



• Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
April 2020



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

From the Pastor



I was listening to BBC Newshour the other day, and heard an article on “Tolerating Uncertainty,” a topic that is undoubtedly pertinent in our current situation. No matter who you are or what your circumstances, COVID-19 and the steps we are being asked to take to help mitigate the health crisis created by it are causing mass uncertainty. We are dealing with isolation, physical distancing, new ways of being in community, which largely require new ways of dealing with technology – something that causes a great deal of anxiety to many of us – and much more. The BBC article suggested a mnemonic tool called APPLE that I have modified to engage us spiritually as well as psychologically:

Acknowledge – your feelings. We are going through a lot right now, and God can handle all of it! Psalm 62:8 tells us “Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”

Pause – take a breath. Literally. Stop for a moment and breathe. The Hebrew word for breath, “ruah” and the Greek word “pneuma” are both also translated as “spirit.” Breathe in and out, recognizing God’s spirit filling you as you do.

Pull Back – stop and notice that whatever it is that is causing you anxiety or uncertainty is a thought or a feeling. Thoughts and feelings exist, but they are not necessarily facts. They are simply thoughts and feelings. Pull back and notice them, acknowledge them, pause in the midst of them, and then recognize them for what they are, and God for who God is. “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

Let Go – of the thought or feeling – perhaps imagine it in a thought bubble or cloud floating upward to the Lord – and let God be the one in control of the situation. “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Explore – the present moment. Notice that right here, right now, all is well. Breathe in and out and notice your breath. Notice the ground be-

Pastor News (cont. on Page 2)



**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
ONLINE**

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

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- Jim Thompson
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neath your feet, the sights and sounds around you. Feel God’s presence surrounding you, supporting you. Jesus said, “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20b)

So that’s it. An APPLE a day keeps anxiety at bay. Stopping to Acknowledge, Pause, Pull Back, Let Go, and Explore God’s presence with us can help in these times of uncertainty and fear. After all, we are told more often to “fear not” than any other maxim in the Bible. That doesn’t mean there is nothing to fear. What it does mean is that God is alive and with us in and through it all. May you all experience the certainty of God’s presence in these uncertain times.

- Rev. Rebecca Segers

April Challenge Offering

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God’s love with people experiencing need. Your gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, food for the hungry, and community development that helps people find safe refuge, start new lives, and work together to strengthen their families and communities. To learn more about One Great Hour of Sharing, visit pcusa.org/oghs.

April Birthday's

Todd Gasper	04.02
Linda Farlow	04.04
Pernell Jackson	04.05
Brittany Jones	04.08
Robert Seed	04.09
Delores Shanks	04.10
Vera Harrison	04.11
Denise Cowie	04.13
Roberta Robinson	04.13
Elisa Heyer-Rivera	04.15
Elijah Burnley	04.18
Lydia Overton	04.20
Fay Tomlinson	04.20
Kendi Easterling	04.23
Delores Adams-Henderson	04.25
Jason Greene II	04.25
Phyl Bryan	04.27
Valient Solomon	04.30



FPCG UPDATE

These are powerful Lenten wilderness times. This is to inform you what FPCG is doing in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

First of all, the session is meeting regularly via Zoom, an online platform that enables us to “shelter in place” yet still see and/or hear one another as we prayerfully make decisions about how to best care for our congregation and community.

The session has most recently decided to close the building to all but essential personnel, and limited parameters for the Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry, so they can still service clients to the best of their ability safely, through Sunday, April 5th. We are mindful that we may have to close for longer, but are leaving that possibility open, as we hope to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ together Easter Sunday in person on Sunday, April 12th. The session will hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, April 1st via Zoom, and make a final decision at that point about Easter, as well as considered decisions about what happens beyond it.

Meanwhile, you will be able to be with us online for worship on Sunday mornings as Rev. Rebecca, Rev. Kevin, and Music Director Tony Thurman lead, and Chris Scott and Marc DiNardo take care of video and audio. We will stream on Facebook Live so that those who would like to interact during worship may do so, as well as another platform that will be linked to our website www.fpcgermantown.org

The deacons will (if they have not already at the time of your receipt of this newsletter) call each member of their respective flocks. They will ask how you’re doing, how you are managing food, meds, social isolation, etc., and then ask if there are ways you would like to support others in this difficult time as well as ways in which you might need support. Rev. Kevin Porter is spearheading that effort, as the deacons work together to figure out how best to be there for our community of faith. We recognize this might be a long haul, and so we don’t want to expend our energies all at once and become weary too quickly, but mindfully and prayerfully consider how we can best meet each other’s needs through this journey.

Rev. Rebecca is holding the Lenten Bible Study on Thursdays at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom through April 9th. As stated earlier, Zoom allows a visual capability and/or an audio phone capability. Should the need to continue to self-isolate go beyond that, she will continue Bible Study for the duration of that need. If you would like to participate in these remote Bible Study sessions, please call her at the church (215) 843-8811 ext. 17 or email her at rsegers@fpcgermantown.org and she will give you the login information. She will be checking the church phone every day at 10:00 a.m.

Committee meetings will be held as chairpersons see fit, via Zoom or conference call. This is likely the way Youth Groups will be held as well as any other community group gatherings.

We will continue to give updates via email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and on our website.



Please care for yourselves. The Staff continues to meet via Zoom on Wednesdays and pray for you all. This is a most challenging time, but Psalm 23 tells us: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.” (NKJV) We can hold onto the Lord of love throughout all things, even as we trust that God is holding onto us too.

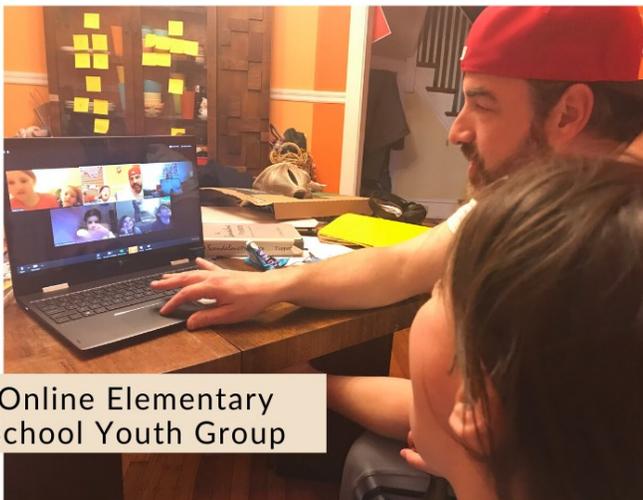
YOUTH NEWS

FPCG Youth Groups, Sunday School, and Confirmation Classes are meeting

All Youth programs have resumed via virtual meetings through Zoom web service. We are hosting Elementary YG weekly on Fridays from 6:30p-7:30p and Middle/High School Youth Group on Friday starting at 8pm. We will continue these times until we can return to actually meeting together at the church. Sunday School class is meeting on Sundays at 11:00am after the worship service, and Confirmation class is on Sundays at 11:45a. If you have yet to receive the Zoom account number to log into our meeting times, please email Christian at cheyer-rivera@fpcgermantown.org to receive access. We look forward to seeing our youth online!



Online Confirmation Class



Online Elementary School Youth Group



Online Middle/High School Youth Group

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

During the physical distancing weeks, Manni spent some time with Elisa teaching her how to play catch, field grounders, and throw a baseball!

Manni and Soren celebrated their birthdays. The Heyer-Rivera family showed Soren some birthday love while still practicing social distancing



Elisa learned how to ride a bike! Way to go!

GERMANTOWN AVENUE CRISIS MINISTRY NEWS

Food Cupboard Grand Re-Opening

March 5th marked the reopening of the Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry Food Cupboard. The completed renovation fulfilled expectations! With added square



footage, all GACM refrigeration and equipment is now contained within the Cupboard. The additional space allows two clients and two or three volunteers to work simultaneously in the space. With all new shelving there's greater storage capacity and access for goods.

It was a festive day that began with a brief dedication program led by Pastor Segers. Snacks throughout the day, gives-a-ways, including tee shirts for volunteers and reusable bags for clients fostered excitement. After serving 62 clients, the day concluded with a drawing for three grocery carts. Two winners were present and used their new cart to carry their groceries home.



Following the Thursday reopening, on Friday, students from Germantown Friends visited GACM as part of their day of service. FPCG's own Emmanuel Heyer-Rivera and his classmates sorted donations, restocked shelves, assembled equipment and moved remaining items from storage in the auditorium to the cupboard. Service learning provides an opportunity for students to learn about food insecurity and the programs and services GACM provides.



Covid 19 & GACM

What better time than now to have reopened the Cupboard with a greater capacity to provide food. While many organizations are closed, we recognize our Food Cupboard is essential. Currently GACM is exploring options for Cupboard operation in a manner that is safe for volunteers and clients. We know the COVID-19 pandemic will increase the need for food access, particularly by those whose income and resources have diminished or stopped. GACM is on the frontline helping neighbors in need. Partner with us by donating food, finances and volunteer service. To do so visit GACM's website, www.crisisministry.org. You may also call the office 215-843-2340.

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

F. Anthony Thurman, Music Director

Beethoven Festival Concert POSTPONED

The Germantown Oratorio Choir, with concert pianist Gayle Martin, was to have presented a Beethoven Festival Concert on Sunday, March 15. Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, we made the decision to postpone the concert and do our part in limiting possible exposure between ourselves and others who enter our house of worship.

THANK YOU to the choir members, Gayle Martin, and guest conductor Ted W. Barr, all of whom had been rehearsing this glorious concert of music since early January before our preparations came to an abrupt halt. The concert will be rescheduled as soon as possible.



While Gayle was in Philadelphia, she recorded the two Beethoven Bagatelles that will open the concert when it is presented. We also have a recording of her Beethoven prelude offered at the March 15 livestream worship service, and her "Moonlight Sonata" performance from the inauguration of the Linda Leube Memorial Concert Piano. These can be found online by clicking the links below:

[Beethoven: Two Bagatelles in A Major and A Minor](#)

[Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 23 in F Minor](#)

[\("Appassionata"\)](#)

[Beethoven: Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp Minor \("Moonlight"\)](#)

FPCG Music on YouTube

While we observe "social distancing" until we can gather again in person, please enjoy these concert recordings available on YouTube. [The concerts listed below can be accessed by clicking here.](#)

Messiah Concerts: 2017, 2018, and 2019

Brahms Festival Concerts: 2018, 2019

Gospel Choir Concert: 2019

Organ and Brass: 2020

These recordings of our McLean Memorial Organ can also be found on YouTube:

[J.S. Bach: God's Time Is the Best Time](#)

[Albert Travis: Hymn to Joy](#)

[Wagner: Parsifal "Finale"](#)

[C.M. Widor: Toccata in F Major](#)

FPCG Act & Engage Follow-Up

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown spent several months looking at our Criminal Justice system from a variety of perspectives. We were motivated by the situation of two of our own: Maurice and Duane Jr. "Stevie" Horne, who are incarcerated in New Jersey. We've received letters from both over the years, many of which have been shared through this newsletter. In our time together beginning in October, we read the book "Just Mercy," by Bryan Stevenson and were led in gatherings by Dr. Tonya Thames Taylor of West Chester University; Peter Yoemans, PTSD Director at the VA; Jim Abrams, Founder of Pointman Soldiers' Heart Ministries; Duane Horne, father of Maurice and Stevie; criminal defense attorney Daniel Connor; and Rev. Rebecca Segers.

Our last gathering asked the question: what next? How can we make a positive difference in the lives of those imprisoned, especially those for whom we love and care? While there is more work to be done, we do have a letter from Maurice requesting tangible action on his behalf. A hearing is scheduled for his final appeal for early release on May 14, 2020. He is asking for character reference letters to be sent to the judge presiding over his case. The letter he has written is shared with this article.

What might a character reference look like from you?

If you know Maurice, you could speak to your relationship and how it and he has grown over the years, how the period of incarceration has been one in which he has matured. If you do not, you can still write about how you have read the letters from Maurice shared in our "Windows" newsletters, in which you have seen his growth in faith and commitment to living a better life. In either case, you can also speak to the fact of FPCG as Maurice's church home and family, as well as your own personal commitment to assuring we are actively present in his life after his release, to the best of your/our ability.

If you would like to take this step to support Maurice in his appeal, please write your letter to the address and with the designation below. It would be best to send it by the end of April, so that letters are received and logged well before his hearing date:

Honorable Paul. X. Escandon, J.S.C.
New Jersey Superior Court
Monmouth County Court House
71 Monument Park, P.O. Box 1266
Freehold, NJ 07728-1266
Re: State v. Maurice Horne
Indictment No: 14-03-0466

Maurice and the Horne family will be grateful for your support. Look to this newsletter for more on next steps in May.

February 27, 2020

Dear First Presbyterian Church in
Germantown,

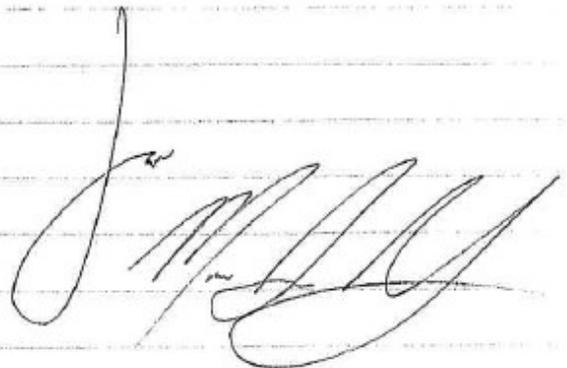
Thank you, Thank you,
Thank you!! This letter can't even
begin to express my wholesome
gratitude, appreciation, and genuine
love that I have for each of
you. My church went well above
anything that I expected, and that
alone is just a very small fraction
of the power & love that our mighty,
loving, merciful, and everlasting
GOD has. When our will is in
complete and total alignment with
GOD's will, there is nothing that we
cannot do and/or achieve.

(Act & Engage cont. on page 4)

I humbly request FPCG's help once again. On May 14, 2020 I have my final and last appeal hearing. I've exhausted all of my appeals, and this hearing coming up in May is crucial and extremely important in determining my early release. My lawyer and I worked very hard on my P.P.C.B. (Petition for Post-Conviction Relief) and we feel really good about this last appeal. But to fully use and exhaust every resource I have in potentially determining my early release, I humbly ask if The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown can write character reference letters to the judge presiding over my last and final appeal hearing.

Thank you FPCG for all that you've done for my brother and I. Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayer. I love you and I miss you!!!!

(Enclosed is the info & address of the judge presiding over my appeal hearing.)



Puerto Rico Service Trip Update

Our deadline of March 15th for sign up for this trip has officially passed, but we understand that everything has changed and that things aren't business as usual. In light of all that is going on we are extending the deadline for the trip to the middle of April, Sunday the 19th to be exact. We should know more by then as to our host site as well. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), our host organization, has yet to cancel our trip. They are still working to host groups in July. They have cancelled all trips up to June but not any trip beyond that. We are still good to go from that perspective and will let you know if anything changes on their end. Airlines are waiving change and cancellation of flight fees right now, and flights are being drastically reduced in cost due to low demand for travel. We feel this

likely won't change by mid April so we should still be in good shape for the later deadline. Fundraising efforts are changing. Some have had to be outright cancelled, others are in limbo while some can move forward. Letters can still be sent out by individuals for support. Group fundraisers are being limited. Work fundraisers could conceivably still happen but we would need to wait until the shelter in place order lifts and we would still likely need stricter parameters around them for health and safety sake. If you have a work project for fundraising, please call or text me at for approval and implementation.

Any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to email Christian Heyer-Rivera at cheyer-rivera@fpcgermantown.org

God bless you all as you consider this opportunity and as you navigate life in this new context. May the peace of Christ fill your hearts and minds that you may continue to creatively reach out in love to your family, friends and neighbors in new and appropriate ways.



Message from Parish Visitor Heidi Mercado-Littles

Dear FPCG Family. Dieter and I were able to return safely to Delaware on March 18th. We came back to a very different world from the one we left in January. Until it is safe and advisable for me to go to Philadelphia, I will be reaching out to you by phone and mail. I will be praying for each of you daily and ask that you contact me by phone, text or email if you have any prayer requests. May God bless you. HEIDI

Whosoever Gospel Mission

How you can help the Whosoever Gospel Mission during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Pray. Please pray for the residents and staff as they had to lay off 6 staff members and make salary and budget cuts to keep the Mission viable. Give. The two thrift stores they have are closed which results in monthly losses around \$30,000. Help is needed to make up the other half in lost income. We are in need of purchasing food, cleaning supplies, and facility maintenance supplies. Checks, gift cards (Walmart, Aldi, Giant, Target, Home Depot & Lowes) can be mailed in or you can make an online gift. To make a online gift go to

www.whosoevergospel.org



THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN GERMANTOWN

**35 West Cheltenham Ave.
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www.fpcgermantown.org