



• Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
April 2019



From the Pastor

by Rev. Rebecca Segers



One of the best experiences I had while in India was sitting on a stone wall in the ancient Imperial Gardens across the Yamuna River from the Taj Mahal. The gardens aren't really gardens any longer, nor is the river much more than a trickle, but it is a tradition to go there to sit and watch the sunset. You see, the Taj Mahal is famous for its symmetrical white marble façade; and, when the sun goes down, it is rumored to take on the color of the crepuscular light in pastel. While I have seen photos of the famous mausoleum in rose, in gold, in pink, and orange, and now have seen the Taj Mahal myself in person, there was no sunset the night I sat on the stone wall. Instead, the clouds obscured the sun, and the light merely dimmed to the west, while the white marble dimmed to gray along with it. Still it was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen.

Lent is a time when we acknowledge the darkness, walking in the wilderness with our Lord. I have been blessed to spend time with many of you this season in Bible Study, talking about the wilderness times. Times of loss or pain or struggle. Times when our faith tells us not to lose heart, that after death there is resurrection, but in the moment, it can be hard to see that. As the light metaphorically seems to dim around us, rather than showing patterns of rose and gilt, sometimes it just gets darker. Nonetheless, our God remains present, even if sometimes we cannot see or feel that.

In the prophet Jeremiah's letter to the Babylonian exiles, he tells them they are going to be stuck there for a while. A good long while. Seventy years to be precise. Then he goes on to say that they are to do the best they can in less than ideal circumstances, "(f)or surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." They are not to give up or give in, but to live faithfully as God's people in all circumstances.

As the dusk fell on the Taj Mahal, it remained solid and stunning, no less itself than it had been in the daylight. I could have sat there into the night, until the darkness was complete, as a witness that it was there even without starlight to illuminate it. The park guards kicked us out, though, so I didn't have that pleasure. Still, I think that it would be good for me to learn to rest in the knowledge that God is present in the waxing and waning times in our lives. To trust that even when, perhaps especially when, things aren't going the way that I would like, God's plan and purpose are still in effect, and it is simply my job to be a witness in the midst of it all.

- Rev. Rebecca Segers

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Items for the May issue of Windows are due on April 15. 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.com 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:

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3rd Sundays

Intergenerational Interactive Bible Study

First Pres has been building intergenerational relationships through an interactive Bible Study on the 3rd Sunday of the month since the fall of 2018.

In February, we had about 25 people who found the gathering both fun and challenging. We began by looking at beautiful photos of a wide variety of building types in which people live, as well as noticing their foundations, then enjoying lively discussion about the Foundations of Our Faith. Then we built structures with cards, recognizing how sometimes building a firm foundation is not as easy as you might think!



Participants try to build the tallest tower, discovering just how important a good foundation is to be able to do that!

(continued on page 3)

April Birthdays!



<i>Todd Gasper</i>	<i>April 2</i>
<i>Peter Ahn</i>	<i>April 3</i>
<i>Linda Farlow</i>	<i>April 4</i>
<i>Pernell Jackson</i>	<i>April 5</i>
<i>Brittany Jones</i>	<i>April 8</i>
<i>Robert Seed</i>	<i>April 9</i>
<i>Dolores Shanks</i>	<i>April 10</i>
<i>Vera Harrison</i>	<i>April 11</i>
<i>Denise Cowie</i>	<i>April 13</i>
<i>Lydia Overton</i>	<i>April 20</i>
<i>Fay Tomlinson</i>	<i>April 20</i>
<i>Delores (Mandy) Adams - Henderson</i>	<i>April 25</i>
<i>Jason Greene</i>	<i>April 25</i>
<i>Phyl Bryan</i>	<i>April 27</i>
<i>Peggy Garrett</i>	<i>April 28</i>

In March, almost 40 people gathered to tackle the topic of bullying, starting with tableaux from leaders Annie Kotto, Sheila Heyer-Rivera, Andrea Overton, and Reverend Rebecca. Then we recognized Rosa Parks and how she stood up to bullying. Finally, we talked about the woman who sinned, and Jesus standing up for her by helping the people who would harm her to recognize their own failings. We also made sand art to remind us of Jesus drawing in the sand and how we can stand up for ourselves and others in situations where people are being harassed or bullied.

There will be no 3rd Sunday gathering in April, since that is Easter Sunday, but we will hold our final study on Sunday, May 19th in the Longstreth Auditorium immediately following worship



Discussions about Harassment and Bullying were deep and productive; sand art was fun too!

When Retreat Means Going Forward

Twenty-three women from FPCG gathered for a retreat March 2 at Cranaleith Spiritual Center, a conference center run by the Sisters of Mercy northeast of the city. Yes, the getting away from the demands and distractions of every day life was a draw for some of the attendees, but the main purpose was to enhance community, share life journeys, and grow as sisters in Christ despite and because of different backgrounds and experiences. Led by the Rev. Rebecca Blake, pastor and director of Beacon, a ministry in Fishtown, and pastor for Christian Education at Old Pine, women participated in reflective activities and learned more about one another in small groups. Time was available to walk the Cranaleith's labyrinth or grounds, as well as to engage in further conversation with other women. Worship was co-led by Sara Greene and culminated in a joint weaving of ribbons into a wall-hanging that was shared in Sunday morning worship the next day.

Was the purpose met? Here are some responses from participants:

- I'm really glad I came! It moved me, and I came away with a better, clearer knowledge of myself and journey.
- Rebecca B was excellent! The retreat team did a great job.
- Busy work was fine for communicating at table but not best use of time for some.
- Explore other ways for women to connect—social media, email, whatsapp, lunch, dinner, movies, art, cooking, exercise, music, singing.
- Thank you for today.
- Excellent retreat.
- 🥰
- It was such a blessing.

The retreat committee is incorporating suggestions for future events and retreats. Thanks to Liz Drum, Sara Greene, and Allison Seed for serving!



Retreat participants enjoy varied activities and insights with leadership from Rev. Rebecca Blake (above).

Profiles from the Pews - Faith Lewis



There are only a few women in history more deserving of their birth name as our own Faith Lewis. Faith is a native of Philadelphia. She was educated in the public school system, graduated from Saul High School and received a B.A. in History from Temple University.

Her career was exciting and interesting. She was employed as a Contract and Procurement Specialist, a warehouse manager of heavy equipment including military Jeeps, in what she describes as her “Dream Job” in Manheim, Germany before retiring from the U.S. Government.

Faith has been a member of FPCG for over 25 years and raised her son William and daughter Michelle in the church. She has volunteered for various projects and served on many committees during her time here. She is currently a permanent office volunteer. Faith has witnessed many changes here at FPCG both positive and negative. She states that she is very proud of the positive and dynamic path that the church is on currently. Faith loves the church and the congregation and looks forward to continuing to be a force of position change in the future of First Church.

Faith’s hobbies include baking bread and crocheting, and she is quite the history buff. Her love of all things historical motivates her and is responsible for her strong passion and dedication in overseeing the archiving of church records and files.

Recently, Faith assisted Ms. Julia Dunn from Boston, MA, with a personal family genealogy search. Ms. Dunn’s family had been an integral part of the early development and history of FPCG and the presbytery for over 200 years.

Faith and Ms. Dunn were researching her genealogy through the church records, recoding information about births, deaths, marriages, etc. I had the pleasure of observing the women approach the project with the forensic veracity of a Nancy Drew novel, becoming more excited with each new entry and discovery of facts about her family members. It was as if they had opened a time capsule, revealing little known facts about FPCG, such as discovering that

the church was once located at Germantown and Walnut Lane. The large yellow building is still located on the corner.

It is usually assumed that archived books of church history may be a bit boring, however, the two women found personal notes of information that kept them laughing like school girls. One letter was discovered where Ms. Dunn’s great-great-aunt had written stating that she and other single women in the church would walk 2 miles each Sunday to listen and observe their new minister who was also single and quite handsome.

The joy the women were experiencing was infectious to all in the office. The conversation then turned to Germantown today and the needs of children, especially those living in food deserts. Faith’s tenacious faith and quest for improving First Church and its commitment to the community are sure to lend itself to a new venture in the near future—and Ms. Dunn was so moved by Faith’s passion and generosity in helping her look for her family’s history that she left both a donation to the church and to Faith to help make new ministry in this arena happen.

Who knew that some dusty old books locked in a vault for some hundreds of years could create such joy and happiness? I witnessed a beautiful spiritual experience unfold that day, and the love and joy that had been locked away in the vault escaped and came alive. Faith and Julia have caused me to never look at those “old dusty” books the same again. I now see them as filled with the history and mysteries of First Church and the Spirit of the Lord!

YOUTH NEWS

Presbyterian Youth Triennium (PYT)

Update:

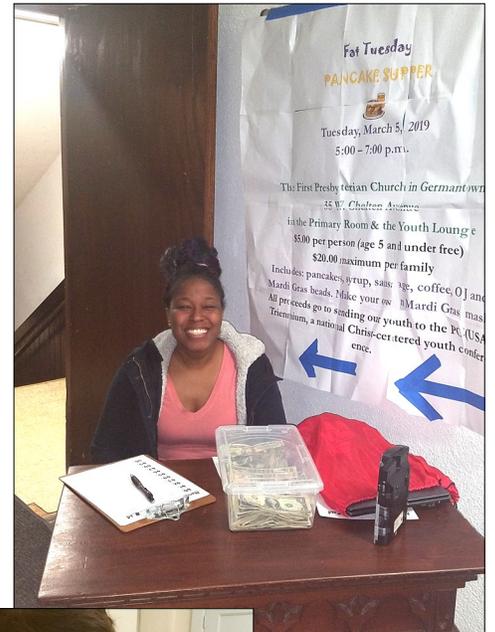


Registration is open for Triennium, we have 9 young people headed to Indiana for Triennium with a few others considering the opportunity. Emanuel Heyer-Rivera, Joshua Overton, Zaria

Cuffee, Abrianna Kendrick, Madison Lundy, Danielle Ohemeng, Jasmine Greene, Trinity Daniels, and Tiffany Daniels will be traveling with dozens of other students from the Philadelphia Presbytery and thousands of other youth nationwide to worship, study, pray and have fun together July 16-20th.

Fundraising has already begun within our own congregation. This is an important part of the planning and lead up to Triennium. This opportunity comes at a cost. The participant cost for the event is \$555. FPCG is committed to seeing any of our members and active youth group participants be able to attend. We have broken down the cost of the event into three payments of \$185 each. The first portion is paid by the participant and their family. After having received the first portion, our congregation's Christian Education committee has budgeted to pay the second payment of \$185 for each participant. The final \$185 per participant is fundraised by the group. Individual FPCG members have come forward on their own to give partial scholarships to participants headed to this event and we thank God for their help, but there is still a balance to be raised. Again, you who have chosen to sponsor know who you are and we thank God for your unsolicited aid in getting our young people to Triennium.

On March 5th we hosted our first congregational fundraiser, a Fat Tuesday Lenten Pancake Supper at the church. The turnout for the fundraising event was fantastic, with church members, family



The Pancake Supper was bounteously supported and so much fun!

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Youth News (cont. from page 6)

members of participants, and our Germantown community at large coming to support the effort. While the final numbers have yet to be completely crunched, its safe at this point to say that this fundraiser made well over \$185, which means another youth from our church has their final portion raised through this event! We want to thank all of you who came out in support and also those who donated to the event even while you were not able to join us for the meal!

More fundraising efforts are coming soon, like our annual Mother's Day flower and bake sale so please be on the lookout and keep giving as unto the Lord knowing that your contribution will provide an exciting, life-giving and unforgettable experience for our young people to learn and grow in the faith God has given them!

Disciples Basketball Update:



The Disciples Basketball Ministry's season is winding down. Our congregation put two teams of young people 14 years old and younger in the Christian Youth Basketball

League. Under our two coaches, Melvin Brown and Christian Heyer-Rivera, the two teams finished the regular season well. The Disciples A team, which includes three of our members (Emanuel Heyer-Rivera, Amir Staten, and Joshua Overton), finished a perfect 8-0, and the Disciples B team second in the standings with a 4-4 finish.

Headed into the playoffs, the FPCG Disciples B team unfortunately were eliminated early in a heartbreaking 28-24 defeat by St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The game was not a total loss in that our players kept playing hard until the final buzzer sounded. This has been a challenge for our B squad throughout the season. As is life, we are not always victorious in every challenge we face, but God asks us to be faithful even when life's struggles seems to get the best of us. We celebrate the B team's effort and the resiliency they have learned throughout the season.

Our FPCG Disciples A team has earned the right to play in the championship game which will be held on April 1st at 6:15pm at the Germantown Friends School Fieldhouse Gym or in the Scattergood Gymnasium located right next to the Fieldhouse. The players and coaches would love to see as many of our friends, family, and members of our church as possible, so please make plans to attend in support of the team and the ministry.

As always, pray for relationships that a being formed among coaches, players, and parents, and the other teams within the league that God might help us to support and encourage each player, their family, and our community as a whole! The Basketball season may end soon, but the relationships of support that are formed and encouraged during the season carry on throughout the whole year, and hopefully for a lifetime and beyond!

Again if you're able, make plans to catch the final championship game on Monday, April 1st at 6:15pm. Come support a wonderful ministry within our congregation and our community at large.



April Good News Youth Corner

Continuing our Windows section called the Good News Youth Corner, this section will

be devoted to lifting up some of the great things that our young people are experiencing and accomplishing. Any parent or member is welcome to share some good news big or small about one of our young people who participate in our community and ministry. Email Christian Heyer-Rivera at christianaheyer@yahoo.com, or text him at 2679725662. When you see the following persons, give them a big congrats for the following:

Elisa Regina Heyer-Rivera turns 8 years old this month. When your taxes are due (April 15th), the

Good News Youth Corner (continued from Page 7)

friends and family of Elisa will be celebrating another year of her life. May God bless you in the upcoming year, and may the Holy Spirit continue to use your creative and joyful spirit to love those around you in the name of Jesus!

Charisma Johnson earned honor roll in her second trimester at Girard College as a fifth grader. Outstanding work Charisma! May God continue to give you the discipline necessary to excel in your studies because it's clear you've been gifted with the intelligence!

Emanuel Heyer-Rivera recently made a decision to accept Germantown Friends School's offer to attend classes there this fall as an eighth grader. Emanuel will be joining our own Amir Staten who already attends GFS as an eighth grader this year. Congrats, Emanuel and keep up the good work, Amir! God bless you both!

Joshua Overton was accepted into Roxborough High School and will be attending there next year as a freshman. Congratulations, Joshua! We are all rooting for your success in all things!

Zaria Cuffee has really stepped up with the little ones in her family. She is always so patient and kind and her family wants her to know just how much she is appreciated. We praise God for how the fruits of the Holy Spirit are so evident in Zaria's life! You are a blessing, Zaria, to so many!

Jasmine Greene was named Student of the Month in March at Hill-Freedman High School. Students who took home this honor received a pizza party and were treated to water ice as well. Their names were also read aloud through out the school's PA system by the principal. While those of us who know you well, Jasmine, know that such an announcement was probably a bit embarrassing for you, your church family wants you to know how proud we are of you and your hard work. As always, our love and prayers are with you!

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

January & February 2019

Actual Pledges \$67,795 Budget to Date \$60,833

Actual Expenses \$148,205 Budget to Date \$127,834

For the first two months of 2019 the paid pledges are on target. Expenses are running higher than we might expect. This is due to the timing of several expenses such as heating and insurance. Since we only have expenses for two months, these expenses are not proportional to the total budget, but are not unexpected.

When the 2019 budget was presented to the congregation in November, we were expecting a deficit. We also were asking for a stretch goal in pledge income for 2019. We met our 2019 pledge goal of \$365,000. This is due to your commitment to our programs at First Church, and we are very grateful.

REVISED BUDGET

At the March Session meeting a revised budget was presented by the Administration and Finance Committee. The Committee requested that each committee reserve 3% of their respective budgets, this still left an income shortage of \$7,467. This action generates a balanced budget for 2019.

By reserving we are requesting that each committee not make commitments which can be deferred until later in the year. The Administration & Finance Committee will monitor income and expenses quarterly, to see if modifications can be made.

Your continued financial commitment is essential to our financial success, and very much appreciated.

Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry News!

LIHEAP

Time is running out to apply for heating assistance through LIHEAP. The program will close April 12th.



There is still time to apply for help to pay your primary or secondary heating costs. Grants range between \$200 & \$1000. Broken heater? Funds remain to repair or replace units. If you know someone who can benefit from this program, spread the word or see Eileen Jones. All Crisis Ministry inquiries are confidential.

LIHEAP Income Limits

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$18,210
2	\$24,690
3	\$31,170
4	\$37,650

Tax Services

Every Wednesday, except March 13, GACM prepares Income tax returns 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. No appointment necessary. For more information, call the office, 215-843-2340.



2019 Walk Against Hunger

Presented By ACME!

Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry joins communities across Philadelphia to help end hunger one step at a time, both in Northwest Philadelphia and around



the region. Hosted by the Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger, the Walk Against Hunger will support the efforts of GACM and hundreds of other agencies to eradicate hunger in our community.

GACM encourages family and friends of all ages to form teams to support GACM and register to walk.

**23rd Annual Walk Against Hunger
to be held on Saturday, April 27, 2019**

Use this link to support GACM: <https://hungercoalition.salsalabs.org/2018germantownavenuecrisisministrycopy1/index.html>

Use this link to register to walk:

<https://hungercoalition.salsalabs.org/walkagainsthunger2018registrationcopy1/index.html>

Use code FOOD5 to receive a discount

Use this link to learn more about the Walk:

<http://www.hungercoalition.org/hungerwalk/event-schedule>

Sign up today!

For more information about the Walk Against Hunger and how you can support GACM, contact Hope Primas at hprimas@crisisministry.org or call 215-681-9554

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

F. Anthony Thurman, Music Director

Spring Oratorio Choir Concert

The Germantown Oratorio Choir presented an inspiring Brahms Festival Concert on Sunday, March 17. Approximately 150 listeners attended the concert, while more than 100 viewers enjoyed the concert via Internet livestream and recording within the first 48 hours of posting. The recording of the concert can be found online at www.fpcgermantown.org/Brahms-2019.

The concert was presented in commemoration of the bicentennial of Clara Schumann's birth. The program included Robert Schumann's rarely performed *Requiem*, his final work, which Clara Schumann edited for publication; *Sechs Lieder (Six Songs)* by Clara Schumann for solo voice as arranged for three-part women's chorus; Brahms's *Schicksalslied (Song of Destiny)* and *Geistliches Lied (Sacred Song)*. Concert pianist Gayle Martin and organist Ted W. Barr provided instrumental accompaniment. In addition to the choral selections, Gayle Martin performed Robert Schumann's *Widmung (Dedication)*, an art song solo transcribed for piano by Liszt.



New Music Fills the Air

Nancy Wertsch, a distinguished composer of choral music and a professional singer in New York City, composed a new choral introit and amen for First Church, which were premiered in worship on March 10. These new works were presented along with choral anthems by Nancy Wertsch, Alice Parker, and Francis Allitsen during Women's History Month.



O Come, Let Us Sing Unto the Lord (Ps. 95) and *Choral Amen* were written as a gift to our church. During a telephone conversation with my long-time friend and colleague in January, I told her we would be recognizing gifts of women in March and asked if she had anything suitable for an introit and choral response. Nancy told me she would take a look in her files, and finding nothing that she felt would be "just right," decided to compose new music for us! We rejoice and give thanks for this stirring new music for First Church.

(Continued on page 11)

Centennial Celebration of the McLean Memorial Pipe Organ

(Music News, cont. from page 10)

The McLean Memorial Pipe Organ turns 100 years old this month! To celebrate the centennial year of our magnificent church organ, a series of celebratory concerts is being planned for 2019-2020. Please watch for more information in *Windows*.

The organ was a gift by Mrs. William L. (Sarah) McLean in memory of her son Warden who died in World War I. In addition to the gift of a magnificent organ to First Church, Mrs. McLean also provided an endowment to support the tuning and maintenance of the instrument in perpetuity. We give God thanks for the generosity of the McLean family and the many blessings the gift of organ music provides both in the context of worship and in concert.

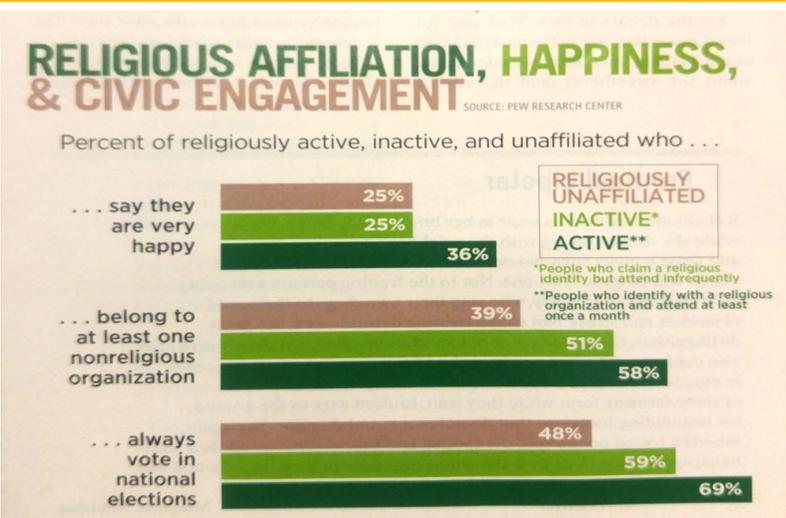


Photos: Portions of our church organ leaving Hartford, Conn., May 1918; and the organ in our sanctuary today.

When the McLean Memorial Pipe Organ was dedicated on April 27, 1919, it was the second largest organ in the City of Philadelphia, after the Wanamaker. Built by the Austin Organ Company (Hartford, Conn.) as Opus 732, it is described in *Austin Organs: The Definitive History of the Austin Organ Company* by Orpha Ochse as "Germantown's Giant." The organ was rebuilt by Austin as Opus 732R in 1964 and enlarged by R.A. Colby in 1999. With nearly 7,000 pipes and 32 digital voices, it is the largest church organ in Philadelphia today.

Easter Music

9:45 a.m. Come early on Easter Sunday to enjoy an extended prelude by brass and percussion students from the Curtis Institute of Music. The Chancel Choir will offer Vaughan Williams's *O Clap Your Hands* and Handel's beloved *Hallelujah Chorus* for the celebration of the Resurrection.



NAME TAGS ARE COMING! NAME TAGS ARE COMING!

The Praise and Evangelism Team is excited to announce the revival of FPCG name tags! Not seen in recent years, name tags were in use in coffee hour for many years. With the help of several office volunteers, the name tags have been restored and brought up to date with the names of all members and friends of FPCG. The goal is to have them ready for use on Palm Sunday, April 14, 2019. Look for yours and wear it with pride!

Source: Christian Century magazine, March 13, 2019

A Lenten / Holy Week Invitation

There is never a better time to invite a friend, neighbor or co-worker to church than during Lent and Holy Week. The first special worship service will be “5th Sunday at 5” at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 31. It is designed for families of all ages with a less formal worship experience, followed by a simple meal for fellowship. Another wonderful opportunity to invite friends with children is our annual Easter Festival on Saturday, April 20. Special worship services during Holy Week include:

- ◆ Palm Sunday on April 14 at 10:00 a.m.
- ◆ Maundy Thursday Simple Soup Supper Service on April 18 at 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Good Friday Taize Tenebrae Service on April 19 at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ Easter Sunday Worship (with special music) on April 21 at 10:00 a.m.

Please think of those who would be blessed by an invitation from you and talk with them soon about joining you at FPCG for Lent and Holy Week this year. You (and they) will be glad you did!



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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN GERMANTOWN

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215-843-8811

www.fpcgermantown.org