Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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Table of Contents

Message from Pastor Doug	2
PACS Pantry	3
Dinner from Moe's Fundraiser	4
Painting with Jackie	5
Scrip Card Orders	5
One Great Hour of Sharing	6
Worship & Music	6
Mission Action Committee	7
Clerk of Session's Report	9
Deacons Dialogue	10
Parish Life	11
Lenten Devotional	12
March calendar	13

From the Pastor

Luke 10:25-37 (NRSV)

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

At or near the heart of my understanding of what it means to follow Christ is that question - who are our neighbors? The last year has made it more difficult to know who our neighbor is in a few different ways.

Most of us have been stuck at home this whole time. For those of us fortunate enough to be able to (mostly) work from home, we rarely see anyone in person who doesn't live at our address. For some of us, there are some hidden benefits. I for example have had more time with Pam and Poppy than in any other year of our lives, at least more than any recent year, with both Pam and me able to partially work from home and Poppy attending school virtually. This can also present a challenge, of course - people cooped up with each other long-term can easily get into conflicts, and things that were small annoyances before can become bigger issues now. And of course there are those who are staying home with someone who isn't healthy for them, in relationships that can be abusive and harmful. The pandemic has made those situations much more difficult.

While we are spending more time at home than we likely did before, we are crossing paths with our neighbors less often. They too are staying home if they can. We've lost a lot of the chance meetings that kept social connections alive, and reminded us of the people who live near us. People experiencing homelessness, who are often made invisible, are even less visible now. I was ashamed to realize I hadn't even thought through the challenges facing neighbors who had to leave their shelter early in the morning and couldn't come back until the evening. How were they staying warm, and where were they using the restroom, when most businesses and buildings were closed in town? It was easy not to think of this because of how little I've been out in the last year, but still. Those are my neighbors too, and for the most part I'd forgotten them.

We also have all of the issues surrounding the last election, not caused by the pandemic but without a doubt made worse by it. Not just the violence and insurrection of January 6th, but the months of disinformation about the election that preceded those events, and the way that the algorithms of Facebook and YouTube push more and more extreme content in order to get our attention, enabling the spread of cult-like ideologies and outright bigotry. Whatever makes us angriest and most afraid gets the biggest boost on our screens, and I think the cumulative effect of that is impossible to over-estimate.

In the midst of all of this, our neighbors remain our neighbors. The literal people who live near where we live, and the many other people God brings into our lives one

way or another. We simply have to fight harder to remember who they are, and who we called to be to them. Almost every Sunday, I use the same benediction, because those are some of the best words I have to offer. Loving ourselves, our neighbors, and our enemies does not mean accepting cult-like beliefs, or bigotry, or violence. It does not mean abandoning our boundaries and our standards for how we treat one another. It does not mean that we should seek unity at the cost of consequences for violence and injustice. We must find the path that means loving ourselves enough to be true to who we are, loving our neighbors enough to be honest with them, and loving our enemies enough to not seek revenge but also not leave them free to do more harm.

When the lawyer tries to get around scripture's teaching by asking "who is my neighbor", Jesus tells a story of a traveler, a stranger beaten half to death on the side of the road. The outwardly pious and ritually clean pass by on the other side, refusing to get involved. It is the enemy, the outsider, the infidel Samaritan who helps the stranger, cares for them, and pays for them to be housed and nursed back to health. Jesus turns the question back on the questioner. Not the exclusionary, "Who is my neighbor?" but the gospel question, "To whom am I a neighbor?"

³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

In the midst of all the challenges the pandemic brings to us, may we be neighbors to the people in our lives.

Pastor Doug



March Mission- 31 days of giving - Let's Help Refill PACS Pantry

Phoenixville Area Community Services PACS, aspires to be the lead source for food insecurity in the community and FPC wants to help. During the entire month of March, you can donate nonperishable items to the FPC container in the church office. Questions? Ask Chris Wittrock (610-662-1412)

Here is a list of the most needed food items:

Peanut Butter, canned pasta, mac & cheese, jelly/jam, cooking oil, canned meat, pasta sauce, syrup, pancake mix, condiments, oatmeal (not instant), butter and margarine, rice, snack foods, baking mixes (with icing), spices/seasonings.

Here are the non-food items needed that CANNOT be purchased with SNAP dollars: Deodorant, Feminine Products, Pet Food (Cats & Dogs), Dish Soap, Toothpaste, Toilet Paper, Baby Diapers (Sizes 4, 5, 6), Laundry Soap, Shampoo/Conditioner, Paper Towels, Baby Wipes, and cleaning supplies.



Per Capita Apportionment... A Friendly Reminder

If you have not yet contributed your "per capita apportionment", it is not too late. These contributions are used to help support our Presbytery.

This year it is recommended that each member give \$36.00. Checks are to be made out to First Presbyterian Church, noting "Apportionment" on the memo line. Envelopes are available in your offering envelope box, and can be found in the pew racks, the narthex and the office. Thank you for your contribution.



THE DATE IS ALMOST HERE! Popup Fundraiser with Fajitas!

On SUNDAY, MARCH 14TH, between 5:30 and 6 P.M., a fajita dinner will be delivered to you in the church parking lot! Yes, we will be celebrating Daylight Savings Time with a fundraiser sponsored by Moe's! What you need to know now is that an email blast will be sent out in the beginning of March with all the details and the sign-up and payment link.

Moe's is dedicated to helping its neighbors. For many years they offered in-store fundraisers to various types of organizations: sports clubs, school groups, churches, non-profit organizations, and many more! In 2020 they launched a new type of fundraiser which brings the food to us! The Fajita Popup Family Meal Kit, which feeds 4-6 people, includes the various ingredients, individually packaged, the meat (your choice of beef, chicken, both or vegetarian) is cooked and hot and the fajitas are ready to assemble when you get home. How much easier can it get, and at the same time you earn \$10 per kit for FPCP! Pick up is a drive up, no contact service and off you go. You can go to www.moes.com and check them out. Looking forward to seeing you...not in the dark, but in wonderful daylight...March 14th.

Your Stewardship Committee



Used/Empty Ink Cartridges

Please remember to save and bring to church, any used computer ink cartridges to be recycled. The church receives credit from Staples which is then used to purchase office supplies. Please also ask friends and relatives to donate used cartridges and place them in the box by the church office.

SAVE THE DATE

Zoom "Painting with Jackie" Event



Join us on **Sunday, March 21** at **2:00** for an afternoon of art, creativity and fun...via ZOOM.

Artist Jackie Nowakowski will lead you in a step-by-step painting experience, helping you to create your very own piece of art. You will finish the session with a painting that you can proudly hang in your home or give as a gift.

We will provide all the materials that you will need...you will supply your artistic talents. Arrangements will be made for you to pick up your materials in the church parking lot on Saturday, the 20th...or they can be delivered to your home. (Details to follow)

The **Church Growth team** looks forward to sharing a fun time with you, even if it is on a computer screen. It will be a time of art...fellowship...&...laughter.

So...mark your calendars and click on the link below to sign up on the Sign-Up Genius. https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050F4AADA722A1FB6-painting1

(Note...this event is not a fundraiser, just an opportunity to be together)

Scrip Gift Card Orders

We will be placing orders for gift cards every other Wednesday in March. (March 3 and March 17). If you would like to place an order, please call Lynne Williams at: 610-415-1581 (home) or 610-955-4749 (cell). You may mail your check to Lynne or drop it off at her home, (14 Schofield Road, Phoenixville, PA 19460). We will complete the order forms for you.



Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (March 2 & March 16). Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR". Thank you...Thank you for continuing to support this program!



Palm Sunday Worship
March 28th at 10:30 am

Maundy Thursday Communion Service
April 1st at 7:30 pm
Easter Sunday Worship

One Great Hour of Sharing

As Christians we are called to love one another more deeply by sharing what we have with those in need. One way to answer this call is through our gifts to "One Great Hour of Sharing". This is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to help our neighbors in need around the world.

A gift to this offering enables the church to share God's love by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, by providing food to the hungry, and by helping to empower the poor and the oppressed.

During the season of Lent we invite you to give generously to "One Great Hour of Sharing". Envelopes are available in your offering envelope boxes, or you may send a check with OGHS noted in the memo line.



Offerings will be received throughout Lent, with a special dedication on Palm Sunday, March 28.

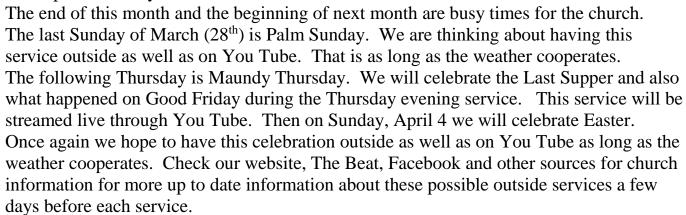
We may not be together in the sanctuary or in Sunday School, but together we can once again help change the lives of many.

Thank you for your life changing offering.

Notes from Worship and Music

We hope you are following the Lenten devotional and that it is a good source of spiritual sustenance.

Please take note that Daylight savings time starts on Sunday, March 14. Don't forget to spring forward your clocks before you go to sleep on Saturday, March 13.



Regardless of how or where, we will...

see you in church.



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

People to People- A Ministry of MAC

Food Ministry Updates (Bob Russell)

Our feeding ministry has been impacted by COVID restrictions since we were unable to host our major fundraisers (flea markets) in 2020. If you are able to provide donations (food or financial), please contact Bob Russell (bob@rtact.com). We greatly appreciate your support.

<u>Souper Bowl Of Caring</u>- Thanks to those of you who weathered snow and ice storms to contribute cans and donations. Bob Russell was able to deliver 44 cans and \$31 to PACS.

Clothing Ministry Updates (Sandy Heidel)

Since March 2020, with the cancellation of our semi-annual garage sale, the rooms and stage were filled with items for that garage sale. We have been using our time organizing the storage areas which is why we have not been accepting new items. The stage area has been sorted by gender, size and season. Now, we can easily locate what is needed when requests come from organizations or the community. We have organized items by size from infants to adults, including clothing, shoes, hats and gloves. When we can, we share extra clothing with Alianzas for their clients.

You may be surprised to know we do receive numerous requests for sheets, blankets, pillows and towels. Through grab and go giveaways of toys and holiday items during the summer, we were able to open up some space to better organize our linens. We also organized other household items like pots and pans, dishes, frames, tablecloths, and are ready for our next garage sale.

Because of limited space, we do "targeted" requests such as when we were in need of children's clothing, a request was made to families in our church, for children's clothing only. Thank you for saving your items until we can store them or have a garage sale! Thanks to Celia Breden, Barbie Kepler, Cheryl Messere, Chris Wittrock and Sandy Heidel for the organizing, and in turn, caring for our neighbors (13 requests filled this past month).

Local Mission Activities

St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

Thanks to all who prepared and delivered meals during the week of Feb 8th-12th. These warm, delicious meals are a true blessing to the families after long days during difficult times. Our next opportunity to provide meals is Oct 4th-8th.

2021- Mark your calendar for volunteer opportunities

If you are looking to help people while keeping yourself safe, we have a few opportunities. Please contact Chris Wittrock if you would like to participate. (cwittrock22@gmail.com)

God's Work our Hands

Good Works Lunch- Help Prep and/or deliver lunch Saturday May 8, 2021 from 10:30 am-1:30 pm Saturday Oct 09, 2021 10:30 am- 1:30 pm

Looking to take a deeper dive?

Bob and Chris are also looking for a few friends to join them for on-site volunteering with <u>Good Works</u> on Saturday, May 8th and Oct 9th to help restore some homes. You don't need prior knowledge or any particular talent. You communicate your talents and limits and Good Works finds a place for your contributions. The system is a well-oiled machine, we just show up. Read more <u>here</u>.

Upcoming Mission Trips

Appalachian Service Project (ASP) - Sarah Shulman Group Leader As you heard this week, Sarah Shulman is spearheading a summer mission trip through Appalachian Service Project (ASP). The mission is focused on making homes warmer, safer, and drier for Appalachian families by providing critical repairs. The mission also underscores the critical importance of service by youth and adults of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels. The MAC committee is supporting this mission project as far as scheduling, advertising and assisting with fundraising projects for this mission. Please stay tuned as we will be hosting events and fundraisers to support our efforts in this endeavor. We ask God to bless the work of our hands.

Mission Updates

We support several local, regional and global missions through our budget, and this is our space to provide updates on our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Phoenixville Area Mission Funding

Orion Communities - Orion's mission is to offer hope for individuals and families experiencing hardship due to poverty, disability or illness by building bridges that lead to self-reliance.

8. continued.....

They help at the street level to meet the basic needs with empathy, respect and dignity. We are happy to work with Orion to fulfill requests for clothing, household items and other needed items.

<u>People in Mission</u>- These funds are available for youth or adult going on a mission trip, up to one half the cost. In 2018, we were able to help some members travel to Guatemala through a Donegal Presbytery sponsored trip, and in 2019 we sponsored Hands in Mission Projects such as Mission Relief Services and various summer feeding programs. COVID-19 had other plans for mission activities in 2020.

Regional Mission Funding

Welcoming the Stranger- A non-profit educational ministry that seeks to follow Jesus' call to welcome people who come into our country (immigrants and refugees). With goals to provide free classes in English, computers, and US citizenship preparation to immigrants and refugees in Bucks, Montgomery and Hunderton counties in the Philadelphia, PA region. The founder, Rev. S. Sturgis Poorman Jr., retired in June 2015 from being Executive Director and taught until his death in April 2018.

Global Mission Funding

Chulumal School (Guatemala) - We provide scholarships for 3 students to attend this Christian school located in the highlands of Guatemala. Check out their <u>Facebook page</u>.

May God Bless you and keep you safe until we meet again. Chris Wittrock (cwittrock22@gmail.com)

Chair, MAC Committee

From the Clerk of Session

• Average Sunday morning attendance: As YouTube viewing of the service is available anytime there isn't a way to accurately count attendance. In January the average for viewing the 10:30am premiere was 49 (households) and 28 households chatting. Please think of chatting as the



YouTube version of signing the Red Friendship Book and join in the chat, if you are able.

- December 22nd Stated Session Meeting
- The 2021 Communion schedule was approved by Session. Dates are: 2/17 Ash Wednesday, 3/7, 4/1 Maundy Thursday, 4/4 Easter, 5/2, 5/23 Pentecost, usually 6/6 would be the first of June, but leaving that off as Pentecost was only 2 weeks prior, 7/4, 8/1, 9/5, 10/3 World Communion, 11/7, 11/28 First Sunday of Advent, 12/24 Christmas Eve, 1/2/2021
- The 2021 Budget was approved by Session.

- o 2021 Session Meeting Schedule: January, February, March, May, July, September, November, December. Fourth Tuesday at 7:30
- The Life of the church
 - o Current active membership is 178
 - o Birth
 - February 3, 2021 Camilla Jay, daughter born to Sandy (Osterhoudt) and Kevin Sexton. Jeanie and Lew Osterhoudt are proud grandparents.
- o Death
 - January 14, 2021 Eugene (Gene) Mariani (member), 4 Marian Rd. Phoenixville, PA 19460. Memorial Service TBD
 - January 30, 2021 Karen Morrison Merkel (member), Phoenixville, PA 19460.
 Funeral held February 4 at R Strunk Funeral Home, Phoenixville. Private burial in WV.

Information from the January 26th Stated Session Meeting will be reviewed/approved at the February 23rd meeting and will be in the next Perspective.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



During this dismal winter, with icy weather still gripping our area, let's turn to warmer thoughts to cheer ourselves. Soon, St. Patrick's Day will be upon us, and Easter right around the corner!

Your Board of Deacons is welcoming new members and getting everyone familiar with the work we will do in 2021. We will be busy with care groups, of course, keeping everyone in close communication with goings-on at FPC. Although we can't see each other face to face, there are lots of ways to stay in touch. Of course, everyone is familiar with our weekly online worship services, and all-church Zoom meetings are an excellent way to safely see your fellow congregants. Together, we can celebrate the little victories and join in prayer for all of those who need it.

As always, your Board of Deacons stands ready to minister to your needs. Please make us aware of any needs you have so we can help you. We'll help with technology, so if you need it please ask. If it is personal contact, that can be arranged. We all have been deprived of that during the past year, and a visit with you from your doorstep to you on the inside might be the morale booster both you and a deacon can share!

God bless you all and be a blessing unto someone each and every day.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by, Ellen Williams

Parish Life



All Church ZOOM Meetings - Wednesday nights, 7:30.

Wednesday, February 24th Trivia Night with Judy & Hermann Ball

Wednesday, March 3rd Caption This!

Wednesday, March 10th Life's Little Connections

Thursday, March 18th Irish Coffee House

Wednesday, March 24th Joke/Mad Libs Night

Wednesday, March 31st Picture Night! Baby Pics, or any others

you wish to share

See you there!





Happy St. Patrick's Day! Enjoy these early spring recipes from your fellow congregants.





MARY'S IRISH BREAD PUDDING

INGREDIENTS:

1 (2 LB) Loaf bread, less 4 slices (raisin or cranberry bread can also be used)

3-1/4 Cups milk

1 TBSP Butter or margarine 4 Eggs

1-1/2 Cups sugar 1 TBSP Vanilla

1/4 TSP Salt 1/2 Cup raisins (optional)

Note: 3/4 Cup Irish Cream Liquor can be added if desired

DIRECTIONS:

In a mixing bowl, whisk together sugar, eggs, salt, and vanilla extract. Pour into bread mixture (bread, milk and liquor). Top with nutmeg and cinnamon.

Bake in 350° oven until set (knife/toothpick comes out clean), about 1 hour, or until golden brown

Submitted by: Ellen Williams

11. continued...







INGREDIENTS:

4 cups, sifted all-purpose flour

1/4 cup, sugar

1 teaspoon, salt

1 teaspoon, double-acting baking powder

2 tablespoons, caraway seeds

1/4 cup butter

2 cups raisins

1 1/3 cup buttermilk

1 egg

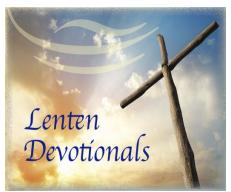
1 teaspoon baking soda

1 egg yolk, beaten

DIRECTIONS:

- 1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 2-quart casserole.
- 2. Sift flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder into mixing bowl. Stir in caraway seeds. Cut-in butter till mixture resembles coarse corn meal. Stir in raisins.
- 3. Combine buttermilk, egg, and baking soda. Stir into above mixture till just moistened. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface and knead lightly till smooth. Shape into ball and place in casserole.
- 4. With sharp knife, make 4-inch cross, ¼ inch deep, in the center of the ball. Brush with beaten yolk.
- 5. Bake one 50-60 minutes, or until cake tester, inserted in center, comes out clean.
- 6. Cool bread in baking dish 10 minutes, and then turn out on rack to finish cooling.
- 7. When cool, promptly seal in a plastic bag to prevent "drying out".
- 8. NOTE: This batch will yield 4 mini loaves. Adjust baking time to 40 minutes. Submitted by: Maggie O'Malley

We look forward to sharing these special times with you! The Parish Life Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7PM in the Zoom Parlor...Please join us!



Lenten Devotional

This year's suggested Lenten Devotional is "The Way to Shalom" from Presbyterians Today. Engage in this journey to peace and wholeness. Each week will have a new theme covering one of the many definitions of shalom. Discover how to receive this gift and to give it back to the world. Click here to view, download, or print a copy. Hard copies are available in the church office and can be picked up on Wednesdays.



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

Amy Myers, our Prayer Chain Coordinator, will be happy to forward your prayer requests to the members of the prayer chain. You can email Amy at fpcprayerchain1@gmail.com and members will be lifting you up in prayer.

You may also call Sue Smith at (610) 933-8816 and she will forward your requests on to Amy.

March 2021

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	10:00a Food ministry	5	6
	7:30p Property	7:00p MAC	7:30p Parish Life Zoom Event	1:00p WIC	1:00p WIC	
				7:00p We Are Virtual Vigil		
3 rd Sunday of Lent 7 8:30a Bible Study	8	9	10	11 10:00a Food ministry	12	13
10:30a Worship		6:00p Staff meeting		10.00a 1 00a ministry		
Communion		7:00p Personnel	7:30p Parish Life Zoom			
11:45a Joys & Concerns		7:00p Parish Life	Event	7:30p Compassionate		
12:30p Deacons meeting				Friends		
4 th Sunday of Lent 14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8:30a Bible Study				10:00a Food ministry		
10:30a Worship						
11:45a Joys & Concerns		7:15p Church Growth/		1:00p WIC	1:00p WIC	Perspective articles
12:30p Worship & Music		Christian Education		7.00 11/4 1/11		due for April
5:30p Moe's Dinner Pick Up				7:00p We Are Vigil 7:30p Parish Life		
7:00p Book Club				Zoom Event		
Daylight saving time				Zoom Event		
begins						
5 th Sunday of Lent 21	22	23	24	25	26	27
8:30a Bible Study				10:00a Food ministry		
10:30a Worship 11:45a Joys & Concerns		7:30p Session	7:30p Parish Life Zoom			
2:00p Painting with			Event			
Jackie event						
Sarah Shulman vacation						
Palm Sunday 28	29	30	31	April 1	April 2	April 3
8:30a Bible Study				Maundy Thursday	Good Friday	Great Vigil of Easter
9:30a Sunday School			7:30p Parish Life Zoom	10:00a Food ministry		
10:30a Worship-outside			Event	1:00p WIC	1:00p WIC	
11:45a Joys & Concerns				7:30p Maundy Thurs.		
7:00p Book Club				Worship Service		