



RENEW

Following Jesus together for the renewal of all things.

Introducing Renew.

Easter is a time to remember God's promise to one day do for all creation (Rom 8; Rev 21) what he has done for His Son by raising Him from the dead. It's the promise of renewal, one in which we get to participate now, through faith, as we follow Jesus.

If you were able to attend Reimagine Sunday on March 27 (or view it online), then you heard some exciting things about the future of Park Church – all captured by a vision of following Jesus together for the renewal of all things. As we move into this next season in the life of Park Church, I can't help but wonder: How do we tell the beautiful and unseen stories of renewal?



Introducing **Renew: A Park Quarterly**. Once a quarter, Park will produce and distribute a newsletter with stories, updates, and prayer requests. It will be written from a variety of voices representing the various ministries that comprise Park Church.

The hope for Renew is two-fold. First, we want you to be informed. By having a better pulse on what's going on, you'll be better equipped to pray for God's renewal in and through Park. Second, we want you to be inspired. We hope that hearing stories of renewal will inspire you to take your next step in following Jesus with us.

Do you have a story of renewal to share?

If you do, please email Michael (michael@parkchurchnj.com) and let him know about it.

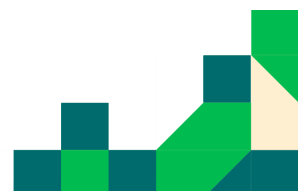
We're love to be able to hear about it, and maybe it'll make its way into a future edition of Renew or Sunday service.

As with most things, this is an experiment which we hope will add value. In the meantime, I want to make one ask: Please share your stories of renewal with me. Where do you see God at work? In you? In your Community Group? In your neighborhood? In your school? At your job? During Sunday worship? Is someone close to you turning to Jesus? Is God answering your prayers? Are chains of addiction being broken? Are wounded relationships being healed? I want to hear about it.

Thanks for taking the time to read.

Grace and Peace,

Michael





Prayer in Park Kids...

Hello! My name is Alice Fadiora and I am the Family Pastor here at Park. I believe that teaching God's Word to our children, and in turn facilitating a relationship with God from the earliest age, is the most important contribution we can make to their lives, and to the world. I love that I get to influence future leaders who are going to set the world on fire for Jesus. What a privilege!

One of the things we're trying to introduce to Park Kids is the topic of prayer. We'd like scripture reading or "story time" and "prayer time" to be a part of the Sunday morning routine, so, ideally, before dismissal, volunteers would set aside some time to talk with children about prayer, and then pray. A few weeks ago, I teamed up with David Scott to teach our Lower Elementary class, and we decided to give it a shot. This tends to be our largest class, and this particular Sunday we had around twenty kids. So as we sat in a circle and talked about prayer, one child had been begging me for food all morning. I assured him he could have food after Sunday School was over. As you can imagine he was not at all content with this answer and was persistent. During prayer time, when I asked the group, "What would you like to say to Jesus?" He quickly raised his hand, and when I called on him, he closed his eyes, put his hands together, and said, "Jesus! I'm hungry!!" I guess he figured since I wasn't going to do anything about it, he would talk to someone who could! In response, his peers grumbled, some laughed, and one kid even blurted out, "Nooooooo!!" But my thought, was "Yes!!" This was a teaching moment and a wonderful opportunity to share the good news that Jesus does care about even the "little" things, and we can talk to Him about anything and everything!

It's moments like this that remind me of why I love doing ministry. In a world full of bad news, it feels so good to have and to share some good news.

How can you help?

Our goal for the upcoming quarter is to **continue to build our volunteer base** and **to establish a routine and structure that enhances learning** for all the children we serve. We are so grateful to God that despite all the external and internal changes that have affected Park Kids, the volunteers have remained faithful to their call to this ministry.

If you are willing and able, please pray that as we navigate this season of transition and the changes that come with it, God would grant us peace. Pray that instead of holding on to people, things, and ideals, that God would help us to grab a hold of Him, and trust that He will see us through. Also pray for the emerging leaders of Park Kids, that God would grant them wisdom, direction, and a vision for the future.

Park Kids Sunday Snapshot

Throughout February and March, we served around fifty kids on average each Sunday, with about ten adult volunteers and five junior leaders. We are always in need of more volunteers so please reach out if you are interested (kids@parkchurchnj.com). We cannot run Park Kids without the help of volunteers who are passionate about equipping the next generation with the knowledge of God's Word.

Hello! This is Matt Agresti, Associate Pastor here at Park Church, and I want to tell you about what's been happening in our Community Groups over the last few months.

There are so many stories to tell, so many moments to share, so many bright rays of God's grace shining through...where to start? Rather than start with any of that, I'll introduce a phrase and concept to you: **life-on-life**. Have you ever heard that? What it captures is the idea that real discipleship (learning to follow Jesus) happens when people are actually doing life together – in the messiness of life, celebrating in the joys together, mourning and crying on one another's shoulders, picking up each other's kids, lending out their rolling pin, bearing one another's burdens, and so on. More than perhaps anything else, this is what is happening in our Groups - in too many moments and stories to share.

This has been captured in the Middletown Community Group, led by Olga and Eugene Brusov and Steph and Tertius Raubenheimer. It's been an amazing Group for years now. If you saw the March 6th Sunday worship gathering, you are aware that Olga and Eugene, along with fellow Group members Yuliya and Aleks, have close family and friends in both Ukraine and Russia. Needless to say, the war in Ukraine has been very difficult for them, as they worry about the safety of their loved ones overseas.

Throughout this difficult time, the Group has rallied around them, surrounding them with love, support, and prayer. Once the war broke out, rather than spending time reflecting on the sermon (as most Groups usually do), they were sure to devote the whole evening to supporting Olga, Eugene, Yuliya and Aleks in "sharing, venting, and prayer." After the evening, Olga shared, "I have so much more peace on my heart after being surrounded and supported by my family in Christ." As difficult as it can be, this is life-on-life discipleship – where people learn to follow Jesus together.

We do Community Groups like this because we believe that this is where real discipleship happens. In the future, we are excited to transform these Community Groups into more robust House Churches - with better supported and empowered leadership, a clear vision for discipleship and multiplication, as well as a more integrated life-on-life approach. Our hope for you is that you get connected to a Group this spring – especially as we launch a foundational series on our core values after Easter. Contact us at groups@parkchurchnj.com to get connected.



A snapshot of Groups

This winter, we had an average of 60 people attending Community Groups weekly – spread across 7 Groups (Middletown, Freehold, Shrewsbury, Red Bank, Eatontown, Long Branch, and Little Silver). We are excited to be adding a Group based out of Oceanport this spring, led by Bill and Kelly Saccone.

From there, our hope is to expand to another Group in the Shrewsbury area, as well as a Group further south in the Neptune region. There's A LOT of room to grow in Monmouth County! Please pray along those lines, and that in each Group, we'll continue to learn to follow Jesus together.

Not in a Group?

This spring, we'll be going through a foundational series about our new vision and values - and Community Groups will be central in it. If you're not in a Group, now's the time!. Visit parkchurchnj.com/groups or contact groups@parkchurchnj.com to get connected today.





What is Park Serves? I am glad you asked, Park Serves is Park Church's local and global service outreach team. Park Serves aims to equip and lead Park Church in her service towards the world, bearing witness to the love of God in Monmouth

County and beyond. Through our Community Groups and in church-wide efforts, Park Serves works to encourage, enable, and support our service in the community.

Who am I? Also a great question! My name is Jane, I have been connected to Park Church for the past 9 years. In my tenure at Park I have been a High School and Middle School Group leader and attended the Oceanport Community Group. Most recently, I have been the Park Serves coordinator since it's relaunch in late 2018/early 2019. The Park Serves team as it stands currently is comprised of: Brian Lootsma, Mark & Lynne Cilento, Alisa Kinney, and Patti Friel.

What are we up to? Since the beginning of the year the Park Serves team has been hard at work gathering service opportunities and building relationships with local ministry partners and nonprofits. Weekly, volunteers from Park Church are delivering meals through Lunch Break to families living in the Pan Am Motel in Eatontown. Monthly, volunteers are sorting clothes and donations for the Jersey Shore Rescue Mission (JSRM).

Recently the Park Serves team did a trial run providing lunch for attendees of the JSRM residential program and associated staff. The lunch was an opportunity for Park Church members to meet the gentlemen helped by the JSRM and show them what it looks like to live life as a Christian. If you are interested in helping with these lunches you can reach out to via email: serves@parkchurchnj.com.

Developing personal relationships with the men of the JSRM program is a great example of how Park Serves aims to provide the Park Church community with the opportunity to be God's hands and feet in the world. As is written in Matthew 25: 37-40, *"Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"*

Park Serves Look In

More of a **numbers** person? Here's what we did this winter:

- Approximately 1,170 Lunch Break meals delivered to families in need.
- 5-6 Park Church Members volunteering their Saturday Monthly for the JSRM.
- loads of Christmas decorations taken down from the HABCore River St. and Coffey Houses!

What does the **future** hold? In addition to our regular volunteer events, Park Serves is running:

- April (TBD) - 312 Hance Cleanup.
- May 21st - HABCore Spring Cleaning & Flower Planting.
- June 11th - Park Serves Day! Park Church Wide Volunteer Day & BBQ.

How can you **get involved**? Email serves@parkchurchnj.com, or keep your eyes and ears open on Sundays for future events.

Pray! Pray! Pray!

We at Park Serves are always praying for God's guidance and direction - to be his hands and feet. We are always on the hunt for opportunities to serve those in need in Monmouth County, so if you know of an underserved community that could use Park's help - let us know!

MIDDLE SCHOOL GROUP

Hi, my name is Jenny Streich, the Middle School Group Coordinator, and I have been connected to Park since 2008. I love being able to disciple our middle school students and help them navigate middle school.

What stands out to me about our middle school students is their kindness and heart for others. A group of our students meet each week for bible study before youth group. At the end of our group, we take some time to take prayer requests and pray together. There was one week where all of the students had prayer requests for either other students in their schools or a family member. A lot of them were praying that their classmates can come to know Jesus. It is so amazing to see how on fire our students are for Christ and how they recognize the importance of a relationship with our Lord. We were then able to talk about how they can always invite their classmates to MSG.

Our students praying for others to come to know God is exactly why we need our youth group. We can give our students and their classmates a safe space to come and see what it means to be a follower of Jesus. As Christians, we are called to live in community together. Hebrews 10:2 states "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,". Our students recognize that to be a good friend to their classmates, they should be praying for them and should want their classmates to jump into a relationship with Jesus.

How can you pray for MSG?

If Park could pray for our volunteers at MSG, that would be wonderful. Their dedication each week shows their passion to come alongside our middle school students and show them the love of our Lord. If you could also pray for our students and their relationship with Jesus, we would love that. Middle school is such a confusing time. We pray our students know that through these ever-changing times, Jesus is their rock and shepherd.



This spring at MSG

The goals for MSG in the next quarter is to have more of our students come to our Bible study before youth group starts. At 5:15, a few of us meet and go over the interactive Bible study from "The Chosen". The students who attend have been watching this series at home.



I pray more students start feeling called to attend because during this time, we really get to dive into scripture together and get to hear what our students think about Jesus' teachings.

If you're interested in learning more about MSG, volunteering, or have questions - please feel free to contact me! Email me at jenny.streich@parkchurchnj.com.

HIGH SCHOOL GROUP



This spring at HSG

One of the things we will be doing over the next few months is helping the students come to see that they have ***purpose and meaning*** in life. In the confusing world that they are growing up in, it's not a given that they believe this.

Our hope is that we can show them that God created them with meaning, and that the talents they were given should be cultivated for the sake of God's Kingdom growth on earth and ultimately, for the renewal of all



Howdy! I am Anthony and I have been part of the Park Church community since 2008. Currently, I serve as the coordinator of High School Group.

One of the things I love about this place is the growth in the youth we have here. We've seen multiple kids come up through Middle School Group, attend High School Group, and then become leaders in the Middle School Group as they get old enough. Watching former students grow like this to be leaders in our ministry is what truly warms my heart.

Over the last few months it has been a real treasure having students open up and ask questions about faith, what sin is, and how to live life in a new way. Seeing students feel more comfortable asking challenging questions tells me that what the Lord is doing in this ministry is growing them and strengthening them for the work needed in His kingdom.

I believe ministry with high school students exists to help them feel heard, to feel known, and to help them see that there is a better direction in life than what the world tells them. This world is so broken and full of sin. I struggle with how to navigate that and express that to students. But the one thing I do know is that if we stick close to Jesus - who Jesus is, and what he shows us real life is - they will be equipped to join him in his renewal of this broken world.

Please contact me at anthony.santiago@parkchurchnj.com if you want to know more or help out!

How can you pray for HSG?

On behalf of the entire High School Group team, we ask you to pray for the ministry. Pray that the students who have been coming week after week could know who Christ is and trust that what he has in store for them is so much better than what the world tells them. That's really the heart of the battle that is being waged over their hearts.

We ask that you pray for us as leaders to have discernment. Each and every one of us in the ministry are looking for where God is calling us to next, as we seek to be faithful to him. The last thing we would like to ask you to pray for is wisdom. Please pray that the Lord would pour his knowledge and wisdom into each and every one of us as we navigate this world.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

You fund the mission of Park Church and we are so grateful for you. Park Church's fiscal year runs from September through August, so as of February 28, 2022, we are six months into our fiscal year. Through your faithful giving and the leaders stewardship of those funds, we are out performing our budget!

Giving is up an astounding 26% as compared to the first six months of fiscal year 2021. Given those six months were during the first year of the pandemic, we anticipated a strong increase in year-over-year giving as the economy rebounded and people returned to worship. If we maintain this pace we expect giving to be higher than FY22 budget!

Thank you to all of those that made it happen!

The other side of the equation is, 'how are we spending?' Through the first six months of fiscal year 2022, we're 6% lower for spending against the budget and only 3% higher compared to fiscal year 2021. Given the timing of some expenses we anticipate to come in close to budget for the full year.

Please feel free to reach out to Scott Fitzgerald (sfitzgerald510@gmail.com) if there are any questions.



Following Jesus together for
the renewal of all things.

This spring at Park Church...

On Sunday March 27, we launched a new vision for Park Church, that involves 9 different ways that we are called to follow Jesus together:

- We **WELCOME** and invite others in.
- We **SEEK** God through scripture and prayer.
- We **GATHER** and prioritize relationships.
- We spend time in **WORSHIP**.
- We look to **GIVE** generously.
- We **SERVE** one another and our neighbors.
- We **BUILD** bridges and bring reconciliation.
- We **REST**.

This spring, we'll go through each one on Sundays, in our Community Groups, and through a new series of **daily text messages (sign up by texting 'follow' to 94253)** - providing you with scripture to consider, prayers to pray, steps to take, and more. Sign up today!