

A look at our outreach and the impact our ministry had on the surrounding community.



WE LOVE
to
TELL THE
STORY
2023



Our Mission

As the story of the House Next Door continues to unfold, so too does our Mission Statement. Originally a spiritual formation center, with the addition of Marriage and Family Therapist, Pastor Christine Ruth, the mission of the House Next Door has expanded to include mental health services. We are all familiar with the NRSV, the new revised standard version of the Bible. Well, today it is my joy to share with you the newly revised version of our Mission Statement:

The House Next Door offers a safe space and a place of grace for all who are seeking healing, wholeness, and transformation.

We do this by:

- **creating a welcoming environment that nurtures spiritual growth and emotional well-being.**
- **providing spiritual direction, therapy, retreats, and workshops that deepen spiritual and mental wellness.**

COME AS YOU ARE

Our mission is to provide a safe space and a place of grace where all feel welcomed, loved, and accepted for who they are, just as they are. Our mission is to embody the love of Jesus. When guests approach the front door of the House Next Door, they are greeted by a welcome mat that says, "Come as you are."

This year **579 individuals** walked across that welcome mat (a conservative number).

177 people crossed that welcome mat for the first time (also a conservative number).

This is a substantial increase from 2022 when we welcomed 374 guests.

MINISTRY SUPPORT

This ministry would not be possible without the faithfulness and passion of the following people:

The Spiritual Formation Team: Kate Chen, Jen DiGioia, Nancy Herrington, Ellen McBrearity, Audrey Oehm, Nancy Reyes, and Gerda Somers.

The Vision Team: Pastor Peter Froehlke, Pastor Brandi Hebert, Pastor Kayla Hopgood, Pastor Laurie Matarazzo, Beth Michell, Pastor Christine Ruth and Elizabeth Wagner.

Our Program Leaders and Presenters.

thank you

I Love to Tell the Story

Evangelical Lutheran Worship #661

My favorite story to tell is the story of the House Next Door. I tell it everywhere I go, to anyone who will listen. I love to tell the story because it is God's story. The House Next Door is a story about stewardship and a congregation who had a house. It is a story about faith and a team of people who had a vision for what God might do with that house. It is a story about listening: listening to one another, listening to the needs of the community, and most of all, listening for God: God's invitation, God's direction, God's guidance. It is a story about prayer and a God who answered each and every one of our prayers beyond what we ever could have imagined. Ultimately, the story of the House Next Door is a story about God. God doing a new thing. God breathing new life into God's church. It is a story that continues to unfold.



House Next Door Sunday



Welcome. Respite. Peace.



We were overjoyed to offer a variety of programs in 2023. Programs are offered weekly, monthly, seasonally, and annually. We were also overjoyed to welcome a number of new presenters and new programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

We welcomed a number of new presenters and programs this year. They are denoted with a ++.

Individual Spiritual Direction

Group Spiritual Direction

Marriage and Family Therapy

Worship: Dinner Church

Service of Hope and Healing (Blue Christmas)

Service of Lament and Hope (Tree of Life Chapel)

++Gathering the Graces: Gatherings for Spiritual Directors

World Labyrinth Day with Drum Circle led by Cathy Campanero

Prayer Circle with Charlie Frantz

Beyond Book Club

Day and Overnight Respite for Pastors

Grief Workshops with Christine Ruth

++Artist's Way with Christine Ruth

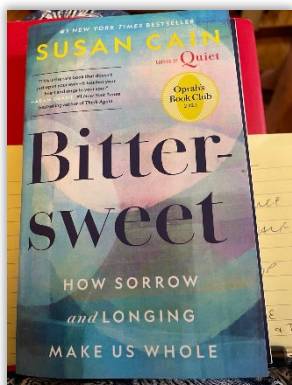
++Dream Group with Christine Ruth

++Art.full Prayer with Pat Pickard

++Soul Collage with Teresa Knipper

++Music and Meditation with John Franek

++Self-Compassion and Care with Dr. Zan Struebing



Beyond Book Club Fall Selection



Art.full Prayer with Pat Pickards

*"The perfect day to say,
I just LOVE this place of
hospitality and sacred
presence – simply abundant
with artful inspiration
and invitation!*

~ Sara Jane



Seasons of Life Retreat with the Women of Holy Trinity, Red Bank



Ash Wednesday Retreat at Cross Roads

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Women's Retreat @ Red Bank

God's Love Lutheran Church Women's Retreat @ Newtown

++United Methodist Church of Red Bank Youth Leader's Retreat

Day of Respite for NJ Synod Rostered Leaders

++Presbyterian Cohort Lenten Retreat @ Prince of Peace

++NJ Synod Diakonia Retreat

++Retreat for Chaplains of Robert Wood Johnson Hospital, New Brunswick

Retreat for the Women of Westside Presbyterian @ Ridgewood

Retreat for Candidates of the NJ Synod

Women's Retreat @ Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center

Ash Wednesday Retreat @ Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center

++Northampton Presbyterian Session Retreat

Joshua Prayer Group

++Light of the World Women's Group, Hamilton



We always appreciate invitations from others who provide us with the opportunity to tell the story of the House Next Door and share our ministry. This past year Pastor Dale was invited to lead a workshop for the Day of Respite for the Rostered Leaders of the Southeast Pennsylvania Synod; lead a workshop for the Candidacy Committees of the ELCA; be a guest presenter for a class Bishop James Hazelwood, New England Synod was teaching at United Lutheran Seminary; and be a guest on Bishop Hazelwood's podcast.

Why are we doing this ???

For the past ten years I have felt nothing but excitement and passion for the ministry of the House Next Door. Watching this ministry unfold...having a front row seat to witness what God is doing...has been one of the greatest joys of my life and ministry. But I would not be honest if I did not share with you that the growing pains of this ministry have been difficult. Don't get me wrong. The growth of programs, presenters and participants has been amazing. It has been an answer to prayer. But it has also been challenging to navigate this growth without the needed staff and funding. I really struggled this fall. There were times when I would cry out to God: Remind me again, why are we doing this? Why am I doing this???

I was having one of those moments, when I opened PrayerNotes from the Homestead, my morning devotion that is written by my spiritual director, Glenn Mitchell. Glenn was reflecting on the brokenness of our world. He writes,

Tikkun olan is a Hebrew expression from the Judaic tradition. It is an invitation to repair the world. In Islam there is a parallel tradition, carried by the Arabic word islah. The tradition asserts that in the midst of creation, God pulled back enough to give space for humans to tend or repair the world. The tradition has mystical roots asserting that it is our stepping forward to create and mend that continues the intention of God in creation. Our stepping forward is essential in the ongoing creative and redemptive process...In the mystery of tikkun olam, there is no wasted effort. No mending action, no matter how small or inconsequential, is lost upon the world.

This is it! This why we do this! God has called us to be repairers of a broken world. And no act of mending, no matter how small, is inconsequential. Every time a person walks the Labyrinth, the world is healed. Every time parents place a stone at the font of the Tree of Life Chapel, naming their child, the world is healed. Every time Christine or I sit with a client or a directee, the world is healed. Every time a pastor spends a night of respite at the House Next Door, the world is healed. We are repairers of a broken world. **This is why we do this.**



All Saints Dinner Church



Gathering of seminarians and candidates for ministry



Day of Respite for Rostered Leaders



Compassion and Self-Care with Dr. Zan Struebing

With the growth of the ministry of the House Next Door comes the need for infrastructure, especially in the form of staff and funds. The Spiritual Formation, Vision, and Finance Teams are faithfully discerning next steps so that this vital ministry is sustainable.

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there among them." ~ Matthew 18:20*

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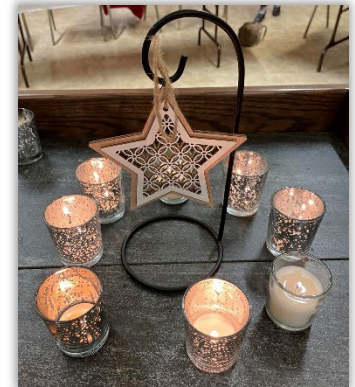
This year we literally outgrew our building. We are now receiving requests from groups that are too large for the House Next Door to hold, and we are "overflowing" into Prince of Peace. Pastors are telling me that there is a shortage of affordable, spacious retreat spaces where they and their congregations can gather for retreats, meetings, and workshops. How might we meet this need? What are we being invited to? What might this mean for our building usage?

Please join me in this time of discernment as the ministry of Prince of Peace and the House Next Door continues to unfold. How else might God be inviting us to be repairers of the world? We are blessed to have a front row seat where we get to watch this new thing that God is doing. God is breathing new life into God's church. Let's tell the story.

Submitted with Joy and Thanksgiving,
Pastor Dale C. Selover
Pastor of Spiritual Formation and
Director of the House Next Door



*Welcoming WHAM
(Windsor Hightstown Area Ministerium)*



Epiphany Dinner Church

*"Thank you for this
beautiful, gracious, space to
reflect, pray, and study!
I'm so grateful for a few
days of respite close
to home.*

*Peace and blessings to all.
~ Rev. Linnéa Clark*



Farewell and Godspeed for Lois and Dave Case



*Retreat for the chaplains of Robert
Wood Johnson Hospital*