



# Windows

*The newsletter of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown*

**In this Issue:**

- 1. Minister's Message
- 2. Happening this Month
- 3. May Challenge Offering
- 4. 20 Year Anniversary
- 4. Make GACM Your +1
- 4. Puerto Rico Fundraiser
- 5. Church Updates
- 6. Holy Week 2026
- 8. Oratorio Concert
- 9. Congregational Coffee Hour
- 9. House Concert
- 9. Volunteers Needed
- 10. CLEAR Project
- 12. Mt. Airy Day
- 13. Acts of Kindness
- 14. Church Officers and Staff
- 14. Prayer List
- 16. April Sermons

Dear FPCG Family and Friends,

What an exciting month we have ahead of us as we look into May. As spring activity brings life and color, we have a number of activities that add life and color to our common life together and our witness in the world.

Let me start with our activities outside the church walls. On May 2nd we will be setting up our portable canopy on the property of the Cliveden House and participating in Mt. Airy Day. The Christian Education Committee will be selling mother's day flowering plants, vegetable plants, and coffee in support of our service-learning team headed to Puerto Rico later this summer. Our Mission and Outreach Committee has prepared plants of their own to give away to visitors of our tent along with fun stickers that share our church name and an encouraging message of faith. Two new church brochures will be debuted at Mt. Airy Day as well, a church brochure and a music ministry brochure. Come stop by or join us at our tent from 11a-5p on May 2nd as we share ourselves, along with information on our community and ministries, with our broader NW Philadelphia neighbors.

Just outside our church, we will be renovating our church's front landscape on Saturday, May 9th from 9:30a-12p, and then following up with a second time of planting on Sunday, May 17th starting at 4:30p. We will be filling our front green spaces with native plants, and sun and shade pollinating gardens in order to support a variety of life (mainly birds, butterflies, and bees) in our area. After our May 17th planting, pots of native and vegetable plants will be given away to those participating in the renovation. Our congregation was allotted grants to carry out this work through our participation in the CLEAR Project, and through donations from Journeywork and Weaver's Way, which you can read more about in this newsletter.

Within the church walls we have a number of exciting things happening as well this month. We will be hearing from our own Rev. Dr. Gerry Davis as he preaches and helps serve communion on the first Sunday of this month. Cari States-Codding and myself will share the Word in the middle of the month as I preach on Mother's Day on the 10th, and Cari preaches around Mental Health Month on the 17th. The wind of the Holy Spirit will be moving through our worship as Rev. David Cassie preaches on Pentecost Sunday, our celebration of the Holy Spirit on the 24th. Rev. Sarah Cowill, from the Presbytery, will round out our month by leading us on Trinity Sunday at the end of the month on the 31st.

Please join us this month as we share, both inside and outside our church building, with each other and our neighbors, the Good News and life that the Holy Spirit offers us through the grace and love that is ours in Jesus Christ!

Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera

*Newsletter submissions are due the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month.*

**Church Hours**

Office:  
Tuesday through Friday  
9AM-1PM

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



[www.fpcgermantown.org](http://www.fpcgermantown.org)



[@thefirstpresbyterianchurch8143](https://www.youtube.com/@thefirstpresbyterianchurch8143)



[@FPCGermantown](https://www.instagram.com/FPCGermantown)

# Happening this Month

## Schedule

- Mt. Airy Day, 05/02
- Session Meeting, 05/06, 7PM
- All Ages Youth Group, 05/08 and 05/22, 6:30PM
- Deacons' Meeting, 05/17, 11:30AM
- Congregational Development and Fellowship Committee Meeting, 05/24, 12PM
- Memorial Day, church closed, 05/25
- Property Committee Meeting, 05/28, 7PM

## Weekly Events

- Sunday Worship, 10AM
- Choir Rehearsal, 7:15PM  
Tuesdays and 8:45AM Sundays
- GACM Food Pantry, 10AM  
Thursdays

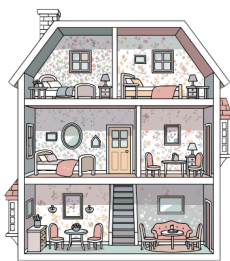
## Pastor Christian's Office Hours

Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30AM-1:30 PM

## Preaching this Month

### John 14:1-14

*Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life*  
Fifth Sunday of Easter, 05/03  
Rev. Gerry Davis, preaching



### John 14:15-21

*Those who love Jesus keeps his commands*  
Sixth Sunday of Easter, 05/10  
Rev. Christian, preaching



### Luke 24:44-53

Ascension Sunday, 05/17  
Cari States-Codding, preaching



### John 20:19-23; Acts 2:1-21

Pentecost, 05/24  
Rev. Dave Cassie, preaching

### Matthew 28:16-20

Trinity Sunday, 05/31  
Sarah Colwill, preaching



## May Birthdays

Mary Lundy	May 01
Rose Slater	May 07
Taneisha Gibbs	May 08
Jim Thompson	May 12
Nathan Ahn	May 14
Douglas Payne	May 15
Christopher Torrence	May 22
Kristina Ohemeng	May 23
Aaron Bass	May 26
Jerelyn Lagunsad	May 31

## **May Challenge Offering:**

### **Anesthesiology Training program within Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons**

It is well-documented that 5 out of 7 billion people in the world lack access to safe, affordable, and timely surgical care. In addition, the greatest areas of unmet need include Sub-Saharan Africa where 9 out of 10 people do not have access to safe surgery and anesthesia. The rate limiting step in providing surgery is often the availability of anesthesia providers and safe anesthesia care. Anesthesiologists are physicians that care directly for patients during surgery and ensure their safety during surgery and other life-threatening illnesses. In ten countries in Africa, there are currently NO physician anesthesiology training programs. Beginning in July 2018, a group of anesthesiologists from around the world worked to investigate the possibility of starting anesthesiology training under the auspices of the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS). PAACS was started in 1996 as a rural-based surgical training program in African Christian hospitals, directed by experienced board-certified surgeons. PAACS partners with established mission and faith-based hospitals to provide training in surgery to African physicians. I led the Anesthesiology Investigative Task Force which culminated in a presentation at the PAACS Annual Commission meeting outlining the rationale for anesthesiology training within PAACS. The commission voted to accept the proposal and the first group of physician anesthesiologists began training through PAACS in Kijabe Kenya in January 2022. The primary goal is to prepare physicians to practice at the highest level of evidence-based medicine in anesthesiology and to return to their home country to work as anesthesiologists. Additional training is provided in spiritual and leadership development. The first two anesthesiologists graduated in November 2025 and are now working as faculty at the same hospital where they trained. There are currently 9 African physicians in training from Kenya, Ethiopia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Three additional physicians will be added in 2027. The training program takes 4 years and costs approximately \$25,000 USD per physician per year. The ultimate goal is to have graduates of the program assume leadership roles in the training program or their home countries and to expand this training to other hospitals in Africa.

Additional information about PAACS is available here: <https://paacs.net/welcome.html> PAACS Anesthesiology program: [www.paacs.net/anesthesiology.html](http://www.paacs.net/anesthesiology.html)



## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF RISING FROM THE ASHES!

### WHOSOEVER GOSPEL MISSION

One of our long-time partners in community outreach is our connection and support for the Whosoever Gospel Mission. Financial support for their work is provided by one of the FPCG Community grants overseen by the Outreach and Mision Committee.

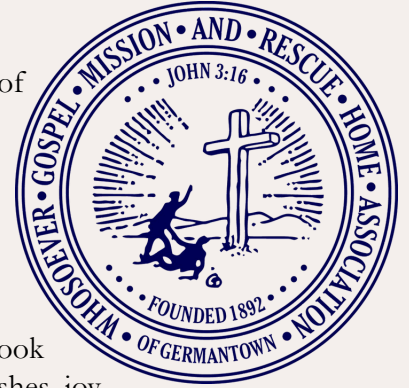
20 years (2/25/2006) ago the mission was the victim of an arson fire that destroyed their oldest building, heavily damaged their main building, closed their residential ministry for 2 years and nine months and cost them \$3.2 million to rebuild.

At this time, since the day of the fire and by God's grace, we are THRIVING! As you look inside the Mission today, you will see a places where God delights to trade beauty for ashes, joy for misery, and hope for weariness – not just in words, but in everyday life.

To celebrate this joyous milestone, WGM held an afternoon celebration on April 18. The program included TV replays of the fire and reflections from several people who were there that day. Bob Emberger, the former Executive Director, was interviewed by Heather Rice, the current Executive Director; both were present during the fire. The event also featured testimonies from current and former residents, sharing how the Mission has impacted their lives. Heather closed by outlining a vision for the future, including development of an additional parking area to meet current needs and support future improvements.

FPCG and WGM have many common connections over an extraordinarily long time of working together in Germantown. May this continue!

*-Jim Thompson*



### 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.



### Service/Learning trip to PR

On August 8-15 a group of 16 members of FPCG and 5 members of Overbrook Presbyterian Church 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! We are currently 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!

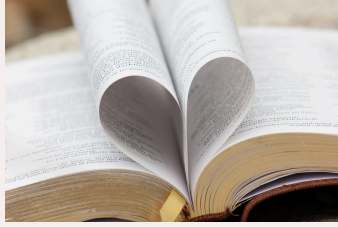
*-Sheila Heyer-Rivera*



# Church Updates

## Prayer List Updates

In an effort to keep our prayer list up-to-date, staff will be re-setting it every two months. Please let us know if someone needs to be on the list longer.



## Minutes and Operations

Please note that session minutes are available in the front office, as is a church operation manual. Both are in white binders, on the counter, next to the light switch.

## E-Mail Changes

Currently, FPCG sends mass emails through two modalities, the [communications@fpcgermantown.org](mailto:communications@fpcgermantown.org) email address and through a service called MailChimp. Since the departure of the communications manager several years ago, the communications email address has only been used to email service information and has otherwise not been monitored. Lately, when emails are sent via the communications email, some people are not receiving them until days later. To ensure prompt delivery, and to streamline our communication, we will be doing a complete change-over to MailChimp starting in June.

Switching to MailChimp will necessitate a change in the composition of service emails. There will no longer be a service bulletin attached to the email. However, the bulletin is available via a link in the description section of the video.

What this means: Not everyone who is on the communications email list is on the MailChimp email list, and vice versa, so Cari has cross-referenced both email lists. If you are only on the communications list, you will be receiving an email asking if you'd like to be added to MailChimp. If you have been receiving everything from the church *except* for service information, you should start receiving service information starting in June. Contact Cari at [office@fpcgermantown.org](mailto:office@fpcgermantown.org) with any question. And, if you aren't receiving any emails from the church, please sign up so we can stay in touch.

What you need to do: Unless you receive an email, there is nothing you need to do at this time. Thank you for your patience and grace as we make the switch.

Sign-up here to receive church emails:



## Transitional Pastor Search Committee

The Session has appointed a team to search for a new Transitional Pastor. The team consists of 2 representatives from Session (Peter Smith and Randy Clever), 2 representatives from the Personnel Committee (Leah Hood and Ingrid Harris), and 1 representative from the Deacons (Andrea Overton). Interviews are currently taking place. If you have any questions please feel free to contact any member of the team.

## The in-between time: Interim ministry as sacred space

published in *The Presbyterian Outlook*, written by Jeri-Lynne Bouterse

<https://pres-outlook.org/2019/06/the-in-between-time-interim-ministry-as-sacred-space/>

This article provides an overview of the purpose of interim ministers. It also addresses the benefits and challenges, for both minister and congregation, as well as the unexpected blessings that can come from this type of ministry.

# Holy Week 2026





# Oratorio Concert



*photo credit: Delores Solomon*

## 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 April the item is fruit. A signup sheet will be at the CDFC bulletin board...we thank you in advance.

-CDFC Committee



## It's coming! House Concert, May 2!

Don't miss it! An exciting event this spring...our first ever **HOUSE CONCERT...** featuring award winning folk-rock singer/songwriter

### Meghan Cary

Meghan and bandmate Peter Farrell are donating their time to make sure community seniors get the meals they need. Come enjoy the concert, and give generously to support the work of Chestnut Hill Meals on Wheels!

**Saturday, May 2  
3:00 pm  
Lafayette Hill PA\***

Pay as you can.  
(Suggested donation: \$50)

Rain or Shine. Plenty of Parking.  
Light Refreshments provided.  
Bring a bottle to drink or share.

Space is truly limited. 80 guests max

*\*Donations accepted at the concert - bring your checkbook!*

*\*\*House location provided with registration.*

**Great Music.  
Good Times.  
Important Cause.**



*"Meghan Cary serves up Folk-rock with a fierce heart and a storyteller's soul - award-winning original tunes hailed as healing, empowering, and outrageously joyful."*

**Your RSVP is your ticket!**

Scan below, call, or email us!  
215-233-5555,  
info@chestnuthillmow.org



SCAN ME

## Calling all volunteers!

Volunteers make GACM run! Between the office, food cupboard, and special events, volunteers contribute over 300 hours per month to GACM. We are always looking for new volunteers, especially in the following areas:

### Office:

Filing and clerical support  
Reviewing/quality control for Energy Coordinating Agency packets  
Client Intake  
Answering phones, greeting clients

### Food Cupboard:

Food Cupboard workers (Wednesday or Thursday)  
Manage our Healthy Access Voucher process  
Assist with client sign-in and Food Cupboard Questionnaire

Want to be part of a team making a difference in our community? Visit <https://www.crisisministry.org/volunteer> to learn more.

-submitted by Carey Davis

# THE CLEAR PROJECT

## CHILDREN LITURGY ECOLOGY & RENEWAL

### The CLEAR Project

In 2023, Villanova University began to recruit religious institutions throughout the greater Philadelphia region to participate in a two year project that they created with funding from the Lily Foundation. Using Pope Francis's encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'* as its foundation. Villanova created a project to bring together 13 institutions around the themes of Children, Liturgy, Ecology and Renewal, the CLEAR Project. The two year project was established to teach and expose leaders of Christian communities to different ways of engaging their local community in greater efforts to lovingly care for and steward the natural world around us. The project placed special emphasis on nurturing children in their natural wonder and responsibility to care for the earth, and making creation care a regular part of the church's liturgy.

Two leaders from each of the 13 institutions were chosen to participate in group teaching times, field trips centered around ecological restoration, planning sessions towards individual institutional projects of engagement, and presentation concerning the creation of smaller projects. FPCG was represented by Elder Contina Lundy and Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera. The CLEAR Project allowed for a grant toward the work of creating opportunities for education, advocacy, and renewal in order to build and support each institution's witness as stewards of God's good creation.

For FPCG, three ideas became the center of thought and action in expanding our ecological witness.

1. Education
2. FPCG will establish an ecological picture book library to be used within our Nursery Ministry for a monthly read aloud lesson, with books available to families for "check out" throughout the year, and utilized within our summer Freedom School Program
3. FPCG will engage in a year long congregation wide study of *Laudato Si'*
  - a. High School YG members will be lead in a 4 week study of *Laudato Si'*
  - b. FPCG Session will be led in monthly reflections
  - c. FPCG Members will be offered a book study
4. Advocacy

FPCG in partnership with Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry will establish a Microgarden Community that will supply organic local produce to our neighbors who utilize the GACM food cupboard. 4'x4' raised garden beds will be offered and installed for up to 10 FPCG members and GACM supporters who have the space and commitment to grow produce on behalf of the Crisis Ministry. Two raised beds will be placed in FPCG's newly renovated front landscape to educate and advertise to the Germantown community this ministry with hopes of future community expansion.

#### 1. Renewal

FPCG, in partnership with the non-profit organization Journeywork, will renovate the front landscape of the church grounds with sun and shade pollinating gardens, as well as fill in existing landscaping with native plants and shrubs in order to create a more lush and verdant landscape resistant to drought and more supportive of our natural ecology. FPCG's garden will also serve as a place of education for our Germantown neighbors who might be interested in establishing similar gardens on their own properties, through the services of Journeywork in that pursuit.

Rev Christian and Elder Contina have not been alone at FPCG in establishing and now carrying out this project. A team of members and friends have come along board to create a team to meet the CLEAR Objectives. In our Education component, our nursery supervisor Ms. Darshonta Roberson, Elder Sheila Heyer-Rivera, and Rev. David Cassie have helped to start these efforts. In our Advocacy project, GACM exec directors Jeff Podraza and Rebecca Bernstein, as well as Elder Leah Hood and Elder Webb have been instrumental in getting this portion off the ground, or rather in the ground. And finally in our Renewal efforts, the Property Committee, under the leadership of Peter Smith, with Carolyn Ballard-Freeman as the liaison, along with Paige Menton of Journeywork, have made our congregational plans come to fruition.

Please keep our projects in prayer and please join us on Saturday, May 9th from 9:30a-12p and Sunday, May 17th starting at 4:30p in the front of the church as we kick off CLEAR Project activities by installing new gardens on our property. On May 17th, Journeyworks will be giving away native plants and vegetable plants in pots to volunteers. Come, as we honor the God of all creation, who has redeemed us in Christ, that we might love and serve all life on this planet that God has entrusted to us to care for.

For more information:

<https://www.villanova.edu/university/liberal-arts-sciences/programs/theology/clear.html>

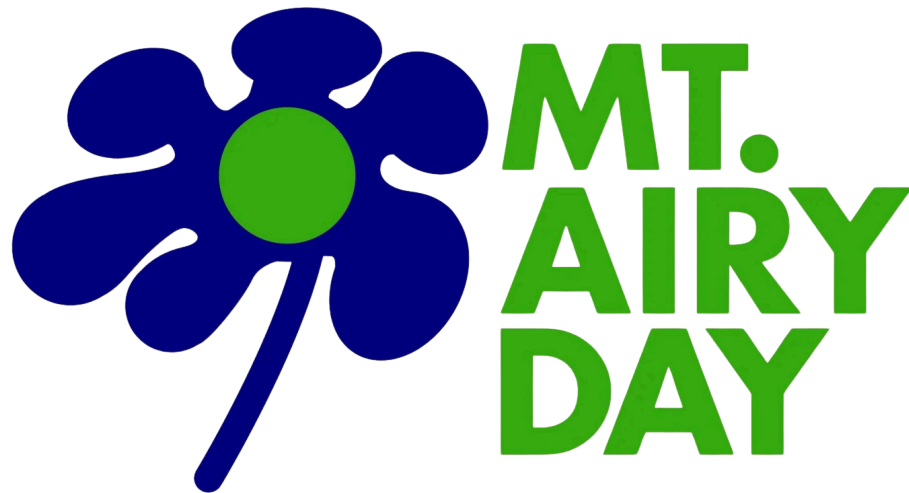
<https://journeywork.org/>



*Future site of CLEAR Project landscape renovation.*



*Mission and Outreach Committee members get plants ready for the give-away on Mt. Airy Day.*



FPCG will be at Mt. Airy Day this year! If you'd like to help setup, meet at FPCG at 9AM on Saturday, May 02. We'll have plants and stickers to give away, as well as new FPCG brochures. Everyone is invited to help run our table, which will be outside of Cliveden House, from 11AM-5PM.

<p>Enjoy a game night with friends or family</p> 	 <p>Write a thank you note to a police officer or fire fighter</p>	<p>Start a gratitude jar (write down what you are grateful for each day)</p> 	<p>Give an extra <b>BIG thanks</b> to your server at the end of your meal</p> 	<p>Go on a walk with a friend or co-worker</p> 
 <p>Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru line</p>	<p><b>An opportunity for our Nation as we celebrate 250 years!</b></p>  <p><b>Kindness is our universal language. It is the value that America was built on and the value that continues to guide our nation every day.</b></p> <p>2026 marks the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the United States of America. Help us celebrate by completing the acts of kindness on this challenge board and spread kindness far and wide.</p> <p><b>Together, America is a Kind-land.</b></p> <p>Learn more and print additional challenge boards at <a href="https://USofKindness.com">USofKindness.com</a></p> <p>Share your kindness journey at <a href="https://twitter.com/BeKindland">@BeKindland</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/USofKindness">#USofKindness</a></p>			<p>Thank a local teacher</p> 
<p>Donate to a Food Bank</p> 				<p>Make something for someone who is sick or recovering</p> 
<p>Say something kind to someone you've never spoken to before</p> 				<p>Lend a helping hand to an elderly neighbor or family member</p> 
<p>Write a thank you note to a Healthcare Hero</p> 				<p>Support or volunteer at a local charity</p> 
<p>Invite a friend or co-worker to lunch</p> 	 	<p>Pick up trash at a park</p> 		
<p>Leave a kind note for the mail carrier</p> 	<p>Give someone flowers</p> 	<p>Visit a family-owned business or restaurant</p> 	 <p>Support your local animal shelter</p>	<p>Say thank you to someone who has made a difference in your life</p> 

*From the United Church of Christ, submitted by Allison Seed.*

Church Officers

Elders

<b>2026</b> Sheila Heyer-Rivera Andrew Hood Peter Smith	<b>2027</b> Arlene Grace Randy Clever Contina Lee Lundy, Clerk of Session	<b>2028</b> Anthony Webb Sara Greene Klass Hoekema-Boerman
--	--	---

Deacons

<b>2026</b> Zaria Cuffee, Moderator Garth Herrick Madeline Valentine	<b>2027</b> Lydia Cooper Matthew Grewe William Lewis	<b>2028</b> Faith Lewis Andrea Overon-Horne Rosemary Williams
---	---	--

Committees and Chairs

<b>Administration and Finance</b> Klaas Hoekema-Boerman	<b>Christian Education</b> Sheila Heyer-Rivera	<b>Congregational Development and Fellowship</b> A. Webb	<b>Mission and Outreach</b> Drew Hood
<b>Personnel</b> Ingrid Harris and Randy Clever	<b>Property</b> Pete Smith	<b>Safety and Wellness</b> Sara Greene	<b>Worship, Music, and the Arts</b> Arlene Grace

Staff

<b>Acting Head of Staff</b> Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera	<b>Director of Music Ministry</b> John Walthausen	<b>Building Manager</b> Terry Boyer	<b>Church Administrator</b> Cari States-Codding
<b>Bookkeeper</b> Cindy Osborne	<b>Sextons</b> Tony Nixon, Robert Patterson, JR Pasture, Chris Shoffner		

Prayer Requests

Special Needs

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

Veda Gibbs & Family  
Arlene Grace  
Marney Hague  
Charlene Hardy & Family  
Jane Heyer  
Lee Hurst  
Matt Hurst  
Laverne Kitchen  
Frank Lundy  
Evadney Miller  
Tatiana Mitchell  
Cindy Osborne  
Edna Solomon  
Bogdan Suiunbaiev  
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  
Hortense Kennedy



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:

- 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

ALIVE,  
 CELEBRATING,  
 & SERVING  
 THE LIVING LORD!

## April Sermons

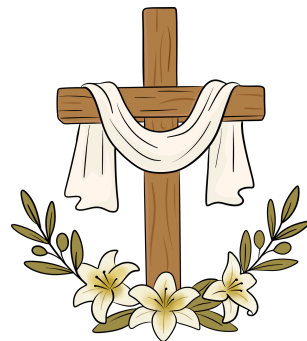
04/02: *Living Witness*, John 13:1-17, 31b-35  
 Cari States-Codding

04/05: *A Love That Brings Us Back To Life*, John 20:1-18  
 Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera

04/12: *Believing Without Seeing?*, John 20:19-31  
 Don Carlin

04/19: *Listening to Creation and Acting in Hope*, Luke 24:13-35  
 Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera

04/26: *Gatekeeping*, Acts 2:42-47; John 10:1-10  
 Cari States-Codding



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

35 West Chelten Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19144



AN LGBTQIA+ AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE  
 COVENANT NETWORK  
 OF PRESBYTERIANS

