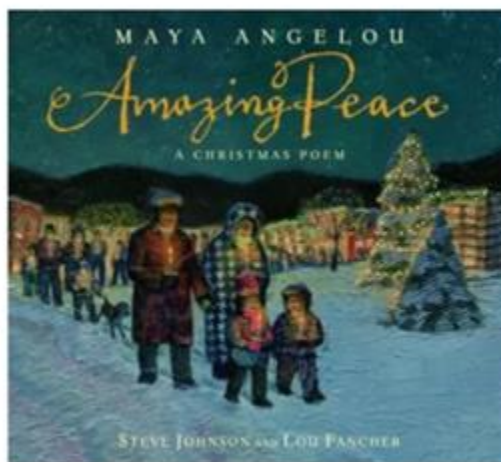
By Faith,

Pastor Stephany

"THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS" ~ HOWARD THURMAN

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost, to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.





Discipleship is kicking off a new year of Community Sundays with Maya Angelou's beautiful poem, *Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem* (written especially for the White House Tree lighting in 2005), wonderfully illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Maya Angelou inspires us to embrace the peace and promise of Christmas so that hope and love can once again light up our holidays and the world all year round.

Join us on **Sunday, January 5, at 9:30am** for this intergenerational time as we grow in our relationship with God and with each other!



Bagels & Bible Study

Beginning Tuesday, January 14 - 10-11AM

Join Pastor Stephany in The Gathering Place for a six-week study called "Prophetic Voices: A Study of the Prophets". It will run for six weeks, always meeting on Tuesdays at 10AM. There are free bagels and free conversations—she'll be waiting for you!

YD (Young Disciples) Youth Worship

Sunday, January 19, 2025—11AM

Guest Rapper: Brendon Tilghman



Invite your neighbors, family members, young friends and the young at heart to worship, with fun, refreshments, board games and fellowship to follow in the Gathering Place.

"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants You, Lord, have called forth Your praise?" Matthew 21:16

What's Happening

~ **FOOD PANTRY** - Thank you for all of your support for 2024! We have helped so many people and families. We are looking forward to serving our community in the new year.

~ **JB'S CAFE** - Soup's on! JB'S Cafe will reopen on **Tuesday, January 7**. We are looking forward to seeing all of our faithful customers and newcomers as well! Join us in the Gathering Place for breakfast or lunch. We are open from 8AM -1PM every Tuesday.



The Food Pantry is more than just a place to get food. It's also a place to share a moment.

Creating God,

Time and time again we act against your desires for us.

But more than that, we act against our own self interest

We divide ourselves against each other, we speak hateful things against one another, we try to find a way forward while leaving half of our people behind.

And we do all of this at the expense of your Creation.

We have made your beautiful world a pawn in our game, just another issue to debate, when in truth, it is our source of life and our shared home.

Lord, forgive us!

In this moment when many of our hearts are broken, draw near to us.

We ask not only that you'd be our comfort but that you would also be our courage.

Strengthen our weary hearts to love the way that you love. Strengthen our weary voices to speak out against corruption and greed. Strengthen our weary hands to serve the garden you've given us to tend.

Remind us that we belong to one another and that this world belongs to you.

The work ahead is clear. May we be people fit for this moment.

Amen.



Dear Congregants and Friends:

I shared the following articles with the Session during our December meeting and also with members of the Delaware Poor People's Campaign during our end of year meeting. As we begin the new year together I hope these articles will inspire and inform you.

By Faith, *Pastor Stephany*



Excerpts From "The Future Ahead: Congregations in the Age of Trump 2.0" - Nov. 14, 2024

By Rev. Cameron Trimble, CEO of Converge: A Movement from Organized Religion to Organizing Religion

Perseverance in the face of adversity is sacred work. Let us remember that the work of justice often requires persistence and sacrifice, but it is holy work. And let us trust that even in the hardest moments, God is with us, turning our acts of courage into seeds of transformation. The institutional guardrails of our nations rule of law and constitutional freedoms appear to be weakened and may fail faster than we can predict. We must not underestimate what this moment requires of us.

As global temperatures rise, ecosystems degrade, and extreme weather events increase, communities are pushed to their limits. Climate change adds a layer of urgency and complexity to our existing challenges. Regardless of political leadership, we are facing a future shaped by climate instability.

Social anthropologist Margaret Wheatley's observations on social collapse resonate here. She warns, "*In times of collapse, leaders increasingly withdraw resources from the many to protect the few.*" We're seeing this pattern as elites control resources, information, and influence, often deflecting the frustration of the struggling working class toward minority groups. Social media amplifies these narratives, converting fear into hatred and polarization, while elites offer themselves as the saviors from the very threats they have manufactured.

Excerpts From "The Truth: What we Know Now" Sherrilyn Ifill's News Letter -Nov. 15, 2024

Sherrilyn Ifill is a Law Professor and the Former President and Director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund

Our goal now must be first and foremost to survive this dark period with as much of our values, dignity, integrity, work, financial stability and physical and mental health intact as possible.

We must also work to protect our families and communities, and to hold in place our most trusted and needed institutions, a modicum of the rule of law, our constitutional commitment to equality and to free expression.

This is "planting time." Planting is work. That work must be aimed at building ideas, theories, paradigms, institutions, skills, practices, and alliances that we can seed now for a future harvest – a fulsome and lush democracy that will reflect the very best of us.

We will demand that congressional representatives, our Governors and our Mayors, act to protect our democratic rights. Even when we know they will not stand up for what is right, we must not be silent. We must not make it easy for them to be cowards or to take our rights.

We must still call, write and email our representatives and show up at town halls and meetings. Remember that those who have fought for us over these past years are tired too. Let them see us in these spaces and hear from us. But our primary work must be first and foremost to work in our communities – both physical and ideological. To build them up and to share time and ideas with those committed to democracy and justice. We each need a curriculum of local service. *(continued on page 5.)*

We also need a personal curriculum that will allow us to contribute to the building of the future we dream of for ourselves and our families. That means that our core work must be to commit during this time to do less watching, and more learning and more growing.

We need to become better citizens for the democracy we want. That means we must dedicate time to expanding our thinking and our knowledge, and to building up our democratic imagination. That means our work is to imagine, to ally, to experiment, restore, befriend, study, read, write, serve, and create. Every one of us. Even as chaos swirls around us.

Show your children and grandchildren real things – nature, animals, how things are built, how to cook from scratch. Teach them cursive writing, so that they have a signature all their own. Take them to live concerts and theater. Go on field trips. Infuse their lives with memories of things that are true and concrete. If you teach, use primary documents in your teaching, take your students to historic sites, listen to audio of oral arguments and speeches so that they will feel confident in their understanding of history, and know that history was made by human beings, not machines.

To protect ourselves and our loved ones, there are also pragmatic things we must do. I've thought of a few:

- * Save some cash. And keep enough in the house for gas and food for a week.
- * Let yourself imagine what you would do if you lost your job in terms of finding new employment, paying rent/mortgage for several months, and start building what you need to be able to meet that moment if it comes.
- * Get needed vaccinations in case new HHS policies result in changes or delays in their development or availability. Stock up on COVID tests, and get the most recent COVID booster. Purchase Plan B if it's available in your area.
- * Think about tightening security on your electronic devices. Be more thoughtful about social media, and even return to making phone calls and writing letters in some instances. I know it's old school, but actually memorize the phone numbers of at least two loved ones.
- * Gird yourself spiritually, through your faith or other meditative practices, as we are all likely to hear or confront many disturbing and ugly interactions.
- * Experience art, go on walks, dance, play Spades, Dominoes, Scrabble. We need resilience.
- * Walk away when you need to walk away. Challenge when you need to.
- * Try to always have back up.
- * Take the bystander training offered by groups <https://righttobe.org/> so that when you see outrages committed against members of your community or against strangers, you will have practice in how you might intervene or respond.
- * Get an online subscription to a news service from another country so that you have a reliable sense of what's going on in the world, and how this country is being perceived.
- * Are your taxes paid, or more importantly, filed?
- * Is your passport up-to-date?
- * If you have money to give – then give to your local library, the food pantry, homelessness services. But also give to cultural institutions. Get a library card and a membership to a museum. Give to organizations working to hold back the worst possibilities– the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the ACLU, the National Women's Law Center, the Poor People's Campaign, and so many others.



Chemours Supports Food Pantry



Do partnerships make a difference? Here is an example that shows just how much partnerships matter. Hanover's food pantry ministry goes back to the 1970s. While we wish there were no need for a food pantry in the community, the need remains high, particularly among the senior population living in Wilmington Housing Authority subsidized housing in the neighborhoods around Hanover. The food pantry is an all-volunteer operation dependent on in-kind donations of food and on financial gifts from individuals and foundation grants. The partnership developed with Jefferson Street Center has expanded financial support for the food pantry through grant funds for food, especially fresh produce, and also grants to renovate the space for the pantry and provide more refrigeration for storage.

The food pantry and Hanover also formed a partnership with Christiana Care approximately 12 years ago, as Christiana expanded its efforts to reach people in the neighborhoods and promote healthier lifestyles. Christiana Care started a zumba class in the gym at Hanover. They paid for the instructor and provided a community nurse to take blood pressure and diabetes tests and promote education around exercise. When the funding ended, the partnership between JSC and Hanover has continued to support the zumba program so it is easily accessible and available to all, no matter what your socio-economic circumstances.

One of the participants in the zumba class, who has been attending for over 10 years, works for Chemours. Kate and her husband, Graham, are very aware of the food pantry and clothing closet housed at Hanover and have donated to both. In November, Kate started a food drive at her place of employment. All the departments of the Chemours Global Headquarters, in the DuPont Building in downtown Wilmington, contributed to collecting food donations, which included a gift card. The much needed donations were delivered December 19th.

We are very grateful for their support! ~ Ellen Casson



From the Church Office . . .

Annual Reports: It's that time of year again – we are collecting articles for our 2024 Annual Report. Please submit your articles to the office at: churchadmin@hanoverchurch.org by **Friday, January 31**.

2025 Church Directories: We are in the process of printing 2025 directories and would like to include any updates. There is a master directory on the bulletin board table in the Church School Hall. Please make any additions (cell phone, etc.) and corrections – we will then have new directories available for the first Sunday of February.



January

“Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing.” ~ Sarah Ban Breathnach

Weekly Happenings

- ◇ Prayer Circle—Mondays, 9am
- ◇ JB’s Café—Tuesdays, 8am - 1pm
- ◇ Bagels & Bible Study, 10am (start date 1/14)
- ◇ Zumba—Tuesdays, 6pm
- ◇ Pickleball—Wednesdays, 10am - 12pm
- ◇ Clothing Closet—Wednesdays, 10am—12pm
- ◇ Choir rehearsal—Wednesdays, 7pm—8:30pm
- ◇ Food Pantry—Thursdays, 8-10am
- ◇ Zumba—Thursdays, 6pm
- ◇ Yoga—Fridays, 6:15pm - 7:30pm

January Birthdays

- | | |
|----|--------------------|
| 1 | Greg Harris |
| 8 | Bernice Van Rooyen |
| 15 | Aysha Gregory |
| 21 | Alice Cornelius |
| 23 | Rochelle Ransom |
| 26 | Sebastian Gross |
| 27 | Jeff Long |

January Meetings & Events

- ◇ The Ties That Bind—Tuesday, January 6, 6pm—Zoom
- ◇ Personnel—Wednesday, January 8, 6pm
- ◇ Worship Committee—Tuesday, January 14, 1:15pm
- ◇ Session—Tuesday, January 21, 7pm—Zoom
- ◇ Faith in Action Planning Session —Thursday, January 23, 4pm
- ◇ Newsletter article deadline for January—Friday, January 24



Looking ahead to February . . . Black History Month Celebrations

- February 2—Communion—Pastor Stephany
- February 9—Pastor Stephany & Rev. Brooke in conversation
- February 16—“Celebration of African-American Spirituality” and Soul Food Luncheon
- February 23—Youth Sunday





NEW YEAR'S BLESSINGS!



Hanover Presbyterian Church

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