

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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Phone: 610-933-8816

Fax: 610-933-8060

www.fpc-phoenixville.org

email: secretaryfpc145@gmail.com



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Publisher: Sue Smith Contributors: Church Family; Proofreader: Jeanne Blackburn

Table of Contents

Message from Pastor Doug.....	2
Property Clean Up Day.....	3
Sunday School.....	3
“Dear Church” Book Review.....	4
Mission Action Committee.....	5
Clerk of Session’s Report.....	7
Deacons Dialogue.....	8
Parish Life.....	9
Social Media Links and Likes.....	10
Worship and Music Notes.....	10
Graduate Recognition Day.....	10
Personnel Open Forum.....	11
An Inspirational Thought.....	11
May calendar.....	12

From the Pastor

John 1:1-4

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

I was asked recently to explain who or what I think God is, without thinking about it, in only a few words. What I wrote was “the Pattern.” I realize this is an unusual answer, but I know that it is also an ancient one that is drawn from our shared tradition. No single term or image or metaphor captures everything about God, but I like to think about God this way sometimes.

It is easy, and understandable, to read this passage in John, and think that what is being said is essentially that Jesus is the Bible. We sometimes say that the Bible is the Word of God, and if Jesus is also the Word of God made flesh, then the confusion is understandable. Our tradition, however, makes it very clear that the Word of God is expressed through the Bible, but is also expressed in other ways - in the natural world, and in the sermon preached aloud, and in musical expression. The Bible does not encapsulate, or contain the Word of God. The Bible is one of the ways that we encounter the Word of God.

It is very common, and traditional, and also right I think, to refer to God as a person. As one God and three persons, in fact - the Trinity. The personhood of God is a central idea to Christian faith and to the Jewish roots from which we grew. This is not the entirety of the story, however. We have this idea from John of Jesus as the Logos of God, often translated as “Word”, but the term *logos* can be translated a number of ways, and in the Greco-Roman world the first way that *logos* was understood was as a pattern. The Greek term *logos* is where we get terms like biology (the *logos* of living things) - not merely words about living things, but the patterns of living things.

The first time we see the term *logos* used in Greek philosophy was from the philosopher Heraclitus, someone whose work was referenced by others like Plato and Aristotle. About 500 years before Jesus, around the time that the Israelites were in exile in Babylon, Heraclitus wrote about the *logos*. For Heraclitus, the *logos* was the governing principle of the cosmos, though he liked to play with the various meanings of the term, and he even earned nicknames including “The Obscure” during his day. The later Stoics, drawing on Heraclitus, defined the *logos* as ‘the account which governs everything.’

Why talk about an ancient Stoic philosopher when reading the gospel of John? Because John uses Logos, I believe, in the way that Heraclitus did. I think it is appropriate to define Logos as “Pattern”, and what the author of the gospel is saying is that the Pattern was present with God, and present in the moment of creation, and that the Pattern became flesh in Jesus. The better we understand this Pattern, the better we understand Jesus (and vice versa), the more we will be able to see Jesus echoing throughout the world.

We can see the Pattern in our own thoughts and conscience. The Logos is within us even before we understand anything about it. It is part of what shapes us, and it is part of God that is within everyone, including people who have no interest in God. We can also see the Pattern in the behavior of others around us. We can recognize people who do what’s right, who are kind or courageous or wise, long before we know what their religious beliefs or practices are (if any). We can also see when the Pattern is violated, when someone is abusive or deceitful or selfish. It isn’t a precise or flawless sense, but it is there, innately.

We can see the Pattern in other philosophies and religions. Jesus demonstrates that Pattern as he heals, redeems, tells the truth, shares meals with outcasts and the ‘unclean’, overturns tables, and sacrifices his life for others. He shows the Pattern as he teaches people to resist without using violence. Scripture, and Christianity, are far from the only places where we see these things.

2. *Continued....*

The idea of the Logos as a Pattern is a way to understand the world around us, which is different from the ancient world of scripture in innumerable ways. The Bible does not speak directly to our racial abuses and unrest in the United States; it does not speak directly to climate change; it does not speak directly to sexual orientation as we understand it now. But we can ask ourselves: where do we see the Pattern of Christ? Where do we see that Pattern in us, in others, in the world around us?

Where do you see the Pattern of Christ?

Pastor Doug

May 20th, 7pm Vigil Downtown

As some of you know, Pastor Doug has been leading and helping to organize vigils on the first Thursday and third Thursday of each month since July of last year. Now that he is vaccinated, he will be leading the in-person vigil on the third Thursday of May in downtown Phoenixville. You are invited to join Pastor Doug and members of our community for a peaceful vigil in solidarity with BLM on May 20th from 7pm to 7:30pm. We will meet at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets. Feel free to contact Pastor Doug for more information or with any questions.



Socially Distanced Work Day

Saturday, May 15th from 9:00 AM to noon

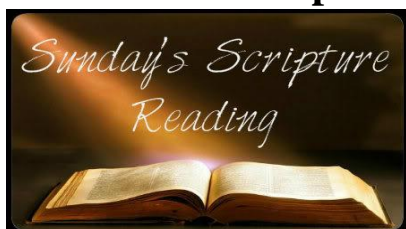
We will be cleaning the parking lot, edging sidewalks, raking leaves, trimming hedges, etc. Bring gloves, rakes, shovels and any other appropriate tools. Help spruce up the church and actually see people at the same time.



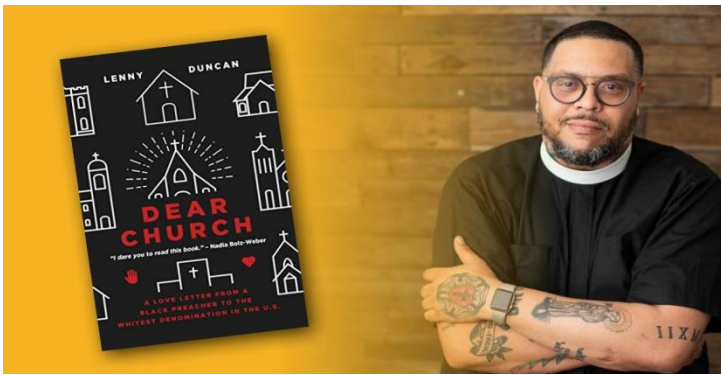
Sunday School Class

Sunday School will meet online at 9:30 am on Sunday, May 23rd. Pentecost Sunday
We hope you will join us!

Upcoming Scripture Readings



May 2nd: Acts 8:26-40; 1 John 4:7-21
May 9th: Acts 10:44-48; John 15:9-17
May 16th: Acts 1:1-11; Luke 24:44-53
May 23rd: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Acts 2:1-21
May 30th: Isaiah 6:1-8; Romans 8:12-17



Book Review – “Dear Church” by Lenny Duncan

A group of church members and one Christian from another church have started a book club to learn of racial injustice in our country. This was created after the horrific

death of George Floyd. We started with the book “How to be an Anti-Racist” by Ibram X. Kendi. Next was an easy read – “Ghost Boys” by Jewell Parker Rhodes and now “Dear Church” by Lenny Duncan. Dear Church is filled with insights and views on multiple issues of which I was never aware. Ever since last summer and the murder of George Floyd, I followed a mandate presented on a college announcement board – “*White people, **DO** something*”. This book provides numerous ways to learn and then DO something.

Author Lenny Duncan is an unconventional black man who starts off wondering why he is a member of the whitest church in America (I thought it might be ours, but technically is the Lutheran denomination), let alone a pastor of one of those churches. He wants us to see that “the church should be all about bringing people further along the arc toward justice” because that is what Jesus did. His theory is that the church, as followers of Christ, should be the leader of a social justice movement. He examines the path of Dylann Roof who was a member of a real family who loved him and belonged to a community and Lutheran church just like his!

By reading this book I had to acknowledge that systemic racism has been deeply woven into the structure of much of our laws, lives and socioeconomic conditions. This racism exists even though I did not ever realize it or certainly did not *feel* it. I did not want to admit it, fought against it, but he encourages us (Church members) to lead the way to support the change needed. One small historical fact I did not realize – Black people never received the 40 acres and a mule they were promised in the Emancipation Proclamation! That could make a huge difference in the ability to create generational wealth.

Some aspects of life that affect people of color are related to government, military, housing, financial, policing, and the prison system. How many times have we seen instances of black men held unjustly in prison only to be exonerated decades later. (“The Hurricane” is a dramatic movie with Denzel Washington, worth watching for a true story.) There is SO much more than that in this book. It took all of us in this new book club by surprise.

The Emmaus collective, Equity & Social Justice Initiative, Truth & Reconciliation commission and New Sanctuary Movement are all groups of which I have just become aware due to this book club. We would love to have more thoughts and voices join us. Even if this concept makes you uncomfortable, anxious or even angry, think about extending your comfort zone to learn what the black and brown people of our nation have experienced and continue to experience. --- Mona Sabia



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!”

Volunteer Opportunity- Are you feeling called?

During our March meeting, we welcomed two guest speakers from Bridge of Hope in Chester County: Rachel Thomas Steadman, Program Director and Reverend Scott Dorsey, Church Engagement Director. You may remember Rachel is the daughter of Nancy Thomas, former members of FPC. Bridge of Hope serves families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Chester County area. Families that they partner with benefit from a network of Christian faith volunteers, rental assistance, and intensive case management as they work to achieve long term stability. Here is [the story of a family](#) from the Bridges of Hope, Lancaster.

Rachel explained the program consists of three key participants:

- The family (single moms and their children)
- A case manager, licensed social worker (Rachel)
- Church volunteers (6-10 people to provide ‘neighboring’ - networking, connections, resources)

Reverend Scott explained ‘[neighboring](#)’ - the church investing social capital in the family

- Brining your empathy, compassion and personal network to move the family into a stable environment and become self-sufficient. This can be done safely from your own home!

Reverend Scott will join us on **Sunday, May 29th** for worship, and to speak to us during Minute for Mission. Why not check out [the website](#) in the meantime?

Mark your calendar for volunteer opportunities

Clothing Ministry

Contact Sandy Heidel csheidel@verizon.net

Good Works Lunch- Help Prep and/or deliver lunch

Saturday Oct 09, 2021 10:30 am- 1:30 pm

St. Mary’s Franciscan Shelter

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.

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.



Ministry Updates

People to People

Clothing Ministry Updates (Sandy Heidel)

We have helped 51 people (14 children) since January. We were happy to be able to fill requests that came from people affected by the fire at Prima Hotel in Phoenixville. We continue to have requests for sheets, blankets and pillows as well as clothing. If you have king, queen, or full sheets and blankets to share, please call Sandy Heidel to determine a time for drop off. Together we are helping our neighbors.

Food Ministry Updates (Bob Russell)

In addition to feeding our usual lunch bunch at St. Peter's Episcopal on Thursdays, we also provided lunch to volunteers at Good Works, LLC in Phoenixville. We are grateful for your donations (food and financial) to the People to People food ministry, thank you. Bob Russell (bob@rtact.com).

March Mission- Replenishing the PACS Pantry

Thanks to all who participated in this important event. We had so many items that Bob Russell had to make several trips to PACS to drop it all off. Your generosity has been consistent during this pandemic and we are thankful.



The MAC Committee supports several local, regional and global missions through our budget, and this is our space to provide updates on our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Global Mission (General Assembly Mission)

The MAC committee provides financial assistance to international ministries through the Presbyterian General Assembly mission projects. The two we selected this year are missions we have supported in the past, both of whom are listed below. Please read about these incredible people, their calling to serve, and the challenges we help them to mitigate.

The Reverend Nadia Ayoub works with refugees in Greece in partnership with Perichoresis, which explains its mission as “the alleviation of human hardship regardless of ethnicity, race and creed.” Perichoresis provides housing and support for approximately 550 refugees in 115 apartments in the city of Katerini on mainland Greece. Their programs include a nursery school, sports activities, and socio-therapeutic groups for children, adolescents and women. It also supports refugees with medical appointments and visits with lawyers. In her work with Perichoresis, Nadia serves as a children’s worker in its preschool programs and as a translator. You can read more about Nadia’s work on [her page](#) through the PC (USA) Presbyterian Mission homepage.

The Reverend Cathy Chang and Juan Lopez work from their home base in Manila, Philippines to help global partners address issues of migration and human trafficking. The UN’s International Labor Organization estimates 21 million people are victims of coerced labor and/or forced sexual exploitation. While human trafficking is a worldwide problem, countries in Asia are increasingly vulnerable. Cathy and Juan work with Asian churches and non-governmental organizations to help coordinate efforts related to the scourge of modern-day slavery.

They also resource various programs of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and U.S. congregations concerned about the issue. You can read more about their work on [their page](#) through the PC (USA) Presbyterian Mission homepage.

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 March the average for viewing the 10:30am premiere was 45 (households) and 26 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. ☺
- February 23rd Session Meeting: Pastor asked Session to approve a plan, specifics TBA, to host a port-a-potty in our parking lot, at zero cost to the church, and in collaboration with multiple borough organizations like the Health Foundation, Orion, and the Mayor's Office. Following discussion, the port-a-potty was tabled until Pastor could contact our insurance company.
- March 23rd Session Meeting minutes will be approved at the May 25th meeting.
- The Life of the church
 - Current active membership is 177
 - Birth – none
 - Death – none
 - Wedding - none



Information from the March 23rd Stated Session Meeting will be reviewed/approved at the next Stated Session Meeting scheduled for May 25th and will be in the following Perspective.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



There is a new feature on the FPC website! Check out the **DONATE** button on the [home page](#). Online giving is really convenient now. Simply click the button, enter an amount on the Faithlife page, and then click the Next button to finish the process. Thanks for your support!

Scrip Gift Card Orders

We will be placing orders for gift cards every other **Wednesday**.
(**May 12 & May 26**).

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 (**May 11 and May 25**).

Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR". Thank you...Thank you for continuing to support this program!





This month the Board of Deacons would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Barbie Kepler for numerous years of service to our church, most recently her service as a Deacon. Barbie served as a Deacon from January 2019 through January 2021. However, her service to FPCP has never ended there. Barbie served as an Elder from January 2013 through January 2015, and was a Deacon and Elder prior to those terms. Barbie has also been a church nursery volunteer since 2015, a Sunday School teacher, and currently serves on the Worship & Music and Parish Life Committees. We extend appreciation to her for all she has done, and continues to do, for our congregation and our Lord. God bless you!

We are also happy to welcome Kathy Thais, Gail Schnaedter and Jen Johnson to the Board. Thank you all for accepting the call to serve our FPCP family and our Lord through your service.

A reminder that each Deacon is assigned a care group of congregant members, based on the alphabetical order of the church directory. Our responsibility is to maintain an open communication with our members, and to be there for you if there are any needs. Please reach out to your Deacon if you need meals due to an illness, new baby, or any overwhelming circumstances in your life. We are here to help you through these life events!

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

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,
Ellen Williams



Joys and Concerns Live

Join Pastor Doug virtually on Sundays at 11:45 a.m. to share some happiness, heartache, or anything in between and lift up each other in spirit. Join Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87345268002>
Meeting ID: 873 4526 8002 One tap mobile +13017158592

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](tel:(610)933-8816) and she will forward your requests on to Amy.



Parish Life



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

Please note that we are moving to a twice a month all church Zoom meeting schedule for the spring and summer months.

May 12th- Mothers day: best/worst gift given or received

May 26th- Patriotic celebrations from the past

June 16th- Trivia night returns

June 30th- TBD

July 14th- TBD

July 28th- TBD

August 11th- TBD

August 25th- TBD

Fairy Update



Your Parish Life Fairies of Happiness have been buzzing around bringing joy to congregants for many months. Since September, our faithful fairies have delivered 26 Halloween bags, 113 visits to drop off baked goods and 123 Christmas cards and 50 Birthday cards!

Pentecost Sunday

Save the Date – May 23rd! Our Chili Fest returns this year as a drive-by pickup.

- Pickup will be in the church lot from 5-5:30 PM
- Chili orders will be individually wrapped/packaged
- Mac & Cheese will be available for the kids
- Orders will be by the serving
- We will accept a donation in the amount you wish to give

Further information to follow.

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!



Be sure to like, follow, and subscribe to FPC online:

Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurchOfPhoenixville>

Facebook Private Group -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/194981514361191>

Instagram - @fpcphoenixville - <https://www.instagram.com/fpcphoenixville/>

Twitter - @fpcphoenixville - <https://twitter.com/fpcphoenixville>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrmNs7JdvZNJpsNjs0Ds8vg>

Please remember our hashtag, #lovingFPC, when posting about this great church!

Notes from Worship and Music

You now have a new worship opportunity. Beginning the first Sunday in May, there will be a 9 AM service in addition to our regular 10:30 AM service. The 9 AM service will be outside and acoustic (that is no amplification). The early service will be mostly identical to the following 10:30 AM broadcast/YouTube service. The grass will be marked so we will be socially distanced and masks will be required. The first Sunday in May is also Communion Sunday. Feel free to bring your own elements or use the prepackaged gluten free elements that will be available. Also, in May we celebrate the church's birthday with Pentecost on May 23. Look for more details on services for Pentecost in the upcoming Sunday bulletins.



See you in church.



Attention Graduates

Please notify the church office with the names of those people who will be graduating from High School, College, Technical School or Grad School this year. (secretaryfpc145@gmail.com or 610-933-8816) We will recognize all our graduates on May 9th during the worship service.

Grass Cutting Help Needed

Last year a few members took turns cutting the grass at the church and we could use some more volunteers for this year. Two people are scheduled for each month, so you would only have to do it four times. Plus, it gets you out of the house. Please email Paul Parrish at parrishps@gmail.com or call 610-935-0436 if you can help.





Save The Date...**Monday, May 17th** **Moe's Southwest Grill ...”TACO TAX DAY”!!!**

Once again, Moe's will be bringing delicious meals to our church parking lot for you to pick up and enjoy as you benefit our church.

As we were unsuccessful trying to schedule a “TACO TUESDAY”...we decided to create our own taco day...and what better day to celebrate than “**Tax Day**”!

You will order your TACO Meal Kit (serves 4-6)...and for each kit ordered...Moe's will donate \$5 to our church. Details will be available in the coming weeks in the bulletins and the Beat.

So, mark **May 17th** on your calendars & plan to take the night off from cooking...

Open Forum at the Personnel Meeting

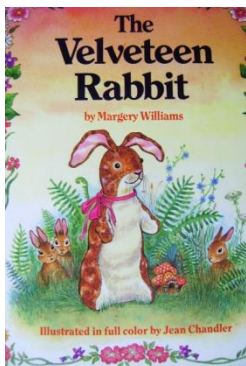
Everyone is welcome to share their feelings about the job performances of the church staff via Zoom at the next Personnel meeting on Tuesday, May 11th from 7:00-7:30 p.m. Responses will be kept strictly confidential. We'd like to have you share your experiences with us. Please contact Jeanie Osterhoudt to share your thoughts or to receive the Zoom link information.



One Great Hour of Sharing...Thank You

Thank you for your generous gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing ministry. With your donations we have raised \$2,102.63. Of that total, \$332.63 was collected by the children of our Sunday School.

Your gracious contributions will help to support the many life changing missions of this ministry. Thank you.



Even in a complex world, simple truths can change everything.
Once upon a time a velveteen rabbit learned that new isn't necessarily better,

That honest friendship and understanding can warm the heart....

That a good book can make the world a better place....

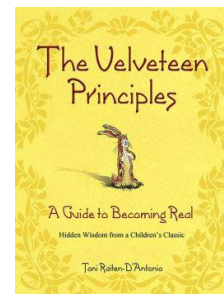
And that love can make us Real.

The simple wisdom of the classic children's story: The Velveteen Rabbit can be the start of your return to Real.

[Recommended spiritual reading]:

The Velveteen Rabbit and The Velveteen Principles

Submitted by Sharyn Funderwhite



May 2021

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 8:30a Bible Study 9:00a Outdoor Worship 10:30a Worship via YouTube site- Communion 11:45a Joys & Concerns 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	3 7:30p Property <i>Sue Smith vacation</i>	4 7:00p MAC via Zoom	5	6 10:00a Food ministry 1:00p WIC 7:00p “We Are” Vigil Virtually	7	8 10:30a-1:30p Make lunch for Good Works volunteers
9 <i>Mother’s Day</i> 8:30a Bible Study 9:00a Outdoor Worship 10:30a Worship via YouTube site 11:45a Joys & Concerns	10	11 7:00p Parish Life 7:00p Personnel – Open Forum	12 7:30p Parish Life Zoom Event	13 10:00a Food ministry 7:30p Compassionate Friends meeting	14	15 9am –Noon Outdoor Work Day
16 8:30a Bible Study 9:00a Outdoor Worship 10:30a Worship via YouTube site 11:45a Joys & Concerns 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	17 5:30p? Moe’s Taco Dinner Fundraiser 7:00p Finance & Stewardship	18 6:00p Staff meeting 7:15p Christian Educ	19	20 10:00a Food ministry 1:00p WIC 7:00p “We Are” Vigil Live <i>Perspective articles due for June</i>	21	22
23 <i>Pentecost</i> 8:30a Bible Study 9:00a Outdoor Worship 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Worship via YouTube site- Communion 11:45a Joys & Concerns 5:00p Chili Fest Dinner	24 <i>John Allen vacation</i>	25 7:30p Session via zoom <i>John Allen vacation</i>	26 7:30p Parish Life Zoom Event <i>John Allen vacation</i>	27 10:00a Food ministry <i>John Allen vacation</i>	28 <i>John Allen vacation</i>	29
30 8:30a Bible Study 9:00a Outdoor Worship 10:30a Worship via YouTube site 11:45a Joys & Concerns 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	31 Office closed <i>Memorial Day</i>					