

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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From the Pastor

Romans 8:31-29

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Recently I got into a discussion with another Christian over Twitter. It ended up being pretty wide-ranging, but one point of disagreement that became apparent to both of us was how we viewed God's plan. Here, I'm talking about God's Plan in the large sense; God's plan for the cosmos, for our world, and for us. This person and I agreed that God does indeed have a plan, and that it is a good plan that we hope and trust works out in the end. The difference was in how the plan functions.

For the person I was debating, God's plan was entirely detailed out from the very beginning all the way to the very end. Everything that happened was part of that plan. It was the plan all along for Eden not to work out, and to scatter people at Babel; it was the plan for the Hebrews to be in slavery in Egypt, and then escape and wander the desert; it was the plan for Jerusalem to be built, and then to fall, and the Temple to be destroyed (twice), and so on, all the way through Jesus' crucifixion, still just part of the plan. In this person's view, Jesus was "born to die", as I know some of our hymns affirm in their text. For this person, the most meaningful thing about Jesus wasn't his Incarnation, nor his life and healing and teaching, nor his resurrection, but his death on the cross. But all of these things, like everything else, were for this person equally part of the plan.

Sometimes this view can be reassuring, but I think it creates more problems than it solves. If we see everything as part of the grand plan, then there are a lot of terrible things that we need to somehow account for. There is certainly suffering and loss in life that is the result of our bad decisions, or that teaches us something we couldn't learn otherwise, or that makes us more empathetic and merciful. There is also a lot of suffering and loss in the world that simply seems to make no sense. While we are seeing massive flooding in North Carolina and adjacent states, there is also a Super Typhoon hitting Hong Kong, having passed through the Philippines. These massive storms will destroy billions of dollars of property, and have already killed people.

I would hate to look out over the wreckage left by a storm and say something like, "This is all part of God's plan." I would much rather look out and say, "This is terrible. There is tremendous suffering and loss here. But God's plan will win out despite this."

My preferred view is that God's plan doesn't mean control of every choice and every event, but rather that God's plan is what God relentlessly seeks to accomplish in the world, through changing means, but continually in process. I think we see this a lot in scripture - God is described as being surprised, angered, disappointed, and even relieved with how events turn out.

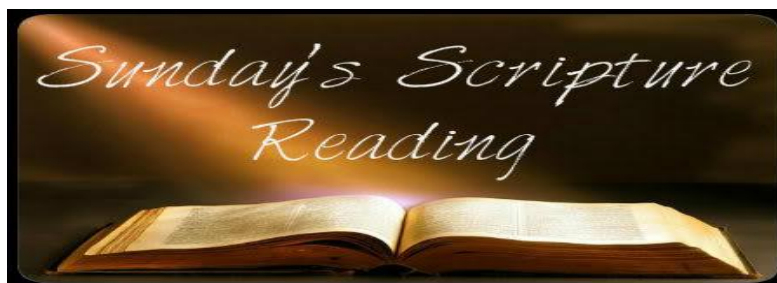
And I think that it is straightforward and faithful to read scripture as the record of God's pursuit of humanity, and of the redemption of the world, by ever-changing means. Many times in scripture, God is quoted as saying something like, '*You have broken the covenant we had and done what is wrong in my sight. Nonetheless, I will not abandon you. Let's try this again.*'

Not too long ago I preached on the series of covenants that God enters into with human beings, starting with Adam and Eve and then Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, David; we talk about Jesus instituting a 'new covenant' when we share in Communion each month as well. In reading through scripture, I get the impression that God is continually trying new ways to reach us, and when one method doesn't work, God tries another. God isn't sitting back saying, "All is just as I planned", but rather in the thick of things, asking "How about this? Will this work? Will you listen to me now? Will this put you on the right path? What about this?" If not a garden, then a new start on life entirely. If not a journey, then liberation from slavery. If not a conquest, then judges to lead the people. If not a king, then prophets. If not a written Law, then a Law written on our hearts. If not a Temple, then a new Way in Jesus. If not the Jews, then the Gentiles too. If not in western Asia, then all over the world. And so on. I see this as a continual process that is ongoing today. God is always reaching people in new ways, and calling us to reach out in new contexts.

Maybe it is difficult to let go of the idea that God is in control of everything, making all of the choices - that everything that happens is specifically part of the plan. I would much rather see God's plan working itself out despite all of the calamity in the world, however. Earlier in Romans 8, we find this passage: "¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies."

Despite the tremendous labor pains we see around us, the revelation is ongoing. God's victory is always on the way. There is only one way that the story will end - God will accept no less. And God's relentlessness is a call for us to be relentless, not because God has planned for storms to come and ravage us, but because the storms that come do not have the last word.

Pastor Doug



October 7th: Amos 5:6-15; Mark 10:17-31
October 14th: Genesis 2:18-24; Mark 10:2-16
October 21st: Psalm 91:9-16; Mark 10:35-45
October 28th: Jeremiah 31:7-9; Hebrews 7:23-28



Deacons' Dialogue

We at FPCP are fortunate to be able to offer the ministry of excellent child care to our church family during Sunday School and our worship services and this month we want to take the time to introduce Jane Shier, granddaughter of Sue Shier, and recent hire who supervises and cares for older children who leave the service after the children's message. It is also time to re-introduce to our members, old and new, Tammy Rosebrook who has been caring for the babies and toddlers in the nursery for 9 years! Please read on! Thanks to both of these wonderful women caring for our children.

Jane Shier

Jane, daughter of Steve and Kate Shier and granddaughter of Sue Shier, is a life-long resident of Phoenixville. As a June 2018 graduate of Phoenixville Area High School, she is now an elementary Education and Special Education major at West Chester University. Jane brings her considerable gift of compassion as well as her gifts in the areas of dance and art to her interaction with our young students.

Jane has traveled extensively in Europe and most recently to Mexico with her family. She participated in several exchange program opportunities during her high school days and their family hosted exchange students from Germany and Denmark as well.

Drop by upstairs to meet Jane or greet her in the Narthex after church where she usually hangs out with her grandmother before heading home!

Tammy Rosebrook

I live in Limerick with my husband, Andy. My husband works for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission & enjoys doing triathlons. We have 2 sons, Adrian & Matthew. Adrian is currently an Assistant Store Manager for Starbucks. Matt just graduated from high school, is working at Petsmart and is taking a year off from school before pursuing a degree in engineering. We also have 4 cats & 2 dogs that keep us on our toes.

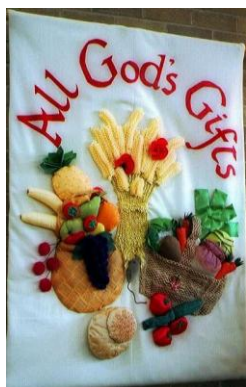
I have enjoyed working in the nursery for First Presbyterian of Phoenixville since 2009. I've had the pleasure of seeing lots of babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers transition into the older groups.

I've been an instructor for White Eagle Martial Arts for 11 years. On Saturdays, I teach tai chi at Reeves Park during the summer and the Civic Center during the winter. I've also been working for Pampered Paws Pet Care as a dog walker/pet sitter for the last 2 years.

Occasionally, I get some free time to enjoy my hobbies of crafting and reading.

Parish Life

It's Harvest Time!



And to celebrate, mark your calendars for a Harvest Pot Luck on November 11th. The meal will immediately follow the service and be held in Fellowship Hall.



Look for a sign-up sheet in the Narthex on October 28th and November 4th.

We look forward to sharing these special times with you!

The Parish Life Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7PM in the Parlor...Please join us!



Communion to You

Pastor Doug is happy to bring Communion to you or a loved one at home, in the hospital, or anywhere else. This can be Communion for an individual, or even a simple Communion service for a small group.

Call the church office to let us know if this is something you would like, and to set up a time. 610-933-8816

Words and Notes from Worship and Music

The first Sunday in October is World Communion Sunday. It is the one Sunday in the year when all Christians intentionally celebrate communion on the same day, many at the same time. We will help you to become more aware of all the other Christian friends celebrating on this day by providing “breads” of different countries as the body of Christ. Many parts of our service, spoken and sung, will be taken from the “normal” liturgy of other Christian’s celebration. We encourage anyone with some piece of clothing that represents your heritage to wear it to add color to our celebration. “We are one in the spirit; we are one in the Lord...”



See you in church.



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

You can fill out a card in the worship service, drop a note or email us at fpcprayerchain@me.com and we will be lifting you up in prayer.

You can also call Jeanne Blackburn at 267-532-8464 or the church office at [\(610\) 933-8816](tel:6109338816).



By: Maggie O'Malley

Here's what's brewing in FPC's communications' world –

Although it's been a topic in a previous article, the Instagram app is worth revisiting:

Instagram posts automatically appear on the FPC website's GALLERY page. Evidence of Dine-Around outings, Pub Theology sessions, Presbyterian Women's Circle gatherings, etc. can be seen by visiting <https://fpc-phoenixville.org/gallery/>.

Using the FPC Instagram account to Like and Comment on the posts of other Phoenixville non-profits and businesses will bolster FPC's investment in the community.

A camera upgrade for better photos/videos is in the works. There is quite a distance from the balcony/loft to the front of church. A simple phone or iPad camera falls short in providing a professional look when trying to zoom in on key service moments from afar. Currently, I am learning how to use a Canon G7, which I borrowed from a friend. In addition, I'm on the lookout for purchasing a refurbished beginner Canon (EOS Rebel T6i or T7i) or Nikon (D3300 or D3400) model. If you know where I could find one, please let me know. I'll be happy to put it to good use.

It would be nice to have a Branding Guidelines Manual. Establishing a brand (or consistently conveying a unified "family" image coordinated with a set of typefaces and colors) is a great way for FPC to convey a look that is easily recognizable. This would make advertising efforts more effective both in print and digital publications. Creating a Graphics Standards Manual (a.k.a. Branding Guidelines) is in the works. Input would be greatly appreciated. Please seek me out if you have experience with branding or would like to know more about the process. I can be reached at fpccommunications@comcast.net or 215-527-1869 (cell).

Thanks,
Maggie



Women's Book Club

Women's Book Club will reconvene on Wednesday, October 3rd. Book discussion from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. Any questions, please contact Robin Fetter at 610-513-6872 or robfet@aol.com.



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

“Wisdom cries out in the street.” —Prov. 1:20

(<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/yearbook/>)

Opportunities

Meals for St. Mary’s Family Shelter

Monday, October 8 through Friday, October 12, 2018

Please consider helping provide evening meals for St. Mary’s Family Shelter. You may provide all or part of a meal. They house about four families with about four members each, so they need 16 meals for five nights from Monday, October 8 through Friday, October 12, 2018. Think about one or two people you could pair up with to provide a whole meal (main course, vegetables, salad, bread and dessert).

Fall/Winter Clothing Distribution

Saturday, October 20, set up Friday, October 19, 2018

People to People are having a free clothing give away on Saturday, October 20, from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Volunteers are needed to help set up on Friday and to monitor on that Saturday. If you are interested in coordinating this event or helping, please call the church office (610-933-8816).

Guatemala Mission Trip Presentation

Sunday, October 21, 2018

During the worship service on Sunday, October 21, Pam Bodam, Ed Bodam, and Jeff McLaughlin will present an overview of their recent sojourn in Guatemala. The trip took place in July 2018 and included work in schools, a medical clinic, visit to a home and support center for disabled young men, and participation in worship and other activities at Mt. Hebron Presbyterian Church in southwestern Guatemala. Pam, Ed, and Jeff will highlight their activities and reflections on the journey, which included travelers from various churches throughout Pennsylvania.



7. continued....

Looking Ahead

Coat Distribution

Saturday, November 3, set up Friday, November 2, 2018

We will open Fellowship Hall to the community on Saturday, November 3, from 10:00 AM–1:00 PM to give away coats to our friends and neighbors. Mark your calendars now and consider helping with coordinating this event, set up on Friday and/or greeting our neighbors on Saturday.

Notes from Near and Far

Did you know?

Letters from missionaries that FPC supports, newsletters and events for local organizations that FPC supports, and more items of interest are posted on the bulletin board at the entrance to Fellowship Hall. Please visit often as the display is continually updated. In addition, a bulletin board dedicated to Guatemala is at the top of the steps from the sanctuary - on the 2nd floor before going into the hallway for the choir room. Letters from and pictures of the school children in Guatemala that FPC supports are posted here.

Wondering what the MAC Committee does?

Please visit the bulletin board outside the church office to see Mission Projects for 2018. This is a comprehensive description of the organizations and missionaries that FPC supports. Many thanks to Sandy Heidel for maintaining this brochure of activities, and for keeping the bulletin boards up-to-date.



Remembering Loved Ones

On November 4th, All Saints' Sunday, we will note in the bulletin the names of the saints (believers) from our congregation who have died during the past year. We will also note other relatives and loved ones who have died in the past year but were not members of this church. If you would like the names of those loved ones listed, please send a message to Sue Smith at secretaryfpc@comcast.net or call the church office at 610-933-8816.

From the Clerk of Session

- Average Sunday morning attendance for August was 82.
- Life of the Church
 - Birth – September 1, Cora Alice Carlino, daughter of Ellen (member) and Kevin Carlino. Granddaughter of Jewell (member) and Woody Baker.
- Session Motions
 - Motions from the August 28th Stated Session Meeting were:
 - Accept Thomas Alred into membership by Profession of Faith. Thomas will be received before the congregation soon.
 - Session unanimously approved the Property Committee motion to lease the third floor (room 306) to Good Samaritan Services.
 - Motions from September Stated Session Meeting will be approved in October and appear in the next Perspective.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session

October 2018

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:00p Women's Outreach Board meeting 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Property	2 1:00p Organist rehearse 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p MAC	3 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	4 9:00a People to People 9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal	5 9:00a WIC 1:00p Organist Rehearsal First Friday	6
7 Offering: L Williams 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship World Communion 12:00n Deacons meeting 6:30p Praise Team	8 6:30p Zumba class Sue Smith vacation Shelter Meals	9 1:00p Organist rehearse 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life Shelter Meals	10 1:00p Clubhouse Cards 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:00p Stewardship 7:30p Merry Ringers Shelter Meals	11 9:00a People to People 10:00a Food ministry 3:00p Good Samaritan Meeting (parlor) 7:00p Choir rehearsal 7:30p Compassionate Friends Shelter Meals	12 1:00p Organist Rehearsal Rev. Hagler vacation Shelter Meals	13 9:30a Zumba class Rev. Hagler vacation
14 Offering: J Baker 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship 12:00n Worship & Music 6:30p Praise Team Rev. Hagler vacation D. Legnini vacation	15 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance Perspective articles due.	16 1:00p Organist rehearse 2:30p Staff meeting 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:15p Church Growth	17 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	18 9:00a People to People 9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal	19 7:00a Food ministry 9:00a WIC 9:00a Set up for free clothing give-away in FH 1:00p Organist Rehearsal	20 6:30a Food ministry 10:00a – 12:00n free clothing give-away in Fellowship Hall
21 Offering: B Russell 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship Good Samaritan Day Mission Trip presentation 12:00n Women's Circle ??? FPC Men's Group 6:30p Praise Team Reformation	22 6:00p Mom's House Board meeting 6:30p Zumba class	23 1:00p Organist rehearse 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Session Sue Smith 1/2 vacation	24 10:00a AARP Board 1:00p Clubhouse Cards 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	25 9:00a People to People 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal Mom's House Harvest Festival (Sun Sch rooms)	26 1:00p Organist Rehearsal Mom's House Harvest Festival (Sun Sch rooms) Sue Smith vacation	27
28 Offering: P Parrish 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship -baptism 12:00n Sermon Talk with Pastor Doug 6:30p Praise Team 7:00p Pub Theology Dominic Vitale vacation	29 6:30p Zumba class	30 1:00p Organist rehearse 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class	31			

November 2018

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<i>All Saints' Day</i> ¹ 9:00a People to People 9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal	² 9:00a WIC 9:00a Set up for free coat give-away 1:00p Organist Rehearsal	³ 10:00a-12:00n Free coat give-away
⁴ Offering: K Carrabine 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship <i>Communion & All Saints' Sunday</i> 12:30n Deacons meeting 6:30p Praise Team <i>Daylight saving time ends</i>	⁵ 6:00p Women's Outreach Board meet 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Property	⁶ 1:00p Organist rehearsal 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p MAC	⁷ 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	⁸ 9:00a People to People 10:00a Food ministry 3:00p Good Samaritan Meeting (parlor) 7:00p Choir rehearsal 7:30p Compassionate Friends meeting	⁹ 1:00p Organist Rehearsal <i>S Smith - vacation</i>	¹⁰ 9:30a Zumba class
¹¹ Offering: J Osterhoudt 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship 12:00n Worship & Music 12:00n Harvest Pot Luck 6:30p Praise Team	¹² 6:30p Zumba class <i>S Smith - vacation</i>	¹³ 1:00p Organist rehearsal 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life	¹⁴ 1:00p Clubhouse Cards 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	¹⁵ 9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal <i>Perspective articles due.</i>	¹⁶ 7:00a Food ministry 9:00a WIC 1:00p Organist Rehearsal	¹⁷ 6:30a Food ministry
¹⁸ Offering: ????? 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship <i>Pledge Dedication Sunday</i> 12:00n Women's Circle 6:30p Praise Team	¹⁹ 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance and Stewardship	²⁰ 1:00p Organist rehearsal 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:15p Church Growth	²¹ 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	²² 12:00n Thanksgiving Day Dinner Church office closed. <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	²³ 1:00p Organist Rehearsal 5:00p Fetter wedding Rehearsal Church office closed	²⁴ 12:00n Fetter Wedding
²⁵ Offering: D Walker 9:15a Sunday School 9:30a Coffee Hour 10:30a Worship 12:00n SermonTalk with Pastor Doug 6:30p Praise Team 7:00p Pub Theology	²⁶ 6:30p Zumba class	²⁷ 1:00p Organist rehearsal 4:00p Brass ensemble 5:30p Rock the Boat 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Session Meeting	²⁸ 10:00a AARP Board meeting 1:00p Clubhouse Cards 6:00p Women's Book Club 6:45p Merry Ringers Quartet 7:30p Merry Ringers	²⁹ 9:00a People to People 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal	³⁰ 1:00p Organist Rehearsal <i>S Smith - vacation</i>	