



Windows

The newsletter of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown

The mission of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is to reflect the loving presence of Christ as we serve others faithfully, worship God joyfully, and share life together in a diverse and generous community.

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Dear FPCG Members and Friends,

As we journey through the Lenten season, and end our month entering into Holy Week, we also have the opportunity to celebrate the gifts and contributions of women in our nation and around the world. In honor of God's continued grace shared through the witness women, we will feature the leadership of Arlene Grace as she assists in the serving of communion. We will also hear the voices of three distinguished women from our community: Heather Rice, the Director of Whosoever Gospel Mission; our own Dr. Carey Davis, Executive Director of Chestnut Hill Meals on Wheels; and Rev. Diane Fitch, Chair of the Presbytery's Committee of Ministry. Each will share the Word of God with us throughout this month.

What a joy that God has created among us a community where the gifts of all people are rightly recognized, celebrated and shared. In each of our families, our workplaces, and in our daily lives may we advance God's Kingdom of love, grace, equity and justice through the affirmation of women.

With so much happening in the life of our congregation this month, I encourage you to not only read with joy the news and events planned, but to also join us as we learn to live and rejoice together in God's love made known to us in Jesus Christ.

Rev. Christian Heyer-River

Newsletter submissions are due the 22nd of each month.

Church Hours

Office:
Tuesday through Friday
9AM-1PM

Building Hours:
Monday through Friday,
8AM-4PM
Saturday: 8AM-3PM
Sunday: 8AM-5PM



@FPCGermantown

@thefirstpresbyterianchurch8143

www.fpcgermantown.org



Happening this Month

Schedule

- Sunday Worship, 10AM
- Choir Rehearsal, Thursdays, 7:15 PM and Sundays, 8:45AM
- Oratorio Choir Rehearsal, Tuesdays, 7:15PM
- GACM Food Pantry, Thursdays, 10AM
- Staff Meeting, Wednesdays, 10AM
- Session Meeting, March 04
- Deacons' Meeting, March 15
- WMA Meeting, March 29
- All Ages' Youth Group, March 13 and 20, 5:30PM

Pastor Christian's Office Hours
Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30AM-1:30 PM



Daylight Savings Time
starts on March 08

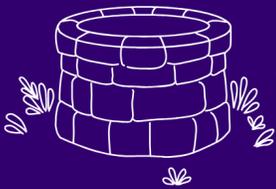
Preaching this Month

John 3:1-17

Nicodemus Meets Jesus at Night

Lent Two, 03/01

Rev. Christian, preaching



John 4:5-42

Samaritan Woman at the Well

Lent Three, 03/08

Heather Rice, preaching



John 9:1-41

Jesus Heals a Man Blind from Birth

Lent Four, 03/15

Dr. Carey Davis, preaching



John 11:1-45

The Resurrection of Lazarus

Lent Five, 03/22

Cari States-Codding, preaching

Matthew 26:14- 27:66

Palm Sunday

Rev. Diane Fitch, preaching



March Birthdays

March 04

Francina Carroll

March 19

Emanuel Heyer-Rivera

March 07

Micah Ahn

Wes Reisse

Rosy Walkenhorst

March 20

Leslie Burton

Alexander Deas

March 09

Robert Archer

March 21

Zara Gibbs

Mark McCord-Amasis

March 10

Sally McCord-Amasis

March 22

Joshua Cameron

Laura Ola

March 11

Ida Wiggins-White

March 25

Joan Blake

Peter Hill

March 14

Ted Walkenhorst

March 26

Tyrone Burton

March 17

Randy Clever

March 27

Soren Hood





**Responding to Christ's
call to ministries of
compassion for the
world's most vulnerable.**



**ONE GREAT
HOUR OF SHARING**

March Challenge Offering: One Great Hour of Sharing

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People – all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance and hope.

Received during the season of Lent to the collection on Palm Sunday each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

-Mission and Outreach Committee



**ONE GREAT
HOUR OF SHARING**

*Dear God, we pray for the strength
to heed your charge to bring
justice to our hurting world.
Help us advocate for what is right,
that through our words and actions,
all people will know of your love.
Amen.*

Whosoever Gospel Mission Service/Learning Event

On Saturday, February 7, twenty members and friends of FPCG gathered at the church and made our way 2 blocks down Cheltenham Ave to Whosoever Gospel Mission. There we were greeted by Heather Rice, the director, and given a tour of the mission. Heather spent some time telling us about the mission's history, purpose and the current work being carried on today. We brought decorations to brighten up their chapel. In honor of Black History Month, the youth group had spent some time assembling portfolios of several historic black American activists from Philadelphia, which we displayed on their walls. In honor of Valentine's Day, some of the youth made beautiful strings of colorful cut out hearts, which we strung along the walls around the room.

After learning about the mission and decorating the space, we joined the men for lunch, listening to their stories and spending time with them. While they munched on delicious treats we had baked for them, the men talked about their past struggles and their hopes for the future. It was really special to hear how the mission was being used in their lives. I am grateful that our church financially supports this organization that has impacted so many lives already and continues to do so.

-Rebekah Davis and the Christian Ed Committee





Being a Vessel

Participants prayed together, learned several songs, learned about worship traditions from the Black Church. Several volunteers improvised with the music and got to practice "lining out" a hymn from Philadelphia Gospel composer Charles Tindley.

-John Walthausen



Year-End Statements

We appreciate everyone's patience with our slight delay in sending out year-end giving statements. If you live in Germantown, and don't receive your statement by March 14, please email or call the office. There have been recurring difficulties with our neighborhood post office. Last year, they returned 40 statements as undeliverable. Last week, we received an Advent postcard that was marked undeliverable.

-Cari States-Codding



February Challenge Offering: Friends of Vernon Park



First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
Minute for Mission: February 22, 2026

In the coming weeks, just outside the windows of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown you will see frost lined branches and snowy scenes giving way to 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 in between commercial corridors and residential streets and serves as a connector, interlude and green oasis in our neighborhood. Friends of Vernon Park is a group of dedicated volunteer neighbor 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 First Presbyterian Church through the Minute for Mission has enabled us to tend to gardens, most recently a pollinator garden planted with your support in 2024, where milkweed, hyssop, mountain mint and others welcome butterflies and other important pollinators to the garden by the playground. The playground's mosaic tribute Sun Ra is the backdrop for the next phase of the pollinator planting for this spring. Down the path a bit towards the Black Writers Museum, a public art installation devoted to processing grief, 'The Thread' frames a bench where visitors can remember loved ones.

The rain garden continues to serve as a vital tool in stormwater management and as it is mature and well cared for, a learning space for kids and Environmental Scientists alike. We organize thoughtful programming for families such as the summer reading and arts program, Under the Shady Old Tree and invest in (limited but consistent) maintenance during the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation off-season. The Park welcomes spring once it arrives—ready for picnics, plantings, FPCG's summer Freedom School and all sorts of fun. To learn more about Friends of Vernon Park, please visit www.friendsofvernonpark.org, sign up for our monthly newsletter email and consider joining us at our open monthly meeting, third Mondays from 6-7 pm. Thank you, FPCG friends, for all you do to lift up our community.

Angela Miles
President, Friends of Vernon Park

Ruth Seeley,
President Emeritus, Friends of Vernon Park

www.friendsofvernonpark.org | Facebook: @FriendsOfVernonPark

Lent 2026



Soup and Sabbath

Join fellow congregants and friends for Soup and Sabbath -- a short Lenten reading and thoughtful conversation over a simple meal of soup, bread, and fruit. It's a great way to get to know others while reflecting together during this holy season as we prepare for Easter. Soup and Sabbath will be held on Sunday evenings, March 8, 15, and 22, 5 – 7 pm, in locations throughout the NW Philadelphia area – Germantown (the Church), W. Mt. Airy (the Davis home), and Roxborough (the Cassie home). You choose which location you want to join and this will be your group for all three gatherings. Sign up at church during coffee hour, or contact Carey Davis at careymdavis@gmail.com.

-Sheila Heyer-Rivera

Calling all Poets!

This Good Friday, April 3, FPCG will hold a special evening meditative service at 7PM featuring readings from Gospels, music from the choir, and original poetry from members and friends. If you love to write, we would like to feature your original work. Participating poets are asked to choose one of seven scripture lessons and write a short response to be read during the service. The themes for our seven lessons are The Shadow of Betrayal (Luke 22:1-12), The Shadow of the Agony of the Spirit (Mark 26:36-44), The Shadow of Arrest (Mark 14:43-49), The Shadow of Desertion (Mark 14:50, 66-72), The Shadow of Accusation (Matthew 27:11-18, 21-26), the Shadow of Crucifixion (Matthew 27: 27-37), and the Shadow of Death (Matthew 27:45-54). For more information and to sign up to contribute a poem, please contact Rev. Christian.



-John Walthausen

“The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses’ sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah’s journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah’s call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus’ time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord’s Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.) In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism at the Easter Vigil. In many communities of faith it remains a time to equip and nurture candidates for baptism and confirmation and to reflect deeply on the theme of baptismal discipleship.” -PC(USA)



2026 Holy Week and Easter

Labyrinth available during regular church hours in Longstreth during Holy Week.



Palm Sunday, by Evans Yegon

Palm Sunday

March 29, 10AM

Rev. Diane Fitch, preaching
Sunday worship with a procession of the palms.

Maundy Thursday

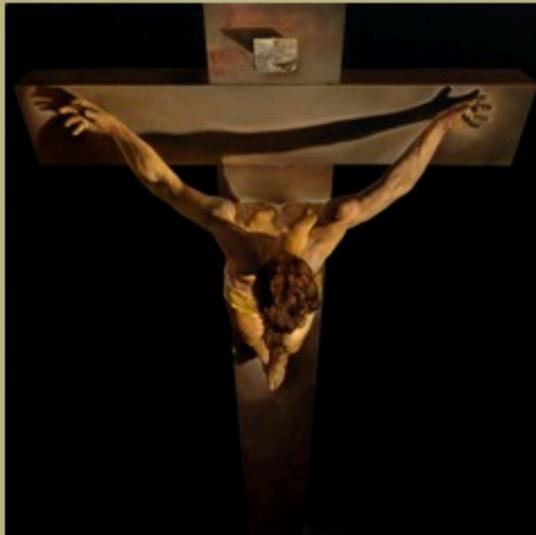
April 2

6PM, Soup Supper

7PM, Worship with Holy Communion



The Mystical Supper



Christ of St. John of the Cross, Salvador Dali

Good Friday

April 3

5PM, self-guided labyrinth walk
7PM, meditation with readings, poetry, and music

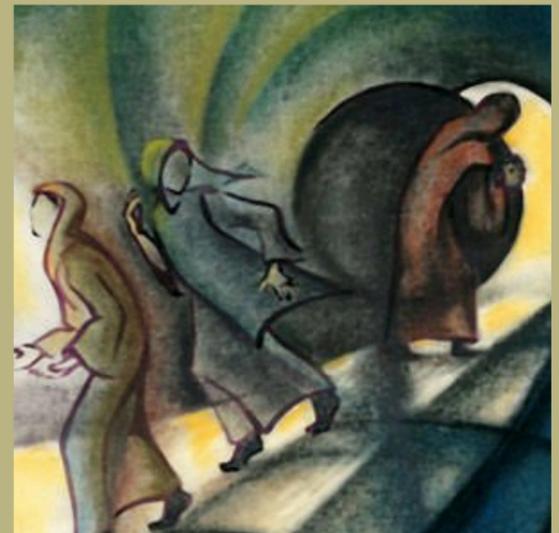
Easter Festival

Saturday, April 4, 10AM

Easter Sunday

Worship with Holy Communion

April 5, 10AM



Woman at the Tomb, Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre - England

Good Friday Labyrinth Walk

Before Good Friday's evening meditation, there will be the opportunity to walk the labyrinth in Longstreth. The labyrinth, made by Cari and Dwayne States-Codding, is an ancient meditation and contemplation tool. It is self-guided, meaning you enter/exit at your own pace, and there will be no spoken instructions. This also means that there is no set time limit. If you haven't walked a labyrinth before, a half hour is usually plenty of time. If, while walking, you want to stop the activity you are welcome to walk out without completing it. This is a new practice at FPCG, so Cari will be at the beginning of the labyrinth with instructions on how to walk it, and they will have (optional) aids to take along the journey. (For those familiar with labyrinths, this one has seven circuits.)

During Holy Week, the labyrinth will be available during regular church hours. On Good Friday, Cari will be at the labyrinth at 5PM.

-Cari States-Codding



Sunday School Special Guest

To celebrate Black History Month, our Sunday School has been learning about different African American Philadelphians in history. We learned about a firefighter, doctors and last Sunday, our very own Laurice Simmons Kennel came to teach us about Marian Anderson!

Thank you, Laurice, for taking time to teach us!

-Sheila Heyer-Rivera



Congregational Coffee Hour

The CDFC is doing a new thing on the 4th Sunday of each month. The 4th Sunday will be Congregational Coffee Hour. The CDFC is asking the church to bring one item on the 4th Sunday. The item for each month will be announced in the worship bulletin and monthly newsletter. For March the item is cupcakes or muffins. A sign-up sheet will be at the CDFC bulletin board...we thank you in advance.

-CDFC Committee



Carpooling

Would you like to attend in-person Sunday service but need a ride? Do you have a car and the willingness to drive another congregation member to church! To sign up, see deacons Matt Grewe or Andrea Overton-Horne after Sunday service, email office@fpcgermantown.org, or call 215-842-8811. Thanks to those who are already serving and building fellowship in this way.

-Matt Grewe

Make GACM Your +1

"Make GACM Your +1" is our church-wide campaign to support the work of Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry. Each month, "most needed" items are listed in the bulletin, and bags are provided to bring in contributions for the food pantry. As you shop, add an item to share! The last Sunday of every month is "collection Sunday." During the first hymn, we will come forward to donate our collected food items. Whether you're able to bring one needed item in your bag or you're able to fill the bag, every donated item is valuable and appreciated. We are excited about keeping our cupboard stocked to bless our neighbors in their season of need. **For March, GACM is in need of the following: cereal, pasta sauce, canned fruit, jelly, canned tuna, shelf-stable milk.**



Service/Learning trip to PR

On August 8-15 a group of 16 members of FPCG are going to Puerto Rico for a week of working alongside Techos Pa' Mi Gente and learning more about the island. During the next few months we will be having different fundraising events in our community, such as hoagie sales, plant sales, and more! Starting in March, we will begin selling delicious Puerto Rican coffee! 8oz bags for \$10 each. Please let us know if you want some. We will be selling them during coffee hour after worship service and also around the neighborhood. Help us spread the word!

Women's History Month: Rev. Margaret Towner



Rev. Towner at her ordination

Rev. Towner was the first woman to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church. She was ordained in October 1956. Originally a medical photographer with a pre-medical bachelor degree, Rev. Towner was encouraged to explore ministry by her home church. They gave her a scholarship to Union Theological Seminary, where she earned a bachelor's degree in divinity (B.D.) in 1954. After obtaining her B.D., she was commissioned as a church worker and was the director of Christian education at several churches.

In 1955, the Presbyterian Church began ordaining women as minister. On October 24, 1956, Rev. Towner became the first woman to be ordained to ministry by the Presbyterian Church. After ordination, she returned to her congregation in Pennsylvania, but she was never asked to conduct services or preach.

Over her career, she served at a variety of churches, first working mainly in Christian education and later as an assistant or associate pastor. It wasn't until her last call that she was paid equally with male pastors.

Rev. Towner will celebrate her 101st birthday on March 19th, and has retired to Florida.

-Cari States-Codding

The most important thing to know about women in ordained ministry is that they are only there because they have been called by God to serve in various capacities. All have been called. It's something we couldn't say no to. I'm a great believer in the Holy Spirit who is with us at all junctures in our lives. -Rev. Towner

From *Gender and leadership in the PC(USA)*, a study conducted through the Office of the General Assembly

- As of 2022, 42% of active, non-retired ministers were women
- As of 2022, of ministers actively serving a congregation, 38% were women
- In 2019, 79% of women ministers reported discrimination/harassment due to their gender, compared to 9% of their male peers
- In 2019, 58% of women reported difficulty in being accepted as leaders because of their gender
- In 2019, 42% of female ministers reported their gender as reason for being turned down for a job

FREE

J.S. Bach Birthday Celebration



With Organists:
Jeffrey DeVault
Edward Landin Senn
John Walthausen

MARCH

SATURDAY

21

2PM

**The First Presbyterian
Church in Germantown
35 West Chelten Avenue,
Philadelphia**



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

GERMANTOWN ORATORIO CHOIR

I DARE LOOK UP

A CONCERT OF AMERICAN MUSIC

**COME
SING
WITH
US!**

*WORKS BY
FLORENCE PRICE,
ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK,
AARON COPLAND,
ROMEO CASCARINO
AND OTHERS*

**REHEARSALS: TUESDAYS AT 7:15 PM
STARTING MARCH 10
CONCERT: APRIL 19**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT MUSIC DIRECTOR
JOHN WALTHAUSEN AT
JWALTHAUSEN@FPCGERMANTOWN.ORG**

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN
35 W CHELTEN AVE. PHILADELPHIA, PA**



Church Officers

Elders

2026
Sheila Heyer-Rivera
Andrew Hood
Peter Smith

2027
Arlene Grace
Randy Clever
Contina Lee Lundy, Clerk of Session

2028
Anthony Webb
Sara Greene
Klass Hoekema-Boerman

Deacons

2026
Zaria Cuffee, Moderator
Garth Herrick
Madeline Valentine

2027
Lydia Cooper
Matthew Grewe
William Lewis

2028
Faith Lewis
Andrea Overon-Horne
Rosemary Williams

Committees and Chairs

Administration and Finance

Klaas Hoekema-Boerman

Christian Education

Sheila Heyer-Rivera

**Congregational Development
and Fellowship**

A. Webb

Mission and Outreach

Drew Hood

Personnel

Ingrid Harris and Randy Clever

Property

Pete Smith

Safety and Wellness

Sara Greene

**Worship, Music, and
the Arts**

Arlene Grace

Staff

Acting Head of Staff

Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera

Director of Music Ministry

John Walthausen

Bookkeeper

Cindy Osborne

Church Administrator

Cari States-Codding

Building Manager

Terry Boyer

Sextons

Tony Nixon, Robert Patterson, JR Pasture, Chris Shoffner

Prayer Requests

Special Needs

Angel Adams
Miles Adams
Mandy Adams
Issa Byrdsong-Patterson
Todd Cameron
Robin Caroline Clark
Sylvia Clark
Randy Clever
David Corbin
Denise Cowey
Ian Cameron
The Cameron family
Lagunsad Family
Debra Gary
Todd Gasper
Kenny & Veda Gibbs

Arlene Grace
Marney Hague
Charlene Hardy & Family
Jane Heyer
Lee Hurst
Matt Hurst
Family of Norma Kilson
Laverne Kitchen
Evadney Miller
Cindy Osborne
Edna Solomon
Bogdan Suiunbaiev
Leslie Williams
Alice & David Wootson

Members & Friends in Military Service

Brittany Carroll
Michael D. Davis
Chip Martin
Dawayne Robinson
Joey
James

Homebound

Lois VanEerden
Wes and Ann Reisse
Betty King

**Nursing Home &
Retirement Community Residents**

Diane Hinman-Guggolz



- 02/01: Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera, *Reimagining Blessedness*, Matthew 5: 1-12
- 02/08: Arlene Grace, *Let Your Light Shine*, Matthew 5: 13-20
- 02/15: Cari States-Coddling, *The Elephant in the Room*, Psalm 2 and Matthew 17:1-9
- 02/22: Rev. Dr. Ethelyn Taylor, *Yield Not to Temptation*, Matthew 4:1-11

Please check our website if you'd like to catch up on (or re-watch) any of February's sermons.

February Sermons

- We will reflect the loving presence of Christ – Matthew 28:19-20
- We will serve others faithfully – Mark 10:43-45
- We will worship God joyfully – Colossians 3:16
- We will share life together – Acts 2:42-47
- We will be a diverse community – 1 Corinthians 12:15-19
- We will be a generous community – 1 Timothy 6:18-19

The mission of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is to reflect the loving presence of Christ as we serve others faithfully, worship God joyfully, and share life together in a diverse and generous community. While much could be added to this statement, we believe that this captures the most essential elements of our mission today as revealed through the words, thoughts and actions of the congregation. This mission statement is not only rooted in the life of the congregation; we believe that each promise this statement makes is rooted in Scripture as well:

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

35 West Chelten Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

