



• Windows •

The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
June 2021



In this Issue

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Minister's Message..... | 1 |
| June Birthdays..... | 2 |
| June Challenge Offering | 2 |
| New Sexton..... | 2 |
| Officers Retreat..... | 3 |
| Confirmation..... | 4 |
| GACM News..... | 4 |
| Music News..... | 5 |
| Financial Update..... | 5 |
| Livestream Update..... | 6 |
| Tech Deacon Needed.... | 6 |
| McCullough Fund..... | 7 |

Items for the July issue of *Windows* are due on

June 18th. Send to

Communications
@fpcgermantown.org

From the Pastor

Summer is coming. We know it for sure with the 90 degree days we've been having lately! With summer, we also move into the season of vacations. I've been thinking about this as I prepare to go visit Arkansas at the end of June. I'm going to be flying there, while Grace flies from DC, and we meet up to spend a week with my mother, sister, nephew, niece, and their children. It is an exciting opportunity, but one that also comes with unique challenges as we transition from over a year of isolation into whatever "normal" is going to look like now.



We will be negotiating physical challenges like travel. What is the safest and most appropriate protocol? When do we wear masks? All of my family over the age of 18 have been vaccinated, but that doesn't mean we can't be carriers of the virus to and through those who have not been. We will certainly follow the guidance of the CDC and the rules in public areas such as airports, restaurants, and the like, but how do we assure that we are caring for all we encounter, particularly my sister's grandchildren who are elementary school aged and younger. I am reminded of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians in which he writes, "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up." How can I best respond so that the most people are supported and comfortable? So that I am building up rather than tearing down relationships and community?

That's just the question about physical actions. Perhaps the most unique challenge in moving forward with "vacation" is the emotional one. What does it mean to "vacation" in this transitional time? A time in which we are coming out of isolation, individual and corporate, like one we've never known in my lifetime. How do we experience rest and refreshment in a world that has been globally traumatized? How do we gracefully ask for what we need to be rejuvenated while also supporting others who have been equally stressed over the past 15 months?

This is a time in which we need to be tender with ourselves, but also with others. To strive to offer grace when we disagree, and especially *to listen* to others as they share their struggles, concerns, and challenges as we face this new world together. After so much time apart, we may have become used to our ways of doing things and need to pay special attention to not to force our points of view on others, but to share with equanimity. This is true not only as we make our path through whatever "vacation" looks like, but through all our encounters in the days ahead.

- Rev. Rebecca Segers



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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- John Walthausen
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JUNE BIRTHDAY'S

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Kaleb Gibbs JUNE 1ST | Maddox Robinson JUNE 1ST |
| John Roberts JUNE 4TH | Allison Seed JUNE 5TH |
| Maya Clever JUNE 9TH | Gail Hill JUNE 10TH |
| Norma Kilson JUNE 14TH | Catherine Clever JUNE 22ND |
| Sylvia Clark JUNE 23RD | David Wolford JUNE 25TH |
| Elizabeth Young JUNE 26TH | Jason Williams JUNE 27TH |



Welcome to Our New Sexton

The Personnel Committee is delighted to inform you that Robert Patterson has returned to the FPCG family as our new (for the second time around!) sexton. In the wake of losing David Slaughter as part of our sexton team, Robert first returned to help out, and has since agreed to remain. We are glad to welcome him back to the First Church staff!

June Challenge Offering: Friends of Vernon Park

Just outside the windows of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown you will see green leafy trees and colorful flowers in bloom, children playing, dogs and their owners strolling the paths and folks enjoying a conversation or book as they sit on the benches. Vernon Park, the 'Emerald of Germantown' is nestled between commercial corridors and residential streets and serves as a connector, interlude and green oasis in our neighborhood. The Friends of Vernon Park is a group of dedicated volunteer stewards of this vital community resource, ensuring that the Park is vibrant, welcoming and a positive environment for all. We are able to accomplish this joyful work with the help of our community. The financial support provided by FPCG has enabled us to tend to gardens, create thoughtful programming for families and invest in (limited but consistent) maintenance during the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation off-season. The park looked and felt great all winter and welcomed spring once it (finally!) arrived; ready for picnicking, Easter egg hunts and all sorts of fun. Thank you, FPCG friends, for all you do to lift up our community. To learn more visit www.friendsofvernonpark.org. Donations could be made to the church. Please indicate May Challenge Offering on your check.

Officers Retreat

On Sunday, May 16, 2021 from 2:00-4:30 p.m., the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown held a Joint Meeting of the Elders and Deacons. It was comprised of the Reception of the Confirmands as New Members and an Officers Training Retreat. It was a joyous beginning as we heard the Statements of Faith prepared by Emanuel Heyer-Rivera, Henry Hunsicker, Mimi Ohemeng, Amir Staten, and Siena Williams, and then received into membership of the church. Next the Elders, Deacons, Elders-elect and Deacons-elect did some team-building work, followed by breaking out into their respective Boards to go over the basics of serving on them, then finished with examining and approving the new Officers and a brief worship service acknowledging the gifts we all bring to the community. We offer thanks for those who have served so faithfully and are going off the Session and the Board of Deacons, and look forward to the future with our new Officers who were ordained and/or installed on Sunday, May 31, 2021.



Deacons and Elders gather for in-person Officer Training Retreat: (l to r) Dani Howard, Marc DiNardo, Andrea Overton, Joe Leube, Delores Solomon, Drew Hood, and Will Lewis



The other side of the circle listens to opening remarks: (l to r) Rhonda Highsmith, Randy Clever, Duane Horne, Jason Williams, Krista Hoekema-Boerman, Sheila Heyer-Rivera, and Arlene Grace



Elder Ingrid Harris looks on as Rev. Rebecca Segers shares how the "leaves of the tree shall be for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2)



Director of CE Christian Heyer-Rivera introduces the confirmands for examination while (l to r) Deacon-elect Arlene Grace, Elder Ingrid Harris, and Revs. Rebecca Segers and Kevin Porter listen.

Youth News ~ Confirmation



Our five confirmands being welcomed as active members into our fellowship. Confirmands/New Active Members (From left to right) Amir Staten, Mimi Ohemeng, Siena Williams, Emanuel Heyer-Rivera, and Henry Hunsicker.



Rev. Rebecca praying over the waters of baptism.



*"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
- Joshua 1:9*



Amir receiving the sacrament of Baptism.

Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry News

This June, celebrate National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables month. Fruits and vegetables provide a variety of nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Fruits and vegetables are good sources of many nutrients like potassium, fiber, folate and Vitamins A and C, are low in calories, fat and sodium, may lower your risk of developing certain chronic diseases, and help you maintain a healthy weight.

GACM's Food Cupboard operates every Thursday from 10 -12. Our partnership with the Community Garden at Mastery Charter School, Pickett Campus enables us to share fresh fruits and vegetables that are picked Thursday morning. In addition to the fresh produce we have on site, we distribute 50 Healthy Alternative Vouchers each valued at \$10. The vouchers can be used at A&N Produce to purchase fruits, vegetables, milk and eggs. We do our best to encourage healthy eating and to supplement the canned and process goods so often available.



Music News



What a celebration it was to have worship together on Ascension Sunday! I am so pleased that we are now able to worship together again in person, and to experience the presence of each other in our sanctuary. I am hoping that the good news will continue, and that we can have the all clear of the medical community to resume full choirs in the fall.

From the middle of June through the end of the summer, we will have vocal and instrumental soloists lead music for worship. I am eager to feature musicians from the congregation. If you would like to sing or play a solo please be in touch! I would love to find a Sunday for you to share your gifts with the church.

Work on the organ continues. Steve Emery from Emery Brothers has been back to the church several times this month as he continues repairing worn-out actions in the gallery pedal. We continue to wait for the return of our 32' pedal trombone stops, but I am hoping that I can use it once again to shake the whole sanctuary sometime this summer.

Financial Information for

January through April 2021

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Actual Pledges | \$151,662 | Budget to Date | \$130,300 |
| Actual Expenses | \$256,900 | Budget to Date | \$242,000 |

For the first four months of 2021 the paid pledges are ahead of budget. This is due primarily to several members fulfilling their pledge early in the year, and many of you fulfilling your pledge commitment during these four months.

Expenses are pretty much in line with the budget. Program expenses are down since we are not yet in full operation due to COVID-19.

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.

We recently received word that our Payroll Protection Loan in the amount of \$82,356 (received last year has been forgiven). This converted the loan into a federal grant. This was a great help in covering payroll expenses in 2020.

Thank you for your continued financial commitment which is essential to our financial success, and very much appreciated.

Livestream Update

When the pandemic hit over fifteen months ago, we quickly transitioned to providing live-stream services to accommodate worshiping from home. However, due to limited equipment resources for streaming capabilities and ever-evolving COVID safety measures, we settled into a pre-recorded service model that was skillfully crafted each week thanks to the expertise of Chris Scott and the dedication of our worship team. Still, recognizing that we would one day return to in-person worship (we celebrate that that day has come!), the Worship Music and the Arts Committee began to discuss the need for high-quality live-streaming services to provide equitable access to our services for everyone and to share the gospel message with a wider audience via our YouTube and Facebook channels. To that end, we put together a Live-Stream task force comprised of Reverend Rebecca Segers, our Director of Music Ministry, John Walhausen, Marc DiNardo, Contina Lundy and Jason Williams.

As a team, we discussed our hope to provide live-stream capabilities for worship services, special events, like weddings and funerals, and our concert series. Through the process, we also learned of the need to upgrade our audio system, not only for live-streaming capabilities, but also for sound augmentation within our worship space. Since the last upgrade to the sound system was done in the late 1990s, it was evident that it was time to bring our sound system up to the technological advances of the 21st century.

As a committee, we vetted various audiovisual providers and eventually narrowed our selections to four. The proposed prices of the systems range from approximately \$31,100 to \$71,000 for varied scope of work dependent on the provider's recommendations. On Sunday, May 16th, the committee presented their final selection to be voted on and approved by session, where it was passed unanimously. Our new audiovisual provider, Zeo Brothers, will be contracted to purchase, install, provide training and service for our new system, which includes a full upgrade to our sound system, three pan-tilt-zoom cameras and live-streaming capability, at a cost of no more than \$45,000. We are blessed to have found a company that we believe will provide a quality product at a reasonable price with good support into the future. We look forward to the work progressing in the near future and hope to have the system installed and in use by the end of the summer.

We know that this will keep all of us connected, whether we worship in person or at home, and we look forward to being able to share other important events at our church with friends around the globe. Yet, we also wonder, what other services can these new tools provide? We have been gifted with the financial means to purchase this technology, how can we best use it to serve our members, our community and beyond?

We want to hear your thoughts! What are your hopes and dreams for our church as we boldly live into a new future as Christ's followers, and how can we best harness the power of this technology to further our mission? If you would like to be a part of this discussion, we invite you to join us via Zoom on Tuesday, June 15th at 7:00 p.m. where we will brainstorm ideas and share our thoughts

about the many ways in which we might be able to use these resources to further the work of Christ here in Germantown and beyond.

Submitted by Jason Williams on behalf of the Mission and Outreach & Worship, Music and the Arts Committees

How We're Going to Pay for It

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is incredibly blessed to have had many members in the past who have chosen to leave a legacy for the church's future. One such couple were George W. and Edith Tall, who on December 1, 1961 gave \$8,500 to the Endowment, asking that a fund be established with it "to aid and encourage the increasing witness of the Church in new and modern ways" ... "and that the income and principal be so designated that it may be used from time to time, under the direction of the Minister of the Church, alone, or in consultation with the donor, or any other Committee now in being, or which may be created, whose purpose will be to foster the expanding ministry of the church."

In February 1976, the church received an additional \$10,000 from the Estate of George Tall for this same purpose. Those monies have grown to almost \$88,000 and will provide the full amount for the Livestream System, thus assuring that their wishes for "new and modern ways" to "foster the expanding ministry of the church" will continue. It is truly by God's grace and the generosity of our forebears that we may do this vital and necessary outreach.

Tech Deacons Needed

We're about to install an amazing system that will allow us to witness Christ's love to the world through continued live online worship, as well as support the mission and ministry of the church by sharing concerts, weddings, funerals, and more. This new system will have two easy to manage portable screens, one for video and the other for audio, that can be set up in the sanctuary each week for worship. Depending on the ability of the individual(s) working it, we imagine no less than one and no more than two people needed to "run the system" and share our worship live online every Sunday and then archived for repeat or later viewing. We anticipate "going live" sometime in late July or early August, and will need to have volunteers organized for training by then.

Additionally, in the interim, we will be livestreaming with a single camera set up in the front the sanctuary. This needs one individual to set up and record until such time as we have our more professional quality system in place.

Do you have an interest in video/audio technique and are relatively computer savvy? Would you like to partner with a friend or family member and share your gifts with the congregation (and the world!) through supporting our worship livestream? Please let Rev. Rebecca Segers or Marc DiNardo know and we will provide you with more information including training dates. Eventually we imagine a similar scheduling set-up as with the ushers, where there is a set week that you would be the Tech Deacon and could trade off with others if needed.

Thank you for your interest and sharing your gifts in this important ministry!

McCullough Fund Update

In the March Windows newsletter, Lois Bethea gave us a brief history of the McCullough Fund—a designated endowment that originated with a bequest from the Mansfield sisters in the early 20th century to support the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society and the Women’s Home Missionary Society of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. Two-thirds of the gift was to be used for the Foreign Missionary Society and the remaining third was to be spent by the Home Missionary Society. As we strive to carry out the original intention of this gift and the decision of the Admin and Finance Committee to spend down the fund over the next ten years, the Mission and Outreach Committee has formed the McCullough Mission Grant Sub-committee. This team has met multiple times over the last two months in order to plan the ongoing administration and disbursement of these funds. Since the two ministry groups originally designated by the Mansfield sisters no longer exist, the McCullough Sub-committee has decided to disburse the funds in the following way: two-thirds of the funds (approximately \$15,000 annually, to be determined by the Admin and Finance Committee) will be granted to international projects and organizations that build the Kingdom of God and show God’s love. One-third of the funds (approximately \$6,000 annually) will be granted to domestic projects and organizations, giving preference to organizations First Church is partnering with in other ways (for example, blessing an organization where we are volunteering with a financial gift).

Each year, our goal will be to make a decision by November for the next year’s grants. International grant requests will be submitted once a year (by October 15th), while there will be an open call for domestic grants. The McCullough Mission Grant Sub-Committee will meet in March, June and September to review any domestic grant requests that may have been submitted. In November, the committee will review the international grant requests and any additional domestic grant requests that have come in. At that time, if there are any remaining domestic grant funds, they will be given to the Mission and Outreach Committee to add to any ongoing recipients as they see fit.

This year, however, we will be disbursing 2021 grants by the end of the year in addition to making decisions for the 2022 international grants. In the March Windows newsletter, Lois put out a call for international mission projects. Five church members responded to the call and submitted grant requests. The McCullough Sub-committee has decided to fund each of the 5 organizations that were submitted, splitting the available funds evenly. We will be putting out a call for another round of international grants later this year with an October 15th deadline for the 2022 grants. Additionally, the call for domestic grants is officially open. If you have any ideas for domestic grants -- especially with organizations that we are partnering with in other ways (and not already receiving financial assistance from the church) email missiongrants@fpcgermantown.org to request a submission form.

McCullough Grant Recipients *(in alphabetical order)*

Athletes in Action – AIA Provides training and chaplaincy for the Olympics, World University Games, Continental and Regional Sporting Events and other Championships. An arm of Campus Crusade for Christ, its goal is to help athletes experience the hope and purpose that comes from following Jesus and equip them to use their platform to be part of God’s mission in the world to make disciples of all nations. FPCG has supported Carl Dambman who was involved extensively with this ministry before his retirement; it is one of our Challenge Offering recipients as well. Jim Thompson was the sponsor for this grant application.

Cuba Partnership Network – for over 100 years, this organization has been responsible for relating to the Independent Presbyterian Synod of Cuba. Our grant will be used for pastors’ salaries, a feeding program for the elderly, and a Christian Education project. Rev. David Cassie is on the steering committee and has been leading engagement in Cuba for over 20 years. He is the sponsor for this grant application.

Hope Initiative Program (HIP) Africa – this organization provides education, food, and water for a rural community in Bungoma county, Kenya. Our funds will go toward building an additional classroom as the educational system continues to grow. Rev. Rebecca and Christian Heyer-Rivera were the sponsors of this grant application, which is led by award-winning Executive Director Livingstone Kegode.

The Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) – this organization provides training for anesthesiologists in 10 African countries, which have no training other than through PAACS. Our grant will go to support that training. Dr. Elizabeth Drum is Chair of the Investigative Task Force leading these efforts and was the sponsor for this grant application.

Village to Village Care – this organization strives to improve health care in underserved communities with a focus on disease prevention and treatments in Bojongo Clinic, Cameroon. Their need is for a solar energy system due to frequent power outages to the service health care center and guest house. Dr. Annie Kotto is one of the founding members of Village to Village Care and the sponsor of this grant application.



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IN GERMANTOWN

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