

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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From the Pastor

Galatians 6

⁷ Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. ⁸ If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹ So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

I'll admit it - I became a little bit optimistic and complacent over the summer. A turning point for me was when Wawa decided to stop requiring masks. Walking into a Wawa without a mask felt like walking in without clothing, the first time. I looked around at the place, wondering at this new world into which we were emerging. People were full of misinformation and misplaced anger but despite this, vaccines were still slowly trending upward. Maybe we were headed out of this.

And then the Delta variant began to spread and we learned about break-through COVID infections. At the same time, enraged, misinformed parents were yelling at school boards, demanding that school open without a mask mandate. Disingenuous governors signed laws legally banning mask mandates in schools and elsewhere (and to this day, brave school boards and municipalities are defying them). Masks - inconvenient adaptations that literally save the lives of our neighbors - were suddenly the center of a political conflagration.

I hope I can be forgiven for looking back on all that we did to adapt, all that we changed, all we gave up, all we lost, and wonder - why did we go through all that if people were intent on sabotaging our progress now, eighteen months later? It's one thing to feel as if we are coming together as a community to save lives. It is quite another to see progress thrown away, or to see some demand the freedom to needlessly endanger themselves and others.

We did what was right, or tried to, and the danger of doing what's right is that not everyone does it. It isn't easy to do what's right - if it was, everyone would do it. Clearly not everyone does, even when it is in everyone's best interest, including theirs.

There's a lot to be said about how people can be manipulated to act against their own best interests, but in the meantime, here we are again. Parents are afraid to send their children to schools where teachers are afraid to teach, and both are trying to hide their fears from the children so that they can have a happy return to school. We are running out of ICU beds in multiple states. I regularly find myself talking to others about how traumatic this has all been. Just when I thought we might have some time to process what's happened, it is clear that the pandemic is not done. It is enough to make one tired of doing good.

Scripture reminds us that we reap what we sow, but we also reap what the people around us sow. We don't each have our own separate plot to till - we till the garden of the world together. Forgetting this fact is the source of almost all of the needless suffering we experience. Life in the spirit is life together, as theologians from Saint Augustine to Saint Francis to Dietrich Bonhoeffer have affirmed. We are bound to one another.

We must maintain the faith that we will indeed reap what we sow. If we have to continue to sacrifice, it is because that is the only way forward. We will continue to gather for worship, prioritizing one another's safety. We will continue to watch the news and transmission rates for our county to make sure we are making the right decisions. We will adapt our Sunday School plans to be outside. We will continue to reach out to those who we have not seen for more than a year and a half now, because of this pandemic.

2. continued.....

It helps to remember that whenever we do what is right, we are not alone. It can feel like it sometimes, but this has been a time when great things have happened in our congregation and in our community, not least because they had to happen. But when we sow in the spirit, we are never alone. Those who came before us, who sowed in the spirit, are with us, and those who will come after us, who will reap what we've sown, are with us as well. God is with us throughout all of this, because when we sow in the spirit, we sow in God - not just the perishable things that we work on, but the imperishable as well. When we do what is right, we are part of something that is eternal, and when we do what is right, we reap what we sow.

Pastor Doug



Upcoming Scripture Readings

September 5th: Proverbs 2:1-2, 8-9, 22-23;

James 2:1-10, 14-17

September 12th: Proverbs 1:20-33; James 3:1-12

September 19th: Psalm 1; James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

September 26th: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

Mark 9:38-50

Notes from Worship and Music

Well, it's September and usually we will find several new, or reinstated activities or musical groups happening.

Not so much this year. However, one big change to our worship service will be the addition of our choir. I hope everyone has considered joining our choir, and of course I hope you will come out to a rehearsal to join or at least try it out. Our choir adds much to our service and we have missed them these past many months.

I want to thank our Praise Team for providing wonderful additions to our worship service. They have been providing much more than usual for these past many months. Of course we look forward to their continued enhancement of our worship service.

Finally, there are still many safe seats available in the pews. It would be great to see more of our congregation joining us for worship.

Hope to "see you in church"



Scrip Gift Card Orders

September is a great month to order gift cards!!! Actually...Christmas is coming...this may be a good time to start planning ahead!!

(Ho..Ho..Ho...)

We will be placing orders for gift cards every other **Wednesday (Sept. 8 & Sept. 22)**.

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 (**Sept. 7 & Sept. 21**). Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR".

As always...Thank you for continuing to support this program.

The Stewardship Committee

3.



FPC 'S Choir Is Back!

It has been almost a year and a half since the FPC Choir sang from the choir loft. I have truly missed the experience of working with our Choir and have missed the musical leadership that is an important part of our worship experience.

We will be having our first rehearsal on Thursday, September 9th, at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 12th will be our first Sunday to lead our worship service.

The choir room is usually still warm at the end of the summer, so we will gather in the sanctuary pews in air-conditioned comfort. I am hoping to see all of our returning members and hopefully a few new ones, too.

You can always find me at the organ on Sunday morning if you have any questions about our Fall startup. See you soon! Diane Legnini



It's September, and that means back to school! Our Christian education programs have been in place since July for the nursery and older children's programs, and it has been a great pleasure to see our kids in person.

The first day of Sunday school will be September 19th. Planned for day 1 is a group activity with all the kids, preparing the bags for Alianzas.

Of course, every precaution will be put into place to ensure the safety of our students. Everyone is extremely excited to see the children and cannot wait for September 19th!

The return date is, of course, contingent upon current COVID status. Should it be determined that return to Sunday school is in any way not 100% safe for our students and teachers, this plan will be revisited.

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

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,

Ellen Williams



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:6109338816) and she will forward your requests on to Amy.



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 Opportunities - Are you feeling called?

Care Packages for Alianzas de Phoenixville

We thank Nina Guzman for joining us on Sunday, August 22 to share the important work of Alianzas de Phoenixville and explain our Care Package project. We launched the Sign-Up Genius to organize 42 bags of household items, one for each single-parent family at Alianzas. Our Sunday school children have started writing cards for each recipient family and they look forward to decorating the cards on September 19 at 9:15 a.m. We thank you in advance for your participation and support of this church-wide project. Contact Chris Wittrock with questions at cwittrock22@gmail.com.

Good Works Lunch: Saturday Oct 9, 2021 – 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to help with lunch preparation and/or to deliver lunches to the Good Works site. Contact Bob Russell for details at Bob@rtact.com.



St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter: October 11 – 15, 2021

These warm, delicious meals are a true blessing to the families after long days during difficult times. Sign up in the Narthex or use our convenient Sign-Up Genius to provide all or part of a meal. Contact Chris Wittrock with questions at cwittrock22@gmail.com.

Mission and Ministry Updates

September 26, 2021: Appalachian Service Project (ASP) Worship Service and Luncheon

In addition to highlighting the work of the ASP team during our worship service, there will be a follow-up luncheon. Enjoy some food and fellowship while hearing more about the work and adventures of First Presbyterian's Appalachian sojourners.

Guatemala Virtual Journey

On Wednesday, August 25, members of our congregation participated in a virtual journey to Guatemala via Zoom. Sponsored by CEDEPCA (an organization that facilitates intercultural exchanges in Guatemala), the program highlighted current migration issues and included background information, first-person stories, music, and small-group discussions. As future Virtual Journeys to Guatemala are planned, registration information will be shared with the congregation.

Clothing Ministry Updates

- On July 17, a successful garage sale of summer clothing, books, and light jackets brought about 100 people and raised \$576.19 for the People to People Ministry. The clothing give-away on August 7 made about 90 people very thankful for the treasures they found. The People to People Ministry received \$33.83 in donations at the clothing giveaway, plus another \$30.00 in Yard Sale donations since the sale.

5. *continued...*

Remaining summer clothing from the giveaway was transferred to Liberty Thrift Ministries at the Collegeville Thrift Shop location.

- Since January we have also clothed and provided linens or household items for 113 people. We are happy that our church can be a resource for our neighbors, including those referred through Orion or Good Samaritan Shelter.
- If you have household items or clothing that you have been holding to donate, please contact Sandy Heidel (csheidel@verizon.net) to determine the best time to bring your items to the church. We appreciate your willingness to store the items in the past and understanding our desire not to be overwhelmed. Let's keep praying for an end to the virus so we can have a full indoor garage sale in the fall.

Child Tax Credit

A much-needed expansion of the Child Tax Credit was included in the American Rescue Plan passed earlier this year. In our recent Offering of Letters campaign, we urged members of Congress to extend this tax credit, perhaps even make it permanent. Whether or not you previously wrote a letter, consider checking in with your representatives to ask whether they will support the Child Tax Credit as part of current infrastructure legislation. For more information, contact Jeff McLaughlin at jeffmcl@icloud.com.

Earthquake in Haiti

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is requesting donations to provide emergency relief and short-term recovery areas impacted by the August 14 earthquake. Gifts can be made online (pma.pcusa.org/donate/), by phone at (800) 872-3283, or by check mailed to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.



May God bless you and keep you safe until we meet again.

Jeff McLaughlin (jeffmcl@icloud.com) and Chris Wittrock (cwittrock22@gmail.com).
Co-chairs, MAC Committee



Parking Lot Attendants Needed

First of all, a huge **thank you** goes out to the many volunteers who have helped in the parking lot the past four months.

Thank you...Thank you...Thank you!!

We will continue to need volunteers to collect parking donations on **Friday and Saturday evenings from 5:00pm – 8:00pm** during the month of **September**. There may also be an additional event on Saturday afternoon, September 25th.

As always, this is a great opportunity to spend some quality time with a fellow church member, as well as a chance to interact with folks in our community. Not only does this benefit our church, but it also makes it convenient for those who park in our lot.

If you would like to help, you may sign up on the **Sign-Up Genius** that Sue Smith emails each Monday. If you have questions, please contact Pam Bodam at 610-496-1933.

The Stewardship Committee appreciates your help.

From the Clerk of Session

- Average Sunday morning attendance:
In July we had an average of 41 worshipping in person (wearing masks) and an average of 19 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 5 *chatting*. I'm assuming most of the chatters are now worshipping in person. Please think of *chatting* as the YouTube version of signing the Red Friendship Book and join in the chat, if you are able.
- The Life of the church
 - Membership:
 - Current active membership is 175.
 - Birth: none
 - Death: none
 - Wedding: none
 - Baptism:
 - On Sunday August 8 Cade William Krauth, son of Meg (Fetter) and Jason Krauth. Cade was born on October 6, 2020.
- Session Meeting Information:
Information from the June 22nd Stated Session Meeting will be reviewed/ approved at the August 31st Stated Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.



Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



Presbyterian Women Circle

This year we will be follow the Horizon Bible Study *What My Grandmothers Taught Me, Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus*, written by Merryl Blair.

Please pack your lunch and join us after worship on the third Sunday of each month. We'll start on September 19th and will have the parlor windows open and a fan on. Because many of us have small children in our lives we are asking that all participants be vaccinated for Covid. Extra studies area available.

Jewell Baker

Open Forum at the Personnel Meeting

Everyone is welcome to share their feelings about the job performances of the church staff at the next Personnel meeting on Tuesday, September 14th from 7:00-7:30 p.m. **in the Parlor.**

Responses will be kept strictly confidential.

We'd like to have you share your experiences with us.



Parish Life



FYI - All Church ZOOM Meetings

As we mentioned last month, all church ZOOM meetings were suspended due to congregants' summer activities and the loosening of restrictions in our area. The Parish Life Crew would like you to know that we are ready to pick these back up, should the need arise. Of course, we sincerely hope this won't be necessary.



Kitchen Cleaning Time!

We all look forward to the time when, as a congregation, we will break bread in Fellowship Hall. However, our kitchen is still a very vital part of our church community, with MAC and other groups using it to provide food security to those in need. September is our county health inspector visit, and we need the kitchen in ship-shape so FCPC passes with flying colors. Parish Life is looking for volunteers to help with the annual pre-inspection cleaning.

A sign-up sheet will be placed in the Narthex once the dates have been determined. If you're able, please roll up your sleeves and pitch in!



Thank you, Lemonade Servers!



A big thank you from all of us for those who hosted Lemonade in the Shade this year. We appreciate your help, and look forward to next year's gatherings.

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!



Reflections and Inspirations – submitted by Sharyn Funderwhite

- “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.” Robert Frost
- “You give but little when you give of your possessions.
It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”
Kahlil Gibran
- “And think not you can direct the course of love,
for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.”
Kahlil Gibran
- All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not the science of honesty and
good nature.”
Montaigne
- If a man were to conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men,
and another conquer one, himself, he indeed is the greatest of the
conquerors.” Buddha
- “To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.”
Robert Louise Stevenson
- “All people smile in the same language.” Unknown
- “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”
Tennyson
- “Your soul is oftentimes a battle field upon which your reason and your
judgement wage war against your passion and your appetite.”
Kahlil Gibran
- “He who smiles rather than rages is always the stronger.”
Japanese Wisdom
- “It was to this God called you; because Christ suffered for you and left you
an example, so that you would follow in His steps.”
1 Peter 2:21
- “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him,
who are called according to His purpose.”
Romans 8:28
- “To see God in everything makes life the greatest adventure there is.”
Unknown
- “Give us a clear vision that we may know where to stand, and what to stand
for --- because unless we stand for something we shall fall for anything”
Peter Marshall

September 2021

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p “We Are” Vigil Via Zoom <i>D. Legnini Vacation</i>	9:00a WIC <i>D. Legnini Vacation</i>	
Offering: CWittrock 5 Communion 10:30a Worship 12:30p Deacons meeting	<i>Labor Day</i> 6 Church office closed.	7 6:30p Zumba 7:00p MAC	8	9 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal 7:30p Compassionate Friends	10	11
Offering: M. Eitl 12 10:30a Worship 12:30p Worship & Music 7:00p Pub Theology @ The Foodery	13 6:30p Zumba 7:30p Property	14 6:00p Staff meeting 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Personnel *Open Forum 7:00p Parish Life	15	16 9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p “We Are” Live Vigil @ Main & Bridge Streets <i>Sue Smith vacation</i>	17 9:00a WIC <i>Sue Smith vacation</i>	18
Offering: K. Grocki 19 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 12:00n Women’s Circle	20 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Finance & Stewardship	21 6:30p Zumba 7:15p Church Growth	22	23 10:00a Food ministry	24	25
Offering: R Williams 26 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 12:00n ASP Luncheon 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	27 6:30p Zumba	28 6:30p Zumba	29	30 10:00a Food ministry		