



• Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
January 2020



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From the Pastor

It’s time to ring in the New Year! In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII decreed that the calendar would skip 10 days, moving straight from October 4th to October 15th. That’s right. They lost a full week and a half out of that year. You see, the Earth takes a trip around the sun every 365.24219 days. When Julius Caesar set up the original calendar, he added leap years, but that was an overcorrection. Slowly but surely, the calendar began to misalign with the trip that the Earth takes around the sun, and the seasons were out of whack with it. Pope Gregory, with the help of a commission led by the physician Aloysius Lilius and astronomer Christopher Clavius, solved the problem. They eliminated the aforementioned 10 extra days, and kept the leap years except on centennial years that aren’t evenly divisible by 400 – so there was a leap year in 2000, but not in 1900 or 1800 or 1700.



Not everyone adopted the new calendar right away. Pope Gregory was able to persuade Catholic countries like Italy, Spain, and Portugal to change, but Protestant countries were wary of this papal initiative. Great Britain and the American colonies didn’t adopt it for almost 200 years, waiting until 1752. When they finally did, they had to erase 11 days instead of 10. Sweden made the change in 1753. Turkey made the change in 1917, and Saudi Arabia just switched over in 2016! Imagine losing more than a week in your life – usually we complain that we need more time, not less.

It is not just the Gregorian calendar that has moved into a new year. Our Christian calendar also started again on December 1, 2019 with the First Sunday in Advent. We celebrate the Light of Christ coming into the world on December 25th and are now moving steadily into the liturgical year as the secular one also begins. In the Christian calendar, we are in the season of Christmas for 12 days until January 6, 2020. Then we move into Ordinary Time until Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 26th.

I love Ordinary Time. Celebrations are great. Holidays, which is an elision of “Holy-days,” are wonderful. But there is something special to me about Ordinary Time. I have a friend who says: “It takes quantity time to have quality time.” In other words, it is during the everyday, run-of-the-mill interactions with one another that we build relationships. Those special moments of sharing and intimacy come through the trust built over the normal routine practice of being together.

This is why it is important to come to worship regularly and to read the Bible and participate in other activities in the congregation. Because the more we engage with God and one another, the more we interact and truly get to know each another and the Lord, the more we likely to have those memorable moments that enhance our lives.

Pastor News (cont. on Page 2)

Items for the February issue of Windows are due on Jan. 17th. Send to *Communications@fpcgermantown.org*



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 www.fpcgermantown.org and click on 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: communications@fpcgermantown.org

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The celebration of Christmas is almost over. But the celebration of the Incarnation never ends. The fact that God chose to come to earth in human form, to know us, love us, and forgive us is a joy beyond imagination. As we enter into the Ordinary Time of our lives, may we ever more fully lean into and appreciate the Presence that is always Present – and always a Present, even when the gift-giving time of year is done.

- Rev. Rebecca Segers

3rd Sunday Plants Seeds

Our 3rd Sunday Intergenerational Bible Study planted literal seeds at our December gathering. We studied Luke 1:39-45 where the newly pregnant Mary visits her relative Elizabeth, who is also miraculously pregnant. We talked about sharing words of encouragement in times of challenge, and about being open to the Holy Spirit's prompting. We then returned to the pots we painted back in October and had the opportunity to plant herbs in them. We are hopeful that we will begin to see the fruits of our labor in the coming months.

Meanwhile, we look forward to meeting again on the 3rd Sunday in January, which is the 19th. We will be talking about the Parable of the Two Sons in Matthew 21:28-32 – and no, these are not the Prodigal and his brother. This parable is a lesser known one about faithfulness and hard-heartedness, change and resistance. Please join us and share your faith journey with others at First Pres on January 19th immediately following worship.



JANUARY BIRTHDAY'S

Happy Birthday!

Happy Birthday!

Krista Hoekema-Boerman 01/01
 Matthew Reisse 01/05
 Dieter Littles 01/06
 Aman Easterling 01/06
 Garth Herrick 01/08
 Christopher Thompson 01/08
 Andrew Hood 01/09
 Annie Kotto-Ohemeng 01/09
 John Orandosh 01/15
 Jeremy Jones 01/16
 Kevin Patterson 01/16
 J. Randall Rosensteel 01/16

Peter Thompson 01/16
 Jessie Coleman 01/17
 Chloe Lagunsad 01/17
 Klaas Hoekema-Boerman 01/19
 Carl Spurlock 01/22
 Peter Miller 01/23
 Dawn Dirl-Jones 01/23
 Jen Hasse 01/24
 Mckayla Davis 01/25
 Lawrence Elliott 01/26
 Faith Green 01/28

Total January Birthday's =23

Message from Parish Visitor Heidi Mercado-Littles Wishing you Peace in 2020

As I do every year, I will be going to Chile to spend time with my family and friends, and to rest and recharge. I will be away from January 13 until March 19, 2020.

Upon my return, I will begin phasing out of my position of Parish Visitor. I have been serving First Church in this capacity since February 2001, When Rev. Nancy Muth was our Interim Pastor. These 19 years have been a journey of growing and learning, of joys, surprises, and tears. I have always had the unconditional support of the Pastors under whom I have served, and I have always felt encouraged and loved by this congregation. For this I am deeply grateful.

In 2020, I will cut my hours in half. I will come to Germantown/Philadelphia every other week to be present at Staff Meeting and visit members who are home- or institution-bound. Rev. Rebecca and Rev. Kevin have agreed to visit these members on the alternate weeks when I am not here. I will still be reaching out to you weekly to ask for prayer requests, and sending birthday, holiday and other cards as needed.

At the end of 2020 it will be time for me to retire. "For everything there is a season." Ecclesiastes 3:1
 May God bless each of you as you have blessed me.

Heidi Mercado-Littles



New Stove for our Kitchen

The Property committee is pleased to announce that there will soon be a new stove in the kitchen. It is a gift in honor of Bea and Bill Gardener given by Marc DiNardo and Liz Drum. For those of you who are new to the church, Bea Gardener served the church for many years by putting together wonderful church dinners for 125 or more. She organized many coffee hours and receptions. She ruled the kitchen. Bea was a legend. Her husband Bill served by her side during his lifetime. Marc and Liz would also like to thank all those who have and are now working in the kitchen to serve our congregation.

Thank you Marc and Liz for honoring the Gardeners and for making our kitchen safer and up to date.

JANUARY CHALLENGE OFFERING Bible Based Trauma Healing for Africa

Africans have been experiencing conflict and trauma for decades. But 20 years ago, Bible-based trauma healing was pioneered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, hundreds of African pastors, counselors, and community leaders have launched ministries to help people who suffer deeply. Each healing group is led by a trained ministry leader using a simple curriculum. Based on foundational truths from God's Word, the lessons use art, stories, activities, and questions to help people engage deeply with themselves, with God, and with each other. 100% of all donations received will go directly to the bible ministry. For more information of to give please visit americanbible.org or call 1-800-549-3328.

YOUTH NEWS

- ⇒ Confirmation classes start on January 5th for students 6th grade and above. Classes will be held from 11:45-1p. We will meet in the Longstreth Auditorium before class.
- ⇒ Middle School Retreat to Johnsonburg, NJ. Middle school students (6-8 grade) will be on retreat from January 10-12. Please pray for our time together for the deepening of our relationships and for our openness to learn and love God more sincerely.

The CE committee would like to thank all those involved in helping make the our December 21st Christmas Festival a success. From our young actors, parents, volunteers who managed our numerous craft tables, our kitchen crew and of course our Santa and his picture takers, all your efforts were so appreciated. Thanks for helping so many celebrate our Lord's coming to us and His continued presence abiding with us even now.



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 the young people who participate in our community and ministry. Email Cherese Akers at communications@fpcgermantown.org.

How to Act & Engage?

Our Act & Engage program concerning Criminal Justice will be coming to fruition in the next month as we host our final panel discussion on Sunday, January 26th immediately following worship. We will be focusing on the criminal justice system itself this time, hearing from attorney Daniel Conner, a representative from the District Attorney's office, a representative from the prison system, and a representative who works with issues around incarceration. We hope to learn more about this aspect of our topic, and then have an opportunity for discussion around next steps in the near term post this gathering. Stay tuned for more information and be sure to join us on January 26, 2020 as we continue the journey.

GERMANTOWN AVENUE CRISIS MINISTRY NEWS

The timeframe between Thanksgiving and Christmas was shortened by 6 days. For GACM this represented less time to receive client holiday requests, to communicate those requests to congregation partners, and to coordinate, receive and distribute donations to fulfill requests. The good news is that 6 days did not hamper GACM! In addition to meeting our primary purpose, to address basic needs, we also made the holiday bright. During this time frame FPCG family and community partner support enabled GACM to:

- ▶ Provide \$11,297 in emergency grant aid to 31 households
- ▶ Distribute 225 Holiday Food Baskets
- ▶ Lavish 75 children with Angel Tree Gifts
- ▶ Send Secret Santa to 3 large families that received a gift card between \$800 & \$1,000

Food Cupboard Renovation

It's really going to happen this time! On January 13th, GACM will close for a short period while the Food Cupboard undergoes renovations to expand our storage capacity and improve client flow. Once completed, GACM will update equipment including purchasing an upright three door freezer that will replace to 20-year-old chest freezer now located in the auditorium. (A grant for the freezer was received in 2018.)

GACM Welcomes New Staff



DUGAN MORGRIDGE

Administrative Assistant, Dugan is a familiar face at FPCG. In addition to his excellent administrative skill, he sings with the FPCG Chancel and Oratorio Choirs. Most recently, he was phenomenal as the 2019 Messiah Concert tenor soloist.



HOPE LEVIN, MSW

Social Service Manager, Hope Levin, MSW, brings a wealth of experience to GACM, having worked with Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network and the Sunday Suppers programs. She will provide direct client services.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the GACM Volunteers who tirelessly provide their labor and love in support of GACM's mission. The December 6 Holiday Gathering was a festive and fun way so show appreciation for the more than 4900 Volunteer service hours receive during FY 2019.



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Monday, January 13, 8:30AM -2PM GACM will host a comprehensive volunteer training. All team members and those interested in serving a minimum of four hours each week should attend. Volunteer opportunities include Food Cupboard Distribution, Truck Team, Office Assistance, Client Service Provider, Congregation Outreach, Fundraising and Publicity. For more information call the office, 215-843-2340 or see Eileen Jones.

FREEDOM SCHOOL JUNE 29 THROUGH AUGUST 14

No matter the weather it's time to look toward summer and plan for Freedom School 2020! In addition to promoting a love for reading, we'd like to incorporate more STEM education that focuses scholars in four disciplines -- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. If you have ideas, connections and resources, speak to Eileen Jones or Contina Lundy.

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

F. Anthony Thurman,
Music Director

THANK YOU

The music of the church is stronger at no other time of the year than at Christmas. This joyous celebration has inspired poets, composers, and musicians around the globe for hundreds of years. We just celebrated the 300th anniversary of “Joy to the World.” “O Little Town of Bethlehem” was given its birth right here in Philadelphia. The beautiful music we have inherited from ages past through the present day, however, doesn’t suddenly trumpet forth without thoughtful and prayerful preparation and rehearsal.

Over the past few months, our choir members have worked hard to learn new music and to resurrect old favorites in celebration of the birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem. “O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!” We offer thanks to all our choirs that supported music in worship during Advent and Christmas: the Chancel Choir, Gospel Choir (Sara C. Blanford, director), Voices in Bronze Handbell Choir and the Children’s Choir (Evelyn Santiago, director) along with the children’s parents who ensured they attended rehearsals.



The Chancel Choir presented Jesse Padgett’s new choral introit, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” each Sunday during Advent. It is the first in a collection of introits, A Season of Introits, that Jesse is composing for the church year. Jesse received his master of music degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and is adjunct faculty at West Chester University. His published works are distributed internationally through J.W. Pepper. We are deeply grateful for Jesse’s dedication to our church and music ministry.

We also offer heartfelt gratitude to everyone that supported the Germantown Oratorio Choir & Orchestra’s Messiah concert and dessert reception on December 1. Bravi tutti! If you were unable to attend the concert or if you did and would like to enjoy the performance again, the Internet livestream video can be found online at www.fpcgermantown.org/Messiah-2019.



The Messiah concert was performed by 50 musicians and attended by more than 150 listeners from a half dozen states. It has been enjoyed by hundreds more via the Internet livestream video, including Bill and Bette Young who watched the concert livestream from their hotel room in Frankfurt, Germany. Livestream viewers included audiences of all ages. From Germantown Oratorio Choir Soprano Molly Hall: "This is my 2-year-old grandson who was inspired to get out his violin while watching our concert. May we continue to inspire the next generation!!"



The concert was made possible by generous gifts from members and friends of First Church. Additional support was provided by the City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy.



Looking ahead: The Germantown Oratorio Choir will present a Beethoven Festival Concert with concert pianist Gayle Martin on Sunday, March 15, at 3 p.m. The program will feature the choral music Beethoven, including the Choral Fantasy, in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth. Rehearsals begin on Tuesday, January 7, from 7-9 p.m. in the Sanctuary. For more information or to participate, call the church office at 212-843-8811 or e-mail music.fpcgermantown@gmail.com.

MCLEAN MEMORIAL ORGAN CENTENNIAL CONCERT SERIES

We are flinging wide our doors and inviting the public to join us in celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of our McLean Memorial Organ, the largest church organ in Philadelphia. When it was dedicated on April 27, 1919, it was the second largest organ, after the Wanamaker, in the City. The organ was a gift by Mrs. William L. (Sarah) McLean in memory of her son Warden, an American soldier who died during World War I. The organ contains more than 7,000 individual pipes of both wood and metal ranging in size from a pencil to a telephone pole.

Philadelphia native **Marvin Mills** and the **Philadelphia Brass** will present the next concert in the series on Sunday, January 19, at 4 p.m. Their program of works for organ and brass will commemorate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend and will include an organ solo by James Lee III, *Ascend the Mountain: A Walk with Dr. King*, which was inspired by King's "I've Been to the Mountaintop" sermon, and selections by Duke Ellington. The concert will be Internet livestreamed for those unable to attend.



Marvin Mills is organist at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Kensington, Md. He is music director of the National Spiritual Ensemble, and guest artist with the Ritz Chamber Players, based in Jacksonville, Fla. An active organ soloist, he has performed throughout the United States in such places as the Academy of Music and Kimmel Center (Philadelphia), the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington), Spreckles Organ Pavilion (San Diego), and the Riverside Church (New York City). He was a recitalist at the 1992, 1996, and 2010 AGO National Conventions and was featured on American Public Media's *Pipedreams* in "Music of Color."

The **Philadelphia Brass** was formed in 1988 by professional musicians of Eastern Pennsylvania to pursue their common goals: performing the best of brass quintet literature of all periods and styles, and educating the public to the pleasures, subtleties, and complexities of chamber music. The group has collaborated in performances with bands, choruses, organists, and dancers, and has performed educational programs for grade-school children, college students, and adults of all



ages, coached grade school instrumentalists, and taught a master class for the brass students of Julliard. For 25 years Philadelphia Brass performed as the resident brass quintet for the First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem, Pa. The group is currently ensemble-in-residence at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, Pa.



Major funding for this series is provided by members and friends of First Church. Additional support is provided by the American Guild of Organists, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

FPCG'S 5TH ANNUAL MLK DAY OF SERVICE

**JAN
20,
2020**



First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
35 West Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

**9am
to
1pm**



BE PART OF THE MISSION TO END WORLD HUNGER!

DAY OF SERVICE:
SET-UP 7:30-9AM
MEAL PACKAGING 9-12PM
BREAKDOWN 12-1PM

GOAL = 25,000 MEALS

Each meal cost 34 cents. Meals are packaged and shipped around the world to support school feeding programs and crisis relief.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we will be RISING AGAINST HUNGER for the 5th consecutive year. Join us on January 20, 2020 for our annual day of service as we participate in the mission to end world hunger by 2030. Our goal is to provide 25,000 meals to feed those who are in need around the world. Each meal cost 34 cents and consists of rice, soy, vegetables and 23 essential vitamins and minerals. If you would like to donate and or volunteer please use this link <http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/FPCG2020>.



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