

February 2016

Good News

Verse of the Month: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6*



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“The Day before the Day Before Thoughts While Waiting for a Winter Storm”

For the first time this winter, it appears as if we might have a measurable snow fall this coming weekend. It is, therefore, difficult to think about things that may occur next month. I have to confess that I have become more obsessed with the weather lately than I was when I was a sailor. However, February will soon be here. We will start the month with a new Session, a new board of deacons and new trustees. The yearly cycle turns again. Some things change, but the regular cycle of life continues.

This year will be challenging in many ways. And, that is true for most congregations across the United States. For religious people the trends are troubling. Ninety percent of American churches are static in terms of membership or declining. Ten churches per day are closing. We see it here in our own Presbytery of West Jersey. At last night’s presbytery meeting, we recognized the congregational life and history of one of the churches that we have closed recently, Barrington First Presbyterian. This was personal for me as I served that congregation at one time.

It made me think about the future of the church. What can we do to reverse the trend, if we should, indeed, work to reverse the trend? That is the first question: should we try to reverse the trend or should we accept that organized religion has had its day? That is a question most churches do not ask and yet it is very important to articulate why we should work to change the pathway to elimination for our churches.

When we are truly being the body of Christ, the Church is the community of people called to faith by God. The churches are gathered communities. That gathering is inevitable as we respond to God’s ultimate call to faith. The Church is unique in that it is not a voluntary organization. People volunteer to do certain things, but we are gathered by the demand of God through the redeeming act of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

We cannot decide not to be the Church. Some of the institutions that have served to respond to the call to community and service eventually live out their life spans and no longer function as a gathered community, sometimes well before their times. All this means is that we have to adapt and innovate and overcome the natural tendency to entropy that affects our churches. It does not mean that religion has served its purpose and no longer has a place in society.

In churches that are growing, innovation is key. Growing churches are innovative faith communities. Those communities of faith are also finding ways to serve those outside their own walls. Dying churches focus on pleasing the members that are already within the church.

As we look toward the future and especially as the Mission Study Committee begins its work of discernment and visioning, it will be increasingly important, even vital, to keep our eyes on the focus of our faith, Jesus Christ. That is also a trait of growing churches; they stay focused on the Lord and ask themselves how their decisions relate to the Lord’s will.

Please continue to pray for your Mission Study Committee as well as your Session, Deacons and Trustees. And, I’ll see you in church.





2016 Newsletter Postage Fees Due

FROM THE
CHURCH
OFFICE

Postal fees for the 2016 Good News home delivery are now due. Payment of \$10.00 must be submitted to the church office by March 20.

This service is provided for those who do not have internet service or cannot pick up a copy in person.



Winter Storm Warnings

We do not advertise on radio or TV, but you may get a message advising you of cancellations in the event of bad weather. In any case, call the office if you are uncertain. We will try to keep the church answering machine up to date.

If you feel uncertain about coming in the snow, you have our permission to stay home.

(If you have not yet signed up for auto-notifications and would like to receive messages please call the office!)



Sunday School and Related News for February

December was a very busy and eventful month. The Christmas play “A Christmas Intervention” was not only enjoyable but inspirational as well. Thank you to Bob and Priscilla for all their hard work. It truly was wonderful!

We collected over 50 warm hats, scarves & gloves for Sister Jean’s kitchen. Thank you to all who contributed to those in need this Christmas. Our blessings were shared with so many.

Our Children looked heavenly in their version of the nativity on Christmas Eve, they were even in the paper. We were blessed to be able to share our gifts of time and talent with others.

Highlights and Up Coming Events

- ◆ On **January 30, 2016** the Sunday School will be hosting a **movie night** showing the Pixar movie “Inside Out”. We will have Pizza, popcorn and drinks. Come on out, it’s going to be a great time. Please sign up so that we have a headcount for pizza.
- ◆ Family game night will be held in February so keep your eyes on the bulletins for details.
- ◆ Pennies for Pins will be held on March 6, 2016. Look for updates.
- ◆ Our annual Easter Play and Egg Hunt will be held on March 13th. We will be accepting candy donations as we did last year. It will be a pot luck luncheon so bring your favorite dish. The kids will have Chicken nuggets and fries. Don’t miss it, it is an Eggcellent time!

The Sunday School thanks all those who lend a helping hand, any and all help is appreciated. Be a part of the future of the church and see where you can help out. We need you!

In His Service,
Tina

Women's Circles



Last month we looked at the importance of water at the beginning of creation. This month we will look at the significance of the water of baptism at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus allowed John to immerse him in the river Jordan as an example for us to follow. With the water of baptism we are marked and adopted as God's own children.

The Ruth Circle will meet at 1:00 p.m. Friday, February 5th at the home of Betsy Cunius. The Martha Circle will meet at the home of Carol Thomas on Thursday, February 11th at 10:00 a.m. All women of the church are encouraged to join us for fellowship and Bible study at the location and time that best meets your schedule. You will be warmly welcomed.



Annual Unity Dinner, Wednesday, Feb. 17, 6:30 P.M.



The Absecon/Galloway Clergy Fellowship will again sponsor the annual Unity Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 17, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. All are welcome to join together and share a meal with our brothers and sisters of our local churches.

The theme this year is "Love Thy Neighbor". The church's music group, Suite Inspiration, will provide the program.

The cost of the four-course dinner and program is \$6.00. Reservations are required and must be made by Sunday, Feb. 14. See Tina Brown.

Watch for more information on the Lenten schedule of ecumenical services.

2016 Flower Chart



The 2016 Altar Flower chart is hanging in the vestibule. If you would like to donate flowers to decorate the altar on any Sunday please mark the chart to reserve your date and fill in a form (which can be found next to the chart). The cost of a single urn bouquet is \$55.00 which includes the delivery fee.

If you would prefer to place your own order and arrange your own delivery, you are welcome to do so. Be sure to reserve your date on the chart and fill in the form with the information you would like in the bulletin.

Forms and payment (if applicable) are due in the church office no later than noon the Tuesday before your reserved date.



Mission/Evangelism for February

The Bakely House: The Bakely House now boasts a beautiful new storm door thanks to Russ Adkisson, Jr. Russ also adjusted 2 windows and discovered that they worked just fine so the windows do not need to be replaced. The house passed its most recent walk through inspection with flying colors. Our current family keeps the house in impeccable condition.

Family Promise: Leo and I will be approaching several chain stores in the near future to ask for the donations of twin sheets. We will need to organize a closet to store all the sheets between stays. We still need to find out if we supply blankets or not.

When you become a member of Club 172, you can make a one-time donation of \$172 dollars or split this into semi- annual or quarterly payments. Becoming a member confirms your commitment to this program.

The cardboard houses for change will be coming out again. Please consider placing your loose change in them. It really adds up and can make a difference. All money goes to Family Promise.

We have 3 boxes full of recycled shoes, and we are hoping to fill that fourth box soon. Please keep those shoes coming. We have earned over \$120 for Family Promise this way.

Our benevolence dinner will benefit Family Promise this year. Our roast beef dinner will take place on Saturday, February 13th, from 5:00-8:00 pm, eat in or take out. We will definitely have a Valentine's Day Theme as we share God's love with those in need. Tickets for adults cost \$15 while tickets for children 12 and under are \$7. You can purchase your tickets from Dawn Duran, Bill Hoesten, Tina Brown, and myself. Come out and support the cause. Donations are welcome if you know you can't make it.

Camp Johnsonburg on the Road: We're still working on this project. Wouldn't it be great to offer a Christian camp for a week right at our own church? Right now we are trying to set up an initial meeting with the other 5 Presbyterian churches in the area to see how we can all come together on this. Stay tuned. More information will follow.

Health Kits: It is time now to begin making our health kits for first response disaster relief. We'll put a description of the items needed in some upcoming bulletins and display the items that need to go into the kits. We are looking forward to the Sunday School's participation in this project this year. In the past they have taken the proceeds from their Pennies for Pans Mission Project and put together over a hundred health kits. It is comforting to know that they plan on doing it again this year. It is also nice that members from the congregation take the initiative as well to put together their own health kits. These will be collected through March.

Our **next meeting** will take place on Saturday, February 13th, 2016 at 9:30 am in the Cobb Lounge.

In His Service,
Priscilla Schultheis



Just a reminder to everyone that the Deacons will still be collecting non-perishable foods for the Community Food Bank which can be placed in the foyer. We will also

continue to collect the FRONT of any greeting or Christmas cards for St Jude Ranch for Children. They can be placed in the decorated box in the foyer. Remember they do not accept Hallmark or American Greeting cards. These organizations truly appreciate your generosity.

The next Deacon meeting will be Saturday, February 6, at 9 am in Cobb Lounge.

Thank You,
Kris Jenoriki, Moderator

Greetings from a Rather Cold Prague,

I hope the New Year is off to a good start for everyone. I was able to spend the holidays in the US this year which meant that I spent Christmas with my Mom for the first time in 7 years. It was great to be with family and friends. I got back to Prague last week on the evening of the 14th of January. I hit the ground running. My friend and colleague Rev. Ricky Yates, chaplain of the Anglican congregation St. Clements here in Prague <http://anglican.cz/>, has recently taken on responsibilities for an English language worship service once a month in the historic Frauenkirche in Dresden, Germany. He invited me to preach at the service on January 17th. Fortunately, I got to preach in English. However, I did have fun practicing my German during our short trip. It was a thrill to stand in the pulpit of this historic church. You can learn more about the service and the church at:

<http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/kalender/detail/event/16477/> and
<http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/anglican-services/>

This is one of the exciting things about serving the church here in Europe, I'm able to preach and participate in worship in churches in other countries. It really was an exciting way to return.

Your generous support of my ministry as a PCUSA Mission Coworker makes it possible for me to share the Gospel in some amazing places. Thank you so much for your support.

May the New Year also bring new adventures to you in your personal lives and in your life together in the Church.

With a grateful heart,
Karen

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Rev. Ricky Yates and Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz
Frauenkirche, Dresden, Germany

Turn Down the Noise!

I just returned from a 24 hour silent retreat! This might surprise some of you. This might make others laugh. This may cause some of you to ask questions like - 24 hour silent retreat - WHY? HOW? Let me explain a bit. As part of the Master's degree program that I am now staffing - we study and practice spiritual disciplines. Silence and solitude are two disciplines that Christians for centuries have practiced. These disciplines help believers who are living in the hustle and bustle of a noisy world take time to quiet themselves and listen to God. Many people cry out to God, yell at God, ask God questions, but very few of us actually take time to LISTEN.

This is the second time I have done a retreat like this. I must admit, the first time I was a bit uncertain as to what to expect. I arranged to stay at a Franciscan retreat center in PA. They have very cozy small one room cottages with a bathroom, small kitchen, bed, recliner and a porch. It is amazing how quickly 24 hours can go by with no TV, no internet, no phone, just resting and quietly listening. Many times in the Psalms it is written "Be still and know that I am God". Being still and allowing body, mind and spirit to slow down really does open your heart to listen to God. It was a refreshing experience for me and perfect timing as I prepare to leave again in February, coming and going until the summer. I am excited for all that this coming year holds as I continue to teach and serve with YWAM. Thank you once again for partnering with me in this sometimes daunting, yet amazing task of "going into all the world".

My next trip will take me to South Africa and Switzerland. I appreciate your prayers as I go. I encourage you to set aside some time for a "silent" retreat. It doesn't have to be 24 hours OR in a special place (although changing location and getting away makes it a bit easier). We can turn down the noise, turn off the phones, TVs and computers and allow ourselves some silence, even for a few hours - you might be surprised how much God wants to TELL you!

Happy Listening,
Lisa



Winter Fundraiser to Replace Nursery Windows

It is time to kick off our Winter Fundraiser. (We wanted to wait for the first snow.) Our project this year is replacing the windows in the nursery area. The windows are close to the ground along the back walkway and have suffered water damage over the years. Our goal is \$10,000 to cover new windows and installation as well as repair of damage to the frames and walls. Any surplus funds will go to Capital Fund.



Lunch Bunch February 10

Lunch Bunch will be going to "Italian Street Pizzeria" on Wednesday, February 10th, located in K-MART shopping Center, Somers Point. The Pizzeria is centered directly across the parking lot from ACME. Meet at Noon or 11:30 at church, if you need transportation. They have a variety of foods if you chose not Italian.



Evergreens

Our scheduled meeting date is February 24th. However, watch for a Lenten Lunch schedule as we might have to cancel our meeting.



*mark Your Spring Calendar
for our*

FIRST 2016 CONGREGATIONAL EVENT

Coming

Saturday - April 16th

(enjoy a "Nancy Sooy" Dinner - with 2 seatings- - -)

- - - Followed by a lively Piano Concert by - - -

Bryan Popin

(Bryan's now-much-older-than the 14 he was when he 1st played here!)

*(Planned by your Fellowship Committee -
Dawn Duran, Chair)*



Directory Update

Dawn Duran has a new email address: drduran74@gmail.com



Serving in January

Lay Assistants

- 07 9:30 David Burgess
11:00 Priscilla Schultheis
14 9:30 Dennis Scardilli
11:00 Linda Gillis
21 9:30 Dawn Duran
11:00 Lee Wolff
28 9:30 David Burgess
11:00 Dawn Duran

Head Ushers

- 07 9:30 Vic & Rita Abelson
11:00
14 9:30 Elaine Risley, Carol Thomas
11:00 Tina Brown, Betty Price
21 9:30 Bryan & Vicky Hawkes
11:00 Nancy Swank, Tina Brown
28 9:30 Ron & Joyce Pfeiffer
11:00 Mary Bew, Betty Lloyd

Offering (9:30)

- 07 Jack and Dee Heil
14 Joan Nale, Franklin Nale
21 Roy Birkbeck, Greg Hamaty
28 Jo-ann Weller, Ilsa Smith

Acolyte (9:30)

- 07 Franklin Nale
14 Terri Villegas
21 Jordan Hawkes
28 Jacob Sabo

Nursery (11:00 Sarah Gillis)

- 07 Jennifer Platt
14 Jordan Hawkes
21 Gloria Achamizo
28 Jennifer Platt

Deacon for the Month

Kris Jenoriki

Van Drivers

- 07 John Channell
14 Barb Hughes
21 Tina Brown
28 Vic Abelson

Refreshment Hosts

- 07 Edith Budd, Leo Ransone & Sandy Shinsato
14 Donna Hughes, Darla Hand
21 Russ & Lynn Adkisson, Jackie, Maryiam, Haroon Bhatti
28 Fellowship Committee

Breakfast Club Kitchen Crew

- 07 Set-up – Jack Little
Cook – Ed Little
Clean-up – Ginny & Bill Davenport
14 Set-up – Kris Jenoriki
Cook – John Channell
Clean-up – Vic & Rita Abelson
21 Set-up – Donna Hughes
Cook – Bill Hoesten
Clean-up – Dirk Williamson
28 Set-up – Jordan & Christian Hawkes
Cook – Bryan Hawkes
Clean-up – Olga Davies, Jean Delesantro

Counter Schedule

- 07 Leo Ransone, Nancy Conover
14 Jerry Hoenes, Betsy Torjussen
21 Lee Wolff, Kirk Conover
28 Barbara & Bob Hudak

