



• Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
February 2019

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From the Pastor

by Rev. Rebecca Segers



Christmas is over and Lent has yet to begin. The pulpit vestments are green, signaling Ordinary Time in our church calendar. We are in an “in-between” time. That seems appropriate given our Judeo-Christian Heritage as well as February as Black History month.

Certainly the Jewish people knew in-between times. After all, they spent forty years in the desert on the journey from slavery to being a people with a land. One could argue the same for people of color in this country—and that we remain in an in-between time until all people are offered an equal ability to build lives of security and abundance.

If you look at the liturgical calendar, there are usually 33 weeks of Ordinary Time; that is, time that is not engaged in a Holy season, such as Lent, Eastertide, Pentecost, Advent, or Christmas. So more of the year is “ordinary” than not. I think this fits when you think about the reality of life. Most of our lives are not spent in special celebrations like birthdays or weddings or vacations, but in the midst of the ordinary, the in-between times.

Then the question would be how do we respond in those in-between times so that we are actually moving toward the goal of God's Kingdom rather than simply going through the motions?

One of the things I truly appreciate about First Pres is the desire and honest attempt to spend our time in meaningful ways, rather than simply living day to day, just getting by. I am grateful to live and work in a community that is striving, however incompletely, to respond in love to the struggles we all bear collectively. I look forward to stepping out in faith alongside you in this “in-between” season, as well as in those that are joyous, and those that are challenging. May we together “press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 3:14)

- Rev. Rebecca Segers

Items for the March issue of Windows are due on February 10. Send to fpcgwindows@gmail.com.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Sundays at 10 a.m.

Everyone is invited to worship, study and enjoy friendships at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. There are service, outreach and fellowship opportunities in abundance. In addition to weekly and monthly scheduled services and activities, **visit our Special Events web pages for more information.**

To learn more, please email fpcg.germantown@gmail.org or call the church office at 215-843-8811.

Windows is a publication of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. For questions regarding the information published here or to submit content, please call the church office at 215-843-8811 or email: fpcgwindows@gmail.com.

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Third Sunday Shares

January's Third Sunday event celebrated the story of the little boy sharing his 5 loaves and 2 fish with Jesus, and feeding 5,000 people as a result! We too shared—muffins within each small group, but also our thoughts about sharing from what has been given to us, and what we think belongs to us. We also looked for stories about what it feels like in our lives through choosing a photograph and seeing the story in it.

Join us after worship on Sunday, February 17th for our next "Third Sunday" event, and get to know your neighbor and God a little better while having some fun in the process.



(above & upper right): Participants ponder and discuss what it means to share; (lower right); Dani and Ted find metaphors for their experiences in photos; (below): A wide variety of photographs were available to choose from.



February Birthdays!



Elizabeth Drum	February 1
Andrea Overton	February 3
Louise David	February 4
Wynter Jones	February 4
Amara McCord-Amasis	February 5
D.J. Clever	February 7
Herb Henze	February 8
Arlene Ricketts	February 8
Mimi Kotto-Ohemeng	February 9
Evadney Miller	February 10
Debbie Ricketts	February 11
Carolyn Asher	February 13
Pamela Murray	February 13
Deborah Thompson	February 14
Marlene Young	February 14
Mary Benjamin	February 15
Faith Wolford	February 15
Regina Carter	February 23
Carolyn Ballard-Freeman	February 24
Shanise Gladden	February 25
Earl Ball	February 26
David Corbin	February 26

Introducing FPCG's New Sextons

The Personnel Committee would like to introduce you to our newest members of the FPCG staff: Assistant Building Manager David Slaughter and Sexton Anthony Nixon.

David "Dave" Slaughter has twenty-plus years experience in contracting, including owning his own business, and brings a wealth of experience to First Pres. He has passed the company mantle to his sons and is happy to enter this next phase in his life, enabling him to stay close to home and his wife. Dave is knowledgeable about all things building-oriented and has already been involved in the routine repair and maintenance that is part and parcel of caring for a facility as old and complex as FPCG.

Anthony "Tony" Nixon comes to us from numerous positions in janitorial maintenance, with twenty-plus years experience at area hospitals and supermarkets. He brings an attention to detail and meticulous nature to the work, assuring that our building continues to be pristine and well-cared for.

We are grateful for the experience, knowledge, and positive attitudes both bring to our community. Please take a moment to welcome them when you're in the building.

Glad you're a part of the FPCG family, Dave and Tony!



FPCG's new sextons: David Slaughter (left) and Tony Nixon (right)

Transformed by Gratitude

As we heard during our stewardship season last fall, the theme was to commit to **Living in Gratitude** by providing for the transformative work we have done as a family of God. This includes providing resources for this ministry to continue.

We are so grateful to report that so many members have made financial commitments to The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown for 2019!

In mid-January, as the deadline for this issue of *Windows* occurs, we have received 71 pledge commitments totaling \$293,244 (81.4% of our goal). We have 2018 pledgers who have not yet responded that based on their past giving could add \$18,395 (5.1% of our goal). Also, there are 2018 contributors that based on their past giving may contribute \$43,225 (12% of our goal). Together this represents 98.6% of our goal but we are still over \$5,000 short.

Indications of increased support include 49 who have pledged in both years and have increased their giving by 13.5%. We also have 11 former contributors who pledged for 2019 and 11 new pledgers.

Notes of **Gratitude** have been sent by our pastor to all those who have pledged for 2019. Giving statements for 2018, including acknowledgment of your actual pledge amount, will be in the mail by early February.

We are blessed by those who continue to give generously. Even if you have not submitted a pledge card for 2019, please consider submitting your card soon so we can plan accordingly for our 2019 ministry. And please remember we still have a shortfall!

God has richly blessed the members of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown and we gratefully anticipate your continuing year-round generosity to continue to grow our ministry in 2019!

Our Transforming Values

As a community of faith, we pledge to be:

- Transformed by Gratitude
- A Possibilities People
- Aware of Abundance
- Honest & Open
- Co-operative & Collaborative

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR 2018

INCOME

\$748,488

EXPENSES

\$745,808

For 2018 the paid pledges were \$344,753, which exceeded our budgeted amount by \$9,753. This is wonderful news and is a testament to the commitment of all of you. As mentioned previously your financial commitment is essential to our financial success.

Expenses are slightly below budget. This is due to the diligence on the part of our various committees, and also due to an unexpected contribution of \$10,000 to offset property expenses. Property expenses, in particular are ahead of budget, due to our utility bills but also continual maintenance on our older building.

The net effect of our total income for the year of \$748,488 and our expenses of \$745,808 is a net excess of \$2,680 for 2018. Thanks to everyone for making this happen.

Giving to the Church—it's easier than you think!

More ways than ever to keep your pledge up to date

For years I struggled to keep my pledge up to date. November would roll around and in addition to shopping for Christmas, I was scrambling to make good on my pledge. Then I discovered using on line bill pay for my church pledge as well as paying my electric bill or phone bill and other recurring bills. The discipline of an automatic deduction for my pledge every month kept me on track. I felt a little odd when the offering plate came around and I did not have an envelope to put in, but I knew my pledge was up to date and that was a good feeling. Now I just drop an “I Gave Electronically” card from the pew pocket in the basket and I feel part of the worship of giving. But I am getting ahead of my story. There are so many ways to give, let me count the ways.

Envelope with cash or check. This is the traditional way pledges are paid. When you pledge, ask for “envelopes”. At the beginning of the year you will receive envelopes for each Sunday and additional envelopes for the Challenge Offerings. You may place cash or a check in the envelope, seal it and place it in the offering plate. The envelopes are personalized with your number and there is no personal information on the outside of the envelope. The back office who credits pledges payments are grateful when Givers use their pledge envelopes. It makes for fewer mistakes and saves time for our bean counters!

Automatic deduction from your bank account. The church has an arrangement with a company called Vanco that will deduct your pledge from your bank account weekly or monthly as you choose. To set this up, you need to call our bookkeeper, Cindy. She is at the church on Thursday morning each week. She will need the bank account information you wish to use to pay your pledge. She will also need the amount you wish to pay and whether you wish to pay weekly or monthly. Once she sets it up, your pledge payment will be made without any more effort on your part.

Online bill pay service. This service is offered on line by many banks and credit unions and makes it easy to make recurring payments. How online bill pay works is straightforward: You log in to your bank account, navigate to its online bill pay feature. Set the church up just like any other service provider. You will need to provide the name, address, and telephone number for the church. It will also ask you for an account number. The account number for your pledge is your full name. By using your name as the account number, the church will be able to credit your pledge account when the payment arrives. After you set the church up as a “biller” or “provider” then authorize your bank to send payments for you to the church. You can set up a recurring payment so that your pledge is sent weekly or monthly, as you choose. Once again, no more effort is needed on your part.

Church Website and/or PayPal – The church has a PayPal account which is available on the website at www.fpcgermantown.org. At the bottom of the website click on Giving. A donate button will pop up. Click Donate and fill in the amount and other requested information. You may even set up a monthly giving plan here.

E-GIVING Pew cards. The latest way to give is the new E-Giving cards in the pockets of each pew. Type the bit.ly into your browser or using your cell phone, you can scan the QR code on the card. Either will take you to the on-line giving page on the church website. Fill in the amount you wish to give. Then you may place the card in the offering plate to acknowledge your E-Gift. Your gift will be recorded to you whether you place the card in the plate or not. I like to place something in the plate, I feel more a part of the offering time.

- Lois Bethea



FPCG Rises Against Hunger!

PhotoGrid

The 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service hosted by FPCG was a success on so many levels.

Once again, FPCG hosted the “Rise Against Hunger” Project. Project Organizer Chris Scott and his small army of volunteers successfully assembled 25,056 food packs to be shipped internationally to the poverty-stricken. Amazingly, 25,065 kits were assembled in less than 5 hours with the help of 200 volunteers. This humanitarian effort will bless so many and improve the quality their lives.

This MLK Day of Service also served as an excellent opportunity for FPCG and our community to prove that people from different races, different age groups from toddlers to seniors, different socio-economic backgrounds, and different religious backgrounds are capable of peacefully uniting behind a positive humanitarian cause, can come together as strangers and leave as friends, having completed a common goal successfully. All of the volunteers’ actions and thoughts embodied the true meaning and values of Dr. King’s Legacy.

In 2019, it is great to know that Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech is becoming closer to reality after 50 years.

FPCG extends its appreciation to all in attendance. We look forward to hosting this event next year and beyond.

God Bless, Deacon Carolyn Tarver



(above): the whole work crew; (below): the work they did

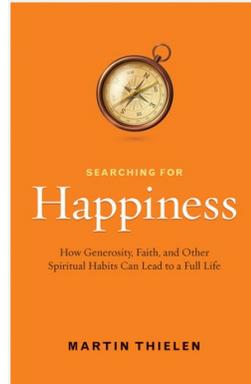


January Session Highlights

- Session approved 2019 dates for the **Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**: Sunday, January 6, 2019 – First Sunday of the New Year; Sunday March 10, 2019 – The First Sunday in Lent; Thursday, April 18, 2019 – Maundy Thursday; Sunday, June 9, 2019 – Pentecost; Sunday, August 4, 2019 – Mid Summer Sunday; Sunday, October 6, 2019 – World Communion Sunday; Sunday, December 1, 2019 – First Sunday of Advent.
- Andrea Overton and Bob Seed were elected commissioners to the Saturday, February 9, 2019 **Philadelphia Presbytery Meeting** at the Olney Presbyterian Church. Come one, come all!
- Delores Solomon, **Congregational Development** chair, reminded Session that **coffee hour hosts** are needed and that Rachel Circle hosts every 5th Sunday.
- **Mission and Outreach** Chair, Gloria Bethea, reported that the twelve **Challenge Offerings** for 2019 have been determined: Healing Children - Greater Philadelphia, FPCG Deacons, She Academy, One Great Hour of Sharing, Beacon Art Ministry, Friends of Vernon Park, Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission, PAR- Recycle Works, Athletes in Action, Presbyterian Peace & Justice, Rise Against Hunger, and Presbyterian Joy Offering.
- Joe Leube, **Administration & Finance** Chair, reported that the 2018 market value of the church's endowment is down from 2017. Joe stated this reduction in value will affect our distribution in 2020. Also, the **2019 pledge campaign** update from Jim Thompson was encouraging as pledges and estimates of giving are very close to the \$360,000 goal. Joe will finalize the 2019 FPCG budget in February after all pledges are known.
- **Property** Chair, Marc DiNardo, reported the leak in the nursery roof was investigated and an attempt to seal/coat the subject area will be made. Also, leaks in the NE corner of the gym continue to be a serious nuisance. The committee is looking into replacing the shades in the Primary Room. **Other areas requiring attention**: heating/air conditioning actuator valves, east parking lot gate repairs, possible upgrading of sanctuary thermostats, exhaust fans in the gym, a leaky dishwasher drain, and furnace chimney maintenance. FPCG is blessed to have Marc spearheading this hard working committee!
- **Date to remember**: Saturday March 2, 2019. Why? **The Women's Retreat!** See Pastor Segers, Allison Seed, Sara Greene, Liz Drum, and Gloria Bethea for details.

Searching for Happiness, Part 9

The book series study will be completed this month as we meet on Sunday, February 3rd immediately following worship and on Tuesday evening, February 5th at 5:00 p.m., in the Finney Room with Rev. Rebecca Segers.



We will cover the last two chapters in the book: “Contented People Care for Their Bodies” and “Contented People Care for Their Souls.” There are two reasons for this joining of topics: 1) They are deeply related to one another; and 1) It will allow us to conclude before Lent, during which we will take up a new Bible series.

For five weeks, beginning after Ash Wednesday, Rev. Segers will lead a “Wilderness” Bible discussion. Each week will be an independent free-standing discussion on a “wilderness” topic: hunger, suffering, illness, poverty, and violence, from a biblical perspective. Stay tuned for more information in the March Windows.



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.

Women’s Retreat Coming!

Date: Saturday, March 2, 2019

Time: 8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Place: Cranaleith Spiritual Center,
13475 Proctor Road, Philadelphia

Topic: “The Art of Living Faithfully”

Leader: Rev. Rebecca Blake

Rev. Rebecca Blake followed several different vocational paths before becoming a co-founding pastor at Beacon, a PC(USA) worshipping community in the Fishtown/Kensington area. Trained as a visual artist, writer, theologian, and pastor, she thrives in bringing together those skills to facilitate transformation in the lives of individuals and communities. She loves laughing with people around art tables and s’mores in the yard, getting to know neighbors, making spaces for creative expression in worship, in the classroom, and in various program offerings. She believes that you can never have enough glitter and that the beauty of God lies within every person.

Cost: \$30.00



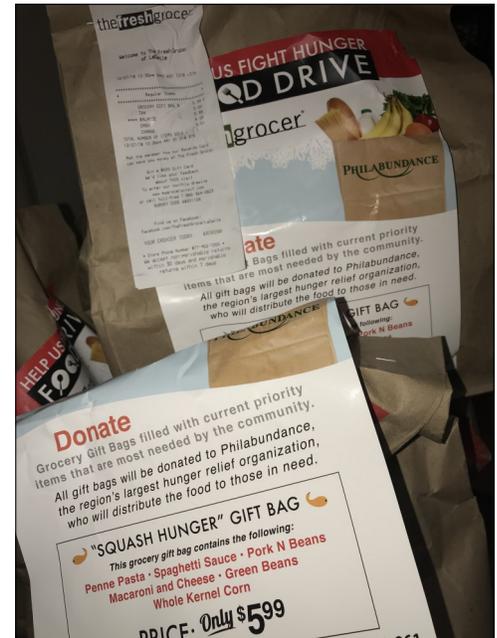
Registration deposit of \$10.00
will reserve your spot!

Gloria Bethea is taking registrations
at the CD table during coffee hour.

Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry News!

Thank You Fresh Grocer!

Thanks to our community partner, Fresh Grocer at LaSalle, GACM has received 50 Squash Hunger Gift Bags filled with staples. At check out, shoppers say yes and donate \$5.99 which covers the cost of the bag contents. Let's continue to support local businesses that support us!



It's Tax Time

Wednesday's, beginning February 6, GACM will offer free tax services using The Benefit Bank, a web-based, completely safe and secure filing service. This expert tax system is designed to maximize your refund and tax credits. You can E-File your local and federal taxes for a speedy return of your refund. (previously within 7 – 10 days)

File with us and enjoy freedom from predatory Refund Anticipation Loans. If you are married and filing a joint return with your spouse, you must have an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$95,000 or less. If you are not filing jointly, you must have an AGI of \$65,000 or less.

Heating Assistance

Did you need help with heating your home this winter? There are programs available to do just that. LIHEAP can provide grants from \$200 - \$1000. Additional aid up to \$600 is available for crisis intervention. And, for seniors and disabled individuals, other resources may help with oil. Broken heater? Call GACM, 215-843-2340 to learn of programs that may repair or even replace your unit.

For more information and eligibility criteria, call the office, 215-843-2340.

Volunteer Opportunity

Each week GACM's Food Cupboard provides food for 50 - 60 households. Many hands are needed to help us receive, sort, stock and serve. Consider joining our Cupboard Team. Whether you choose to work directly with clients, packing bags on our service day or choose to participate on the stock or truck team, your service is needed. Volunteers should be available for a minimum of 2 hours on Tuesday or Thursday. For more information call the office, 215-843-2340 or speak to Eileen Jones or Randy Clever. Feel free to stop by to see us in operation. Tuesday from 11am to 1pm and Thursday 10am – 4pm.

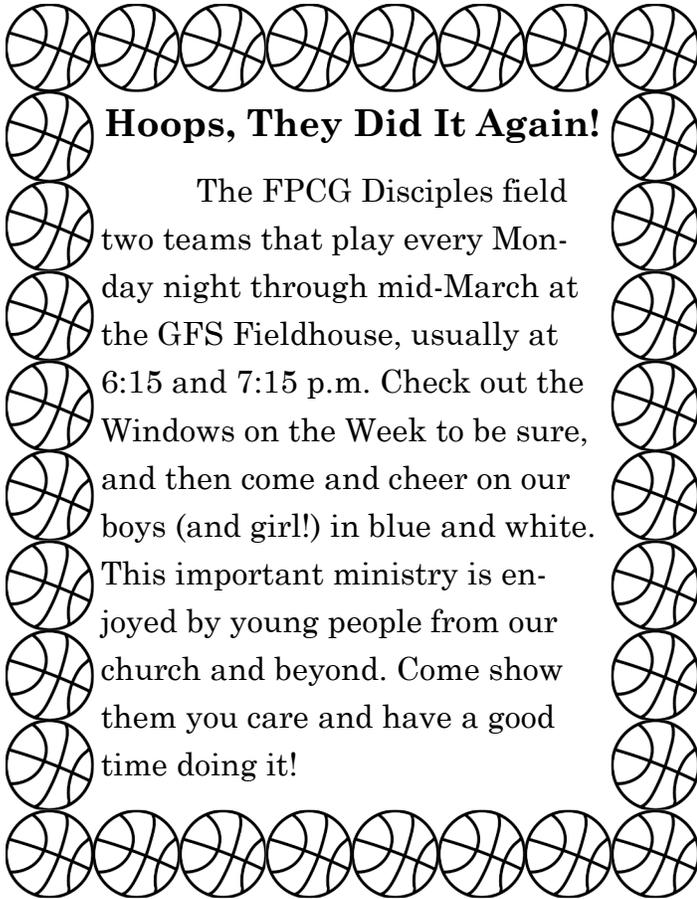
Youth News

Triennium Plans In the Works

On the evening of Sunday, January 27, the second of three Triennium pre-events took place at our very own congregation. Each of the three pre-events are designed to help kids experience some of the elements of a Triennium event.

For this most recent pre-event, 17 youth and 11 leaders and parents (7 families from our church) began the night with an “energizer” in which Christian Heyer-Rivera tried his very best to act like he could lead the group in a “dance.” While a host of First Church youth were thoroughly embarrassed by Christian’s effort, the activity got people off their feet and their blood pumping. These energizers are common at each Triennium. Before each worship session, 5000 youth with their adult leaders are invited to learn a fun dance routine to a popular contemporary song that most kids are familiar with. This allows the young people to get a bit of their youthful energy out in a fun way before focusing in on worshipping God together.

Triennium News (continued on page 11)



Hoops, They Did It Again!

The FPCG Disciples field two teams that play every Monday night through mid-March at the GFS Fieldhouse, usually at 6:15 and 7:15 p.m. Check out the Windows on the Week to be sure, and then come and cheer on our boys (and girl!) in blue and white. This important ministry is enjoyed by young people from our church and beyond. Come show them you care and have a good time doing it!



The two Disciples teams played each other at the January 28th game—a great 2 for 1 opportunity for their fans!



The next activity at our pre-event was a taco dinner, and then we turned our attention to getting to know one another. Through a “mixer” game involving rotating tables and colorful M&Ms, youth and adults alike shuffled from table to table answering “color coded” questions about ourselves while sharing our names and home churches as well. Throughout the Triennium week, youth are led through numerous activities to allow them to get to know kids from their own delegations, but also kids from around the country, and even around the world. Through exchanging Presbytery pins that represent their area of the country, youth start conversations and build relationships with other followers of Christ their own age. The friendly and loving environment shared at Triennium among the youth is often shocking to many of the youth and they experience a way of being in community that quickly becomes a highlight for many who attend.

Finally, we ended our time at First Church with a group game that where kids were divided into six groups and each group built literal walls around their own group with cardboard boxes. We discussed what walls we build around each other, why we build them, what those walls serve to do, and how Jesus Christ calls believers in all times and places to tear down dividing walls of animosity between people. God in Christ has created peace between us and calls the people called by Christ’s name to participate in the ongoing work of reconciliation. A big part of Triennium is the small groups that



(Above): Christian attempts to lead energizers and the group attempts to follow; (below): A time of prayer before discussion.

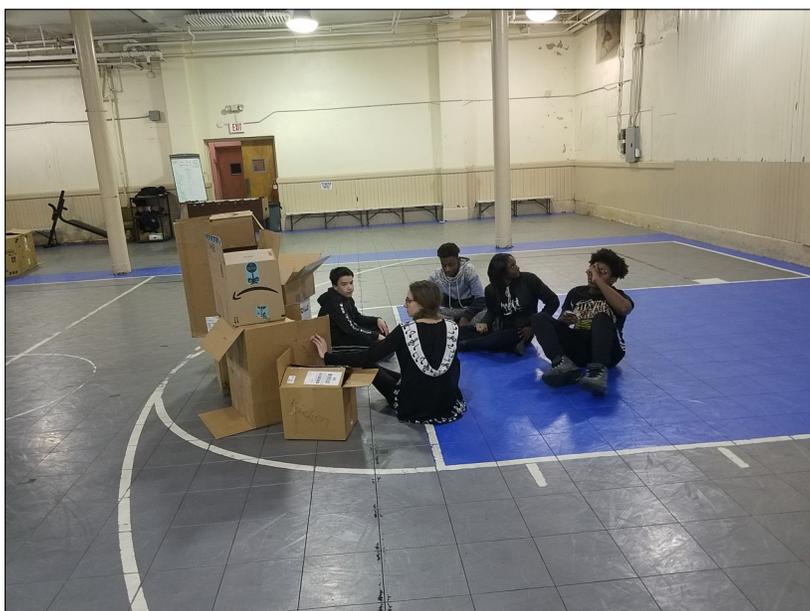


young people will be assigned to. Two times each day youth will be asked to go participate in their small group made up of students from all over the country, to discuss the days events, wrestle with the preached word, and pray for each other. Delegations from Presbyteries also meet in the evenings to share their experiences of the day and consider more deeply the implications of God's love made known to us in Christ. These small groups serve to breakdown walls and help us engage one another as the beloved children of God we are.

The final pre-event for Triennium is on April 28th 6pm-8pm at Carmel Presbyterian Church located in Glenside, PA. Youth and parents can preregister for the event by visiting the following website address: <https://presbyphl.org/events/philadelphia-youth-triennium-committee-hosts-gathering-for-pyt-2019-2/>.

If your child will be entering 9th-12th grade next year, or will be recently graduating high school this spring, please consider giving them the opportunity to attend Triennium with us this summer. It really is a once in a lifetime, life changing, faith building experience. See Christian Heyer-Rivera for more information or to register.

The next Triennium event will be a silent auction during the next called Presbytery meeting on February 9th, 11am-4:15 pm at Olney Presbyterian Church to help raise funds for participants going to Triennium. If you have an item you'd like to donate for auction, a membership pass to one of Philadelphia's many fun activities you'd like to share, a vacation home you'd be willing to offer for a few days, or a service you could provide for donation and bidding, please see Rev. Rebecca Segers or Christian Heyer-Rivera ASAP. Please be on the lookout in the next few months for First Church's own fundraising events to help our youth participate in this national event this summer.



(Above): Our young people experience isolation behind walls; and (right): have fun with the boxes.

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

F. Anthony Thurman, Music Director

Music in Worship

February

During the month of February, in recognition of Black History Month, our choirs will be honoring the heritage of music from the African American tradition. Spirituals and anthems sung in worship will highlight African American composers. Stuart Jasper, tenor, a beloved former section leader in our Chancel Choir, will return as a guest soloist in worship on Sunday, February 17.

March

During the month of March, in recognition of Women's History Month, our choirs will be honoring the gifts of women. Songs and anthems sung in worship will highlight female composers and poets. In addition, two concerts are planned to honor the gifts of women:

- * **Brahms Festival Concert**

The Germantown Oratorio Choir will present a Brahms Festival Concert on Sunday, March 17, at 4 p.m. Rehearsals are on Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The program will feature the music of Brahms, Robert and Clara Schumann in recognition of Clara Schumann's bicentennial. For more information or to participate, call the church office at 212-843-8811 or e-mail music.fpcgermantown@gmail.com.

- * **William & Mary Women's Chorus Concert**

On Friday, March 29, the 50-voice women's chorus from the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, (see photo below) will present a free concert at First Church at 7 p.m. as part of their spring concert tour. Nearly half of the young women will overnight at the church; we are seeking overnight hosts for the remainder of the choir. If you have an extra bedroom to offer, please call the church office at 212-843-8811 or e-mail music.fpcgermantown@gmail.com.



Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Bread & Cup

*Calling on all dancers, musicians, singers, actors, rappers, writers,
comedians, magicians, etc. of all ages.*

*Let's get together on **Sunday, February 24, 2019***

from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

for a night of sharing our talents with each other.

*A light dinner will be served. If you wish to be a part of this event,
please contact Tim Robinson through the church office and
he will sign you up for a four-minute time slot.*



THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN GERMANTOWN

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www.fpcgermantown.org