



• Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown



The Gospel Choir of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. (From left to right) front row: Irene Overton, Mary Lundy, Catherine Clever. Second row: Andrea Overton, Sheila Heyer-Rivera, Gloria Bethea, Heidi Marcado-Littles, Arlene Grace. Third row: Ted Walkenhorst, Randy Clever, Robert Archer, Charles Bethea, Jason Williams, Dick Liberty. Not pictured: Sara Carter Blanford, Director

Gospel Choir Sing-Off at FPCG on May 22

First Church and its Gospel Choir will play host to the Crossroads Concert Series Gospel Choir Sing-Off on May 22 in our own sanctuary. Two well-known musical ensembles, the St. Thomas Gospel Choir and Waverly Alston in the Company of Friends, will be featured. The St. Thomas Choir is a “one bodied, one spirit Christ-centered community choir which spreads the Gospel through music.” Waverly Alston Friends is a sacred jazz group who also does Gospel R&B. Their primary mission is “to provide creative and innovative musical arrangements ministering the word of God, the love of God, and the hope of God through song.” The concert which will begin at 3:00 pm is free, but an offering in support of the series will be taken. Following the program, everyone is invited to a “meet and greet” reception in Longstreth Hall for conversation and light refreshments. This is the last program in the Crossroads Concert Series for 2015-2015 season.

SUNDAY EVENING BREAD & CUP HONORS PORTER



The popular Bread and Cup series at the church has started up again. On Sunday, May 1, the opening program, entitled “A Time to Plant,” drew a crowd of about 70 persons and featured performers Ed Jacobs, pianist, and Khalil Overton, pianist and singer. Khalil, who grew up at FPCG, is the son of Andrea Overton, the brother of Josh, and the grandson of Irene Overton. An open mike drew several performers, including a nine-year-old singer. A bountiful pot-luck dinner was shared.

The evening was dedicated to the life and legacy of Alfonso F. Porter, Jr., the father of the Rev. Kevin Porter. Mr. Porter died earlier this year.

More Bread and Cup evenings are being planned by a committee headed by Contina Lundy with members Tim Robinson, Debra Gary and Rose Slater.

➤ **Get involved! To assist with Bread and Cup Evenings, contact Contina Lundy at 215-512-8824.**



Dr. Thurman

New Organist To Begin In June

On June 5, Dr. F. Anthony Thurman will assume the duties of organist and director of music at the church. Dr. Thurman holds B. A. and M. Music degrees from the University of Louisville and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Manhattan School of Music. He currently is the Director of Development and Communications for the American Guild of Organists and has served as organist at the Irvington Presbyterian Church in Irvington, New Jersey.



Space Planning Is Under Consideration



In an effort to think about our building strategically and re-imagine how we use the space (including where programs are located), the Session hired Mark Thompson & Associates to help us develop a comprehensive space plan. The goal of this plan is to steward the gift of our building in ways that reflect the mission of First Church and help us best love and serve our neighbors in Germantown. We have been working diligently with Mark through multiple rounds of meetings to determine space requirements and think creatively about the future of the church and the neighborhood. The process of looking at our building (from the basement gym to the third floor “apartment” and everything in between) was inspiring.

As a result of these working sessions, Mark has prepared a comprehensive document with recommendations of how to use the building more efficiently. While the Ad Hoc Committee was amazed at the possibilities our building holds, we do recognize the challenges that come with change. We invite you to pray with us for God’s vision at First Church. We are excited to receive the Mission Study Plan next week as its recommendations will help us to further guide the conversations and future decisions of First Church, including how we use our building.



Copies of Mark’s report are available for First Church members to review, available at the church office.

The Pastor’s Paragraph



Randy Bremer,
Interim Pastor

The Mission Study team is to be congratulated for the outstanding work they did compiling their study. On May 4, 2016, the Session accepted it and expressed profound thanks to the team. This study makes a vital contribution to our congregation by articulating our history and defining the challenges we face going into the future. When the Presbytery of Philadelphia approves it, our next step will be the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee by the congregation. Your study of the document is encouraged. I have greatly enjoyed my association with FPC in Germantown and look forward to continuing our time together as this process leading to the call of your next pastor continues.

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Get Your Copy

Link to bit.ly/1VANN3R to download a copy or for those who prefer, a copy is available at the church office.

Coffee Hour Needs Helpers



The Congregational Development & Fellowship Committee is on the look-out for those interested in hosting a Coffee Hour. Please see someone in the kitchen or check out the new bulletin board next to the kitchen to volunteer.



A Letter From Heidi Mercado-Littles



Heidi Mercado-Littles

To My First Church Family:

To everything there is a season and a time for every matter under Heaven. (Ecclesiastes.) As I write to you, the moving truck is parked in front of our townhouse in Roxborough and is being loaded. Dieter will receive them this afternoon at our new home in Magnolia, Delaware.

Our decision to move comes after extensive research to find a place where our retirement dollars will stretch as much as possible. We decided on Delaware because it keeps us close to our kids, Erika and Antonio, and our friends.

What does this mean for my role as Parish Visitor? I will continue to serve our congregation at least until we have called our new pastor and he or she has had a chance to settle in and get to know the members, including those I minister to on a regular basis. My plan is to spend a day in Philadelphia (most likely Wednesdays) to “do rounds” and attend staff meeting. What I won’t be able to do is drop everything and go when there is an immediate pastoral concern. But I will alert Rev. Randy, Rev. Kevin, and the respective Deacon when these situations arise. As I do now, I will continue to keep in touch with members with phone calls and cards/notes. I also hope to be in church some Sundays, but unfortunately I will no longer be able to sing in the Chancel or Gospel Choirs and that makes me very sad. After all, it was the Oratorio Choir which brought me to First Church in the first place. I ask for your prayers at this time of transition for our family. And as I always do, I will pray for you. God bless you.

- Heidi



Joan Harris sits behind her desk, in front of TV monitors.

Have You Met Joan Harris, Administrative Assistant?

Joan Harris could well be called “The Voice of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown” since hers is the voice you hear answering the telephone in person or on a recording.

First Presbyterian’s administrative assistant is a native Philadelphian, a graduate of Northeast High School and the possessor of numerous courses, most of them in the field of journalism, from Temple University. A legal secretary for several Philadelphia law firms, most notably Ballard

Spahr, Joan has occupied the church office now for approximately a year and a half. When she was looking for a part-time job, a mutual friend of hers and David Daugherty’s told her of the position.

“It’s certainly a friendly and welcoming place,” Joan said. “I so enjoy my many conversations with the members here.” The congenial Ms. Harris is a reader, primarily of non-fiction, yet her favorite book is the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*. In addition to reading, she paints in watercolors, crafts stained glass, loves music and movies, and keeps up with her daughter, Rachel, who is a psychology major at Guilford College in North Carolina.

Joan notes that while she has met many members of the congregation, she looks forward to knowing more of us. Arrange to stop in the office Wednesdays through Fridays, 9:00 am-4:00 pm, and say hello!

THEY ALSO SERVE...

Jesse Padgett, who has directed the choir, played the piano for morning worship and shared his musical compositions with the congregation for several weeks.

Chris Scott, who spearheaded another successful Be the Change program, an event that celebrates Keep a Child Alive (KCA) and raises money for children and families affected by HIV in Africa and India. This year’s event raised \$3,400. The April Challenge Offering, still being tallied, also was designated for KCA.

Dani Howard who provided a seven-course dinner for the church members under her care as a deacon.

Joe Leube and **Randy Rosensteel** who recently compiled the new church directory (copies are available in the church office).

Maddy Valentine, who is a member of the Governing Commission of the Synod of the Trinity, encompassing all of Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio and West Virginia with 16 presbyteries and 1342 churches. Maddy recently spoke before the Leadership Collegium of our Presbytery.

Marja Kaisla, founder of the Crossroads Concert Series, who has been guest organist several times.

The late **Winnie Fahs**, who bequeathed her lifetime of needlework pieces to FPCG. Those pieces were available free to members in coffee hour on May 1.

Drew Hood, Rosy Walkenhorst, Daniel Conner, Arlene Grace, Dick Liberty, Kristina Ohemeng and **Sam Whyte** who recently completed the Church Mission Study after six months of deliberation.

Terry Boyer and **Harold Whaley** who have returned to the church to assist as sextons after the resignation of facilities superintendent Jesse Jacobs. They will be working with Robert Patterson and Taniya Matthews.

Sherry and **Bob Archer** who, between the two of them, have served on numerous boards and committees since uniting with the church in November of 2008. In September, the Archers will be moving to Atlanta, Georgia, to be closer to family.

FPCG’s Freedom School runs June 27 - August 12

Freedom School is a seven-week program that offers an exciting morning enrichment component using the award winning Children’s Defense Fund Freedom Schools Program curriculum. Imagine a room full of children clapping, chanting, laughing and learning to fall in love with books & reading!

Find more information at:

fpcgermantown.org/ministries/children-youth/freedom-school

Porter, Young Oregon-Bound for 222nd General Assembly



The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) meets biennially in even-numbered years. It consists of commissioners elected by each of its 172 presbyteries.

When the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA convenes in Portland, Oregon, the week of June 18-25, at least two Germantown Presbyterians will be in attendance. They are the Rev. Kevin Porter and William G. Young, both of whom will take an active part in the proceedings which will include discussions about and possible voting on such issues as Presbyterian identity, environmental issue and the election of at least two top denominational leaders. Members of all Presbyterian churches are asked to remember the General Assembly in their prayers.

Windows is a publication of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown.

For questions regarding the information published here or to submit content, please contact the church office.

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“I think I have a very powerful guardian angel who has had her hands full keeping me safe.”

Marney Hague’s ‘Nine’ Lives

The 30th anniversary on April 26 of the Chernobyl disaster gave Marney Hague many moments of reflection. Marney was working out of London, and as she has written, “... I had four close calls with terrorism and other dangers which could have caused me either physical harm or death. I had booked a seat on the PanAm flight that was blown up by Libyans over Lockerbie, Scotland, but changed my plans to a day later departure.

“I was scheduled to arrive in Rome’s airport on a spring day when the Red Guard blew up a bomb at the airport that killed and maimed dozens of people, but again I had changed my flight to a day later and missed the explosion.

“The week that the Chernobyl Nuclear Reactor exploded in Ukraine, Russian, I was working in Austria, and I had planned to stay for the weekend. For some unknown reason, I felt I should return to London on Friday night instead of staying on for the beautiful May weather there in Vienna. Had I stayed, I would have been outside and radiated by the dense radioactive cloud that passed over Vienna on Saturday morning. (The Russians didn’t admit to the reactor meltdown until several days after the event.)

“Later on in my stay in London, I was nearly present at a Shin Fein bombing at a London Underground Station, narrowly missing the train involved in the explosion that I normally got to the Tottenham Court Rd. Station for Sunday church services. If I were a cat, I’d be mostly out of my nine lives allotment. I think I have a very powerful guardian angel who has had her hands full keeping me safe.”

CHALLENGE OFFERINGS FOR MAY & JUNE

MAY Freedom School



Generous giving will provide scholarship assistance to the scholars attending the June 27-August 12 school at the church. Many of the children who attend cannot afford the tuition, and First Church’s assistance will be invaluable.

JUNE The Deacons



Additional financial support will aid the deacons in their ministries of compassion and service to the poor, the hungry, the sick, the friendless, the oppressed, all those in distress.

Lectionary Readings For June

Our faith as Presbyterians is rooted in Holy Scripture. Lectionary readings are used regularly as the foundation of our worship and preaching. For those who may want to read, reflect upon and study upon the weekly lesson, here are the readings. Note that changes can and may be made.

June 5

*Third Sunday after Pentecost
Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

1 Kings 17:8-16 [17-24] Psalm 146
Galatians 1:11-24
Luke 7:11-17

June 19

*Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

1 Kings 19:1-4 [5-7] 8-15a
Psalm 42 and 43
Luke 8:26-39

June 12

*Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time*

1 Kings 21:1-10 [11-14] 15-21a
Psalm 5:1-8
Galatians 2:15-21
Luke 7:36-8:3

June 26

*Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14
Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62

The First Presbyterian Church
in Germantown

The mission of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is to reflect the loving presence of Christ in Germantown as we serve others faithfully, worship God joyfully, and share life together in a diverse and generous community.

Final 2015 Financial Report

In 2015 we again faced a year of transition and change. We praise God that for one more year we were able to meet those challenges and continue to carry out God’s work here in Germantown. Here are the results for 2015 from a financial perspective.

» HIGHLIGHTS

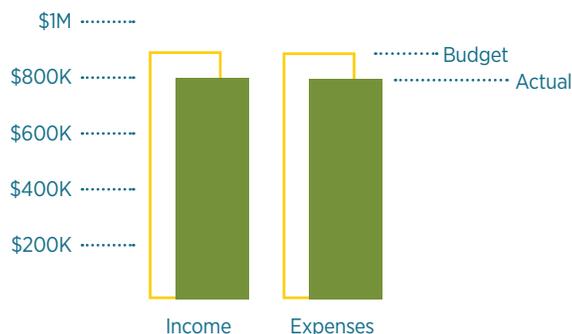
Pledges received exceeded the goal by \$5,664. Thanks to all!

The carry over reserve from 2014 was not needed, so the endowment withdrawals were less than budgeted.

Expenses: our expenses were less than we budgeted for several reasons:

- ✓ salaries due to variations in staffing levels after the budget was formulated
- ✓ property savings from a new service contract
- ✓ heating system updates restored our ability to use natural gas as the primary source for heating

	2015 Budget	2015 Actual	Difference
Income	\$850,550	\$786,241	\$(64,309)
Expenses	\$846,614	\$781,173	\$(65,441)
Net	\$3,936	\$5,068	



» LOOKING AHEAD

The Session approved a revised budget that shows a small surplus based on current conditions.

Stewardship and pledging are vital to our financial health. A letter is currently being sent to all members to further explain the important role that you all play in our ability to carry out our ministry and mission here in Germantown.

Our stewardship campaign for 2016 has been promising, but there are still some faithful members who have not yet pledged. Remember that you can indicate your support by continuing to contribute if your personal status prevents a pledge commitment at this time. Please give this your prayerful consideration to help ensure that we can carry out our mission both this year and for many years to come.

ANNUAL MEETING VOTES ON REPORTS

The denomination’s Book of Order calls for an annual meeting of the congregation to be held, and following that, First Church’s meeting was held on Sunday, May 15, with the necessary quorum present.

Moderated by the pastor, the meeting considered a report of the 2016 Nominating Committee as well as the 2015 Consolidated and Revised 2016 Budget.

Lois Nafzinger, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented a slate of officers to be voted upon: For Elder: Class of 2017, Gloria Bethea; Class of 2018, Ted Walkenhorst; Class of 2019, Deborah Thompson, Dolores Solomon and Joseph Leube. For Deacon: Class of 2019, Dick Liberty, Diane Filter and Ruth Cato. The slate was accepted unanimously.

Also voted upon and accepted was the Church Nominating Committee for 2016-17: Ernest Freeman, Klaas Hockeman-Boerman, Leah Hood and Mary Lundy. Two members of the Session and one from the Diaconate will be selected later.

In the other item of business, Peter Smith presented a financial report on behalf of the Administration and Finance Committee, a summary of which may be found in the article to the left supplied by Jim Thompson. The congregation voted, again unanimously, to accept the report.



We need to improve our emphasis on planned giving and other estate planning items that will enable our endowment to keep pace with our needs. **Do you have the church as the beneficiary in your estate documents?**

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

January 17, 2016

Mark Amasis &
Sally McCord-Amasis
children: Aidan, Tye, Amara

Dhyan Cassie

Lechelle Garnett
child: Madison Lundy

Kerisha Johnson

Stephanie Garrett

March 2, 2016

Joy Ahn & Peter Ahn
children: Micha, Nathan, Aria
Peter was previously under
care of The Presbytery of
Colorado and was recently
officially released.

Birthdays



May

Mary Lundy 1	Douglas Payne 15
Rose Slater 7	Glenna Hazeltine 24
Janeisha Gibbs 8	Maurice Horne 25
James Thompson 12	Aaron Bass 26
Donna Bremer 12	Madison Lundy 27

June

John Roberts 4	Kit Clever 22
Gail Hill 10	Dave Wolford 25
Norma Kilson 14	Bette Young 26
Robert Swenson 19	Jason Williams 27
Nancy Muth 20	Ian Burton 30



Those Whom We Have Lost Awhile

2016 Deaths

Jayne Dambman
deceased January 1
former member, joined in 1974

Keith Benjamin
deceased February 11
son of Mary Benjamin

Norma Mercer
deceased February 20
member since 1969

Myrtle Jackson
deceased March 21
member since 2000

Delva Edwards
deceased March 24
member since 1994

Marjorie Bamont
deceased April 20
member since 1955



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DELIVER TO:

