



Windows

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
September 2020



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Items for the October issue of *Windows* are due on September 15th. Send to

Communications
@fpcgermantown.org

From the Pastor

In Matthew 14, Jesus gets some bad news and withdraws in a boat to a deserted place to rest and pray. When he arrives, the crowd has followed him and he has compassion for them, spending the whole day healing those who are sick. At the end of the day, he performs the miracle of feeding them all and then finally sends the disciples and the crowds away before going up the mountain by himself to pray. All he wants is a little time alone with the Lord and instead he's got a whole bunch of unexpected stuff he's got to take care of first.

I don't know about you, but I'm feeling a bit like Jesus may have in this story. Ordinarily, the month of August is a fallow time in the church. It's traditionally a little more hectic at FPCG at the beginning of the month because of the final weeks of Freedom School, but once its closing ceremony is done, First Pres including the Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry takes a small hiatus from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the year.

This year, however, has been different. While there was no Freedom School, the church has been extraordinarily active in August. We have a Reopening Task Force that has been looking at our options to come together again, and a Director of Music Ministry Search Committee that is in full swing. We held a Congregational Meeting to elect new officers, and then an Officers' Retreat to examine and approve their Ordination & Installation. We had a called session meeting in a month that did not have one docketed. Plus our regularly scheduled activities like Bible Studies, Confirmation Classes, Sunday School, Watch Parties, the Grief Group, and committee meetings continued. All of that in the month of August – in the time of a global pandemic!

We are finally at the end of the planned activities, and I am able to take a little time away. Of course, vacation in the time of COVID19 is not what it usually is. I'm not ready to get on a plane, or do a road trip staying in a different hotel every night. My daughter came up with a compromise solution. She has rented a house in Hilton Head to celebrate her 25th birthday (how did she get so old?!) and I am heading down south with her and some friends (my family bubble) the last full week in August, returning just about as you will be receiving this newsletter. Hopefully, I will be rested and refreshed and ready to face the new season ahead.

The point is that we all – Jesus included – need time to rest and regroup. To pray and center ourselves in God's love. To attend to our own well-being so that we have energy to give to others. I hope that you too are intentionally finding some time, whether in a different setting, or right in your own backyard, to realign yourself with the Lord, and with God's will for you. I anticipate the season ahead will be a challenging one, and we all need a bit of peace as we enter into it together.



- Rev. Rebecca Segers



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
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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September Birthday's

09/01 | Erika Littles
09/02 | Dawayne Robinson
09/04 | Sheila Heyer-Rivera
09/04 | Roger Miller
09/06 | Marlene Simmons
09/07 | Ruth Cato
09/08 | Robert Cato
09/09 | Don Carlin
09/09 | E. Michelle Jones
09/09 | Hortense Kennedy
09/10 | Kerisha Johnson
09/10 | Howard Tyrrell
09/12 | Frances Smith
09/14 | Jade Bass
09/14 | Ann Reisse
09/15 | David Cassie
09/15 | Rosemary Williams
09/18 | Martin Lagunsad
09/19 | Sol Williams
09/19 | Filomena Santos
09/24 | Debra Gary
09/25 | Brian Harris
09/25 | Melissa Miller
09/27 | Lisa Martin

September Challenge Offering: ATHLETES IN ACTION (CRU)

Last month *Windows* provided an update story from Carl and Noreen Dambman indicating how their ministry continues to be effective in this challenging time of COVID-19.

Basically, they have used new tools to reach out virtually to many places in the world so that they could provide guidance to groups such as working with the International Sports Leadership School.

The September Challenge Offering is our opportunity to continue our long history of supporting the work of the Dambmans and CRU. They have served in this role for more than 40 years and our church has been a faithful supporter for most of that time.

We hope to have a personal video message from Carl during one of our September virtual worship services.

Please be graciously generous in giving to this international ministry. Even though we are not worshipping at our church presently, you can give either online or by mail to the church office. Mark your gifts for the **September Challenge Offering**.

Youth News

September Youth Groups

Youth groups will resume throughout September. We will try to find times to meet outside when the weather permits but as the weather turns colder we will turn to zoom meetings. All youth group members should keep a lookout for texts concerning whether youth group will be outside at Andrea Overton's or at the Heyer-Rivera's or if it will be on zoom due to inclement weather. As you continue to pray for an end to this pandemic, remember our youth who are unable to utilize our church's building for gatherings as well.

Confirmation Class

Confirmation classes resume on September 13th with our study of the New Testament and Pauline theology. We will be studying this the entire fall and winter before we turn in the Spring to church history and the reformed tradition. Please pray for our confirmands as they continue to prepare for active membership and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and His Body, the Church.

A Few Words of Thanks from the Heyer Rivera Family

On behalf of each member of the Heyer-Rivera family, we would like to say thank you to all those who sent cards, called, prepared meals, visited as time and safety permitted, hosted the Heyer-Rivera children for play dates, and extended prayers all toward Christian's recovery from his fibula break. We have felt the support of the church and are so grateful to be loved by you all! Christian's recovery seems to be progressing with speed and without any complications up to this point, praise God! His next follow-up appointment is just after the publication of this newsletter. We invite you to join our family in praying for the next stage of his recovery of strength and full range of motion for his ankle. Thank you and God bless you!



The Middle and High School Youth group met on Andrea Overton's patio on the 14th of August to share time together.

This meeting was particularly meaningful as we learned that long standing members of the group, Jasmine Greene and Trinity Daniels would be leaving the group before the next youth group meeting in order to head off to their college dormitories for the first time to begin their freshman year.

Please pray for both of these young ladies as they start new academic and life journeys in the midst of such a challenging time. Our youth group has been so blessed to have had their faithful presence over the years. It's hard not to be both sad to see them go but excited and hopeful for this new chapter in their lives! Our love and support goes with them!

Farewell & Thanks Tony

In these COVID times we are unable to communicate as effectively as we used to. Our beloved Music Director for the past 4 years, Tony Thurman, announced in June that he would be leaving us for an opportunity that would be hard to pass on. Normally, we would have seen him many times as he completed his tenure with us but, in the “virtual” world we are presently operating in, this was not to be. We were able to have a “virtual” farewell gathering in late July. But to many of our extended church family and especially for friends of the church and its music program, there really wasn’t any explanation about what was happening except for a mailing to the members.

So this little item, in our monthly Windows newsletter, that goes to a much wider distribution, is intended to express a public tribute to a person who has served, with distinction, our church in many ways especially in using his talents as a musician and conductor.

Our church, the Church at the Crossroads, was indeed at a crossroad when Tony was chosen. We were in a search for a new pastor, the church had made some earlier decisions that had impacted many programs, including the music activities, and it was time for major improvements. And no one could have done it better than Tony! His skills in attracting skilled talent, his skills at working with organ and piano craftsmen, and his promotional and fund raising skills all helped to restore our church music programs to a higher level than many of our present members have seen. The Oratorio Choir had more concerts than in recent years, special programs to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the McLean organ were held, concerts with other talents and many more events were both popular, well attended and supported by many.

Tony leaves us with a large void as his skill set was so broad and deep, but he also is leaving us in incredibly good shape to continue these excellent programs. Tony has served the FPCG with astounding grace, boundless faith and great heart and has profoundly touched each of us in some way. For that we are so grateful to him and wish him all the best in his new position at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wilmington. - Jim Thompson



Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry News

Following a much-needed hiatus, GACM will reopen after Labor Day. Administrative staff returns to the office Sept 2. Client services resume September 14 with most social service activity being remote. The Food Cupboard reopens Sept 17.

During the hiatus the office was reconfigured to better enable social distancing and to acquire ample personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks and plexiglass screens. Since March we have worked remotely to provide social services and greatly limited client contact in the building. A system to enable document submission, signatures etc. was created. While we’ve had success with this process, we know there are many who have struggled to jump the technological divide needed to use computers or cell

phones to provide information. When we reopen, daily we will have team members in the office.

A protocol for entering the building and limitations on the number of people in the office has been established. Most services will continue to be remote and by appointment. Staff in the office will help those who don’t have computer or internet access receive service. Without our staff, it would be impossible to provide social services. With decreased individual and congregation food donations, our costs for purchasing food have increased.

More than ever your food donations and financial support is needed as we continue to serve our community during this unprecedented time. We are here and remain committed to helping our neighbors in need.

Financial Information for January through July 2020

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Actual Pledges | \$185,084 | Budget to Date | \$210,000 |
| Actual Expenses | \$408,295 | Budget to Date | \$454,390 |

For the first seven months of 2020 the paid pledges are behind budget. However, we qualified for the Paycheck Protection Program from the federal government in the amount of \$82,356. This is a loan. But we will be able to use this for payroll, and it should qualify as a grant. Expenses are running below budget. With the church building essentially closed and reduced programs our expenses are less than expected. Only salaries are in line with our budget, since we have not reduced our staff. Even property expenses are below budget. With limited office staff your tithes and offerings are being recorded and deposited. This generally is done every two weeks, unlike in the past when this was done regularly on a weekly basis. Thank you for your continued financial commitment which is essential to our financial success, and very much appreciated.



SILVER LINING THROUGH PANDEMIC

Webster defines a friend as "one attached to another by affection or esteem." This group of friends started with two at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown, and snowballed into four faithful friends. There are many types of friendship that we encounter in life. Some friends have a season, some friendships are of convenience, some come at critical times in our lives, and some are made to last a lifetime. This friendship is one of the best things in my life and I pray it lasts a lifetime.

Shawdé and I (Erika) met during confirmation class at FPCG, and almost 20 years later we are more sisters than we are friends. Chris joined the group a few years later and we became the Triple Treble threat, playing the top octave of the handbells in the bell choir. I am forever thankful to Russell Patterson for the bonds of friendship he enabled us to form. Then Chris and Richard became friends in college and Rich so seamlessly became one of us that it feels like he's always been there. We all have our own relationships within the group, like any family, but when we are all together, it's a happy family reunion. We have maintained this friendship through years, great distances, difficult life experiences, exciting accomplishments, multiple moves, and other life changes and challenges. We have driven across the country for each other and answered late night calls. No matter what is going on, we can depend on each other for brutal honesty, unconditional love, and uncontrollable belly laughs.

We have been living in different cities for the last few years and have a group text that never really stops, but we never really took advantage of video calling until now. It wasn't until COVID 19 locked us all in the house that we got better about finding time to video chat all together. We have also started to take a free online class together through Yale University titled African American History: From Emancipation to the Present. For anyone wishing to learn more about Black history and the ways it is inextricably woven into American History, I invite you to explore this course*. COVID provided us an invitation and space to learn and grow together.

It is so important to have friends who will listen to your fears, celebrate your joys, and encourage your dreams, especially during these challenging times. These last few months it has been so comforting to see each other and to hear each other laugh. At a time when there is so much uncertainty, we know for certain that we have each other. Decades from now I can see us sitting around, older and wiser, doubled over laughing at a lifetime's worth of memories. - Erika Littles

*Open Yale Courses > African American History: From Emancipation to the Present <https://oyc.yale.edu/african-american-studies/afam-162>



A sweet friendship refreshes the soul.

-Proverbs 27:9



Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.

-Eleanor Roosevelt

PEACE DAY EVENTS



Every year on September 21st, The International Day of Peace is celebrated around the world. In our area, the organization Peace Day Philly, led by Lisa DiNardo Parker, creates and promotes exciting events to observe the week of Peace Day, including social justice, music, art, education, personal development and other topics.

September 2020 marks 10 years for Peace Day Philly, which has included over 170 programs related to personal, local and global peace. This year, all events are available online so that all may participate.

Below are just some of the online programs that will be offered September 15-21. These events focus not only on peace but also on topics of great interest, including racial equity and interfaith discussion.



Peace Day event on Independence Mall, 2018

*"Turn away from evil and do good: seek peace and pursue it."
- Psalm 34:14*



For a full list of events, updated regularly, go to: <http://www.peacedayphilly.org/events/>
And also on Facebook: @PeaceDayPhilly
Please share with your networks!

9/16, 5:00-6:30PM

Immigrant Youth and Their Right to Peace and Security, Offered by Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice: <https://bit.ly/ontheborderpeace>

9/16, 6:30-8:30PM

Democracy Circle -The Rising Cost of Systemic Racism, offered by the Peace Center: <https://bit.ly/democracycircle>

9/17, 5:00-7:00PM

Interfaith Ally Workshop, offered in collaboration with Interfaith Philadelphia: <https://bit.ly/InterfaithAlly>

9/19, 3:30-5:00PM

Junk Journaling for Peace: <https://bit.ly/junkjournaling>

9/20, 7:00-8:30PM

Loving-Kindness Meditation, offered by the Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia: <https://bit.ly/loving-kindnessMeditation>

9/21, 5:00-6:30PM

South Sudanese Journeys: The Long Road to a New Home, offered in collaboration with the Sawa Sawa Network: <https://bit.ly/SSudanRefugees>

9/21, 7:00-8:30PM

Using A Moment to Fuel A Movement: Individual and Collective Action through Pandemics, Protests & Politics: <https://bit.ly/>



Peace Day Celebration in Rittenhouse Square, 2019

2020 Summer Update: FPCG Building

This summer, we have continued to work to maintain and care for our building. Here are some of things that our Staff and Property Committee have been working on:

- Repairs to our furnace chimney, a very major project that we have been planning for several years. This work is now complete and brings us into compliance with city code.
- Patching and repainting of the Primary Room. It now looks beautiful, along with the floor refinishing reported earlier!
- Repairs to the roof over the Longstreth Auditorium. This area is a perennial problem, but with proper attention we have been able to prevent any serious leaks.
- Retrofit of most of our lighting fixtures to LEDs. This will reduce our electric bills and is expected to pay off the investment in only a few years. The work is in process as of this writing and will be complete by the time you read this.
- Painting of the Vernon Park side wall, making it look great following concrete repairs done last year.

This along with many other maintenance and security work that is too numerous to list. We continue to be grateful for our Building Manager, Terry Boyer, Assistant Building Manager, David Slaughter, and our sextons, Tony Nixon and Clinton (CJ) Cotton, who continue to man the building to support access for critical staff, GACM, maintenance, and security.

As I have suggested before, please consider writing a note to Terry and our sextons, through the church office, to thank them for their faithful service. They miss you, as I do, and look forward to a time when we can be together. In the meantime, we continue to work to keep our building ready to meet the needs of the congregation and community.

Blessings to all,

Marc T. DiNardo

On behalf of the Property Committee



- Primary Room - refinished floors, patching and repainting



- Longstreth Roof Repair



-Worker Installing LED Retrofit Lighting



-North Side Wall

Director of Music Ministry Update

The search committee for the Director of Music Ministry has had 3 meetings via Zoom Tuesday, July 21st; Tuesday, August 4th; Friday, August 14th. As a reminder, the committee members are David Cassie, Daniel Conner, Susan Mills MacDonald, Ingrid Harris, Jason Williams, and Pastor Rebecca. Randy Rosensteel and Jesse Padgett serve as special advisors as needed.

To date the committee has received over 20 responses to the job posting. The majority of applicants are members of the American Guild of Organists and have experience varying from 6 years to 30+ years. In addition to cover letters and resumes the committee has asked for and received audio and video examples of organ and piano performance and choir conducting - during worship as well as during rehearsals or special performances. The committee has spent many hours reviewing the resumes and listening to the audio and video files.

We want to thank those who have responded to the questions posed in the August newsletter. In an effort to obtain additional input from across the FPCG family to help us in narrowing down the candidates, we invite your responses to this survey. Here is the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2MB9BPC>. Additionally, please feel free to reach out to any member of the committee with your questions, comments, or concerns.

Yours in Christ,

Ingrid Harris on behalf of the committee

Director of Music Ministry Survey

TAKE SURVEY



In the search for a Director of Music Ministry, the Search Committee is trying to take into account the diversity of our congregation in all its breadth. We are asking for your help in this brief survey.

Rate the importance of each of these items for you from 1-5 with 5 as most important:

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Proficiency on the Organ | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Proficiency on the Piano | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Ability to direct Chancel Choir | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Ability to direct Children's Choir | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Ability to direct Gospel Choir | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Ability to direct Hand Bell Choir | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Ability to play other instruments (e.g. guitar, brass, violin, etc.) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

Rank the following types of music during worship service in your order of preference/importance to you with 5 as most important

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Traditional Christian | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Contemporary Christian | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Gospel/African American Spirituals | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Classical | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| World Music | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Combination of _____ | | | | | |

How important to you is the ability of the music director to be able to organize the following with 5 as most important.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| A classical concerts series | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| A diverse concerts series | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

How important to you is the music director ability to do fundraising to support the music ministry of FPCG with 5 as most important.

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Additional Comments _____



THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN GERMANTOWN

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