



Windows

The newsletter of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown

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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



www.fpcgermantown.org

First Church members and friends,
We have much to give thanks for and celebrate this month.

We celebrate Juneteenth this month as well, uplifting the struggle and complicated history of our nation in the pursuit of greater freedom and justice for all its citizens. As we find ourselves under a federal administration that is seeking to draw attention away from this struggle, as followers of Christ, we celebrate truth telling and anchor ourselves in stories that ask us to consider how we can further the cause of justice and equality in our age. Arlene Grace will be preaching this month in celebration of Juneteenth, and as she does, we remember that our human dignity and rights are indeed endowed to each of us by our creator, and efforts to recognize and codify into law, the rights of all people, are in fact an ongoing and sacred pursuit. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

June is also PRIDE month, where in our church we recognize and celebrate God's calling of people of all genders and sexual orientations. I'm so grateful for this congregation's long standing commitment to embrace the radically inclusive nature of God's love for all of us in Jesus Christ. So much of the joy and growth I've experienced in my 22 years with this church has been a result of the faith, testimonies and gifts of the Holy Spirit through our LGBTQIA+ members, staff members, and friends as we've affirmed together God's grace to and through all people. At the end of this month we will have an opportunity to hear first hand testimonies of faith from longstanding member and deacon Don Carlin, and from our office administrator Cari States-Codding. I will also briefly share the journey God has led me on to open my heart and mind to receive Christ's grace through the LGBTQIA+ community.

So we are lifting up the journey of growth and renewal, dignity and freedom, hospitality and inclusion that God has set before us in Christ. Join us this month in the celebration!

-Rev. Christian



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



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

Happening this Month

Schedule

- All Ages Youth Group, 06/05, 6:30PM
- Worship, Music, and the Arts Committee meeting, 06/07, 11:30AM
- Admin and Finance Committee meeting, 06/09, 7 PM
- All Ages Youth Group, 06/15, 6:30PM
- Church closed in celebration of Juneteenth, 06/19
- Memorial and Repast for Wes Reisse Jr., 06/20, 11AM
- Deacons' Meeting, 06/21, 11:30AM
- Property Committee Meeting, 06/25, 7PM
- Congregational Development and Fellowship Committee Meeting, 06/28, 12PM

Weekly Events

- Sunday Worship, 10AM
- GACM Food Pantry, 10AM
Thursdays

Pastor Christian's Office Hours

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

Preaching this Month



Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Second Sunday after Pentecost, 06/07

Rev. Christian, preaching



Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

Third Sunday after Pentecost, 06/14

Cari States-Codding, preaching



Matthew 10:24-39

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, 06/21

Elder Arlene Grace, preaching



Matthew 10:40-42

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, 06/28

Elder Drew Hood, preaching



Memorial For Wes Reisse, Jr.

A memorial service and repast for Wes Reisse will be held at FPCG on June 20, at 11:00.

June Birthdays

Kaleb Gibbs	June 01
Allison Seed	June 05
Kit Clever	June 22
Sylvia Clark	June 23
Jason Williams	June 27

The Worship, Music, and Arts committee thanks Cathy Coho for the beautiful decorations she made for Pentecost. The suspended paper cranes represent the fire and the peace of the Holy Spirit that came to the Apostles on the first Pentecost and are still with us. We are grateful to Marc DiNardo for his hard work hanging these over the choir loft.



CLEAR Project Update

Our front landscaping enhancement funded through our participation in the The CLEAR Project out of Villanova University, has been planted by FPCG members and volunteers from Journeywork in May. It has been watered for several weeks now by Ms. Madeline Valentine and Ms. Aron Tann, the daughter of Lydia Cooper, and it is flourishing due to these efforts alongside the grace of God given through the beautiful weather we've had. Please enjoy the pictures in this newsletter showing updates or stop by the church to enjoy it in person.

We want to thank all our members and friends who volunteered their time and energy to help us plant native pollinating sun and shade plants throughout our front landscape on May 9th and May 17th. We are grateful for the direction of Journeywork, the organization who designed and helped bring volunteers to aid us in our planting. We also praise God for the vision of Villanova University and the funding of the Lily Foundation for the creation of The CLEAR Project.

We will be launching the next stage of our funded plans with THE CLEAR Project toward the end of June. We will be establishing a network of residential gardens by giving away 4'x 4' raised garden beds (frame, soil and seed included) so participants can grow plants in their own yard to be given at harvest to our neighbors who utilize the food cupboard at The Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry. If you or someone you know has a sunny 4'x4' or 4'x12' area of your yard that you're willing to cultivate with the aid of our program, for the sake of your neighbors experiencing food insecurity, we will build and supply you with a garden bed. Consider joining this gardening effort. See Contina Lundy or Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera for more details.







Following God out of the Closet: Stories of Faith and Identity

June 28th, 11:30

Jennings Room

What does it mean for a church to be open and affirming to our siblings in the LGBT+ community? Why does it matter, and what is the impact? Join us after service to hear the testimony of some of FPCG's own, including Don Carlin, Rev. Christian, and Cari States-Codding. Afterwards, we will hold space for conversation and questions.

LGBTQIA+ History in the PC(USA)

LGBTQIA+ advocacy, activism, and involvement in American Presbyterianism is not new, and it predates the forming of the PC(USA). The Presbyterian Historical Society has assembled a timeline, which can be found at the below link or by scanning this QR code.



<https://www.sutori.com/en/story/timeline-of-lgbtqia-history-in-the-pc-usa--JiBbvQQSWSTGX8WQcgLG8SY7>

FAQs about Queer and Trans Inclusion in the Church

PC(USA) has two resources, "Deepening Our Understanding: A Resource in Transgender Identity" and "LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in the Church". Copies of both of these publications may be found on the literature table.

Juneteenth

“Juneteenth, celebrated June 19th of every year, marks America’s second Independence Day — an enduring celebration of freedom and the oldest nationally recognized commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States... This holiday, which was nationally recognized in 2021, commemorates the announcement of the abolition of legalized slavery in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865. The reading of General Order No. 3 was offered by Major General Gordon Granger and came two-and-a-half-years after President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation.

The news of both the proclamation and the Confederate loss two months prior to Granger’s arrival had not yet reached the folks living in Texas. When they heard Granger’s announcement, it sent ripples of joy and celebration throughout the state. From that moment forward, June 19 became a day for parties, gatherings and communal commemoration.

Two years after Granger’s arrival in Galveston, “Emancipation Day” was celebrated at the Texas capital under the direction of the Freedmen’s Bureau. By 1872, it was noted on public events calendars, and communities across the state threw parties and festivals in honor of the day they learned of their freedom. Juneteenth became an official Texas state holiday in 1979, when Governor William P. Clements, Jr., signed the bill introduced by State Rep. Al Edwards of Houston and adopted by fellow legislators. The first state-sponsored Juneteenth celebration occurred the following summer.

Presbyterian Historical Society houses the records of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.’s (UPCUSA) Board of Missions for Freedmen. Before being formally incorporated in 1883 and becoming the Board of Missions for Freedmen, the group was called the Committee of Missions for Freedmen, or the Freedmen’s Committee, and was created in 1865 at the end of the Civil War.

The goal of both the Committee and Board was to support formerly enslaved people in pursuing an education and career, namely through the training of teachers and preachers. Through fundraising, it built and supported Black schools, churches, colleges and seminaries throughout the southern United States. In 1923, the Freedmen's Board was one of several boards and agencies that merged to become the Board of National Missions.”

-<https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/6/18/unearthing-past-juneteenth-and-board-freedmen-records>



Meaning of the Juneteenth flag

- white star: symbolizes Texas, the Lone Star State, where the last enslaved people were informed of their freedom
- starburst: inspired by a *nova*, an astronomical term for a new star, representing new beginnings for formerly enslaved people
- the arc: a new horizon of promises and opportunities for black Americans
- red, white, and blue: the American flag colors, reminding us that enslaved people and their descendants were and are Americans

-<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/17/us/juneteenth-flag-meaning-explainer-cec>

Hosting/Sponsoring Coffee Hour

The CDFC is in need of volunteers to host or sponsor coffee hour. If you'd like to sponsor, please write a check for \$35 to FPCG, with "fellowship time" written in the subject line. If you'd like to host, the usual categories purchased are cookies, danishes, fruit, and something else (snack bag varieties, etc.). The CDFC provides the juice and gluten-free choices. The sign-up sheet is on the CDFC bulletin board, located by the kitchen window. Please remember to include your contact number. Thank you for considering hosting/sponsoring, and please feel free to ask any CDFC member any questions.



Refrigerator Maintenance

The CDFC requests anyone putting food or drink in the church's two kitchen refrigerators to write their (own) name and date on each item. A roll of refrigerator tape and a grease pencil will be attached to the small stainless-steel fridge for your usage. A seven-day (one week) limit is allotted each item. Any remaining marked, unmarked, undated, and/or outdated food/drink items will be discarded after the seven-day limit. This request will go into effect every Sunday beginning Sunday, June 7, 2026. Expiration dates instead of the one-week time limit will be used for condiments - ketchup, mustard, salad dressings, butter, etc. Thanks for adhering to these necessary food safety guidelines



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. June's item is a chocolate product, especially dipping sauce, and bacon. A sign up sheet will be at the CDFC bulletin board...we thank you in advance.



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



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.

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

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

Building Manager

Terry Boyer

Church Administrator

Cari States-Codding

Bookkeeper

Cindy Osborne

Sextons

Tony Nixon, Robert Patterson, JR Pasture

Prayer Requests

Special Needs

Angel Adams
Mandy Adams
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

Members & Friends in Military Service

Veda Gibbs & Family
Arlene Grace
Marney Hague
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

Homebound

Charlene Hardy & Family

Nursing Home &
Retirement Community Residents

Diane Hinman-Guggolz
Hortense Kennedy
Betty King
Margaret Reisse
Lois VanEerden

May Sermons

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

05/03: *Thy Comfort Come*, John 14:1-14
Rev. Dr. Gerry Davis

05/10: *A Godly Parent's Desire*, John 14:15-21
Rev. Christian Heyer-Rivera

05/17: *Schrödinger's Apostle*, Luke 24:44-53
Cari States-Codding

05/24: *Driven Out By Wind and Fire*, Acts 2:1-21
Rev. Dave Cassie

05/31: ~~Decommissioning~~ *Recommissioning the Great Commission*,
Matthew 28:16-20
Rev. Sarah Colwill



<https://www.fpcgermantown.org/sermons/2026/05/>

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!

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THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

35 West Chelten Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

AN LGBTQIA+ AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE
 COVENANT NETWORK
OF PRESBYTERIANS

