

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume XLVII No. 2 February 2022

Phone: 610-933-8816

Fax: 610-933-8060

www.fpc-phoenixville.org

email: secretaryfpc145@gmail.com



First Presbyterian Church
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania
1846 – 2022

The *Perspective* is published 12 times a year by the First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville. Please direct information or comments to the Church Office at 610-933-8816 or to secretaryfpc145@gmail.com .
Publisher: Sue Smith Contributors: Church Family; Proofreader: Jeanne Blackburn

Table of Contents

Message from Pastor Doug.....	2
Mission Action Committee.....	3
Deacons Dialogue.....	4
Parish Life.....	5
Scrip Card Orders.....	6
Clerk of Session Report.....	7
On-Line Giving	7
Clerk of Session Report.....	8
Worship & Music Notes.....	8
February calendar.....	9

From the Pastor

Matthew 26

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." ³⁹ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." ⁴⁰ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?" ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; ^[a] the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴² Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

It will not be a surprise to anyone that I am part of a number of online communities that discuss Christianity and religion in general. Someone in one of those communities recently shared a question: Did Jesus have a panic attack in the garden of Gethsemane? My response was that we can't know, as we don't have enough evidence (and no one was around who could have diagnosed a panic attack), but I thought that the answer would say a lot about what a person thinks of anxiety disorders.

The church, generally speaking, has a poor track record in dealing with mental illness. Not that our society has a better one, historically, but at least outside the church one can seek therapeutic help, be prescribed medication, etc. that could help. Within the church, seeking help is more risky. There are many - many pastors, many parishioners, even a number of church celebrities and public figures, who equate mental illness with weakness or even sin. The idea that if you pray hard enough, or pray the right way, that you will be freed of any mental illness is a common one.

After all, we have stories of Jesus driving out demons, and many people conflate demon-possession with mental illness. (This is a complex issue for another time, but I'd say the two are not the same) Surely Jesus is able to drive out something less dramatic like an anxiety disorder or depression, or schizoaffective disorder, or borderline personality disorder. And if someone is suffering in these ways, might it not be because they don't have enough faith?

I've lost count of the conversations like these I've had with Christians. It was especially common to hear this kind of thing as a kid and an adolescent, because I wasn't yet able to really choose where I'd go to church. When I was able to do so, I avoided communities where I heard that message...I was going to say I 'avoided them like the plague', but we've learned that a lot of people don't avoid plagues. So maybe, I avoided them like a noxious smell.

Because they are invisible - cannot be detected with a blood test or an x-ray or a CT scan - mental illnesses often have a different status compared to other kinds of illness. It's rare for someone to be told that they have hypertension because they lack faith, or that they need to pray their sciatica away. It's understood that people suffering from those things should seek medical help, and maybe make changes to their lives to become healthier. Even more severe physical illnesses are treated as just that: illnesses.

I'm thankful for the work that's being done to reduce the stigma around mental health struggles, especially from within the church. I feel like I do a small amount of that when I talk about my own struggles (with anxiety and depression, namely). Others do so, like Dwight L. Carson years ago, or like Sarah Griffith Lund more recently. The PCUSA is sponsoring and encouraging a lot of these kinds of conversations through a [Mental Health Ministry Grant Program](#) and the Presbyterian Mental Health Network. I'm glad to think that someone now will have a very different experience compared to what I had as an adolescent and young adult struggling with these issues.

2. *continued....*

To return to Jesus: I would say that there's nothing about the idea that Jesus might have had a panic attack, or even a panic disorder (causing him to regularly isolate himself and avoid crowds for periods of time, for example), that detracts from him being Jesus, the Lord, the Savior, the Messiah. If that troubles you - if it is hard to imagine Jesus struggling with mental health - then I think that says a lot about one's view of mental health. I hope that we as a worshiping community can be open to conversations about mental health, and that we can be accommodating and welcoming to people who have all kinds of challenges in their lives.

Pastor Doug



Upcoming Scripture Readings

February 6th: Isaiah 6:1-13; Luke 5:1-11

February 13th: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 6:17-26

February 20th: Genesis 45:3-15; Luke 6:27-38

February 27th: Exodus 34:29-35; Luke 9:28-43



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Corinthians 16:14)

MAC Priorities Survey

The MAC Committee is interested in your ideas and suggestions related to the mission outreach of First Presbyterian Church. Please complete our short (and anonymous) survey related to mission priorities. Paper copies of this survey are also available in the narthex at church. The survey is here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8f8c76>. You can also use the QR code to get to the survey.

Thanks!



Meals for St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

Many thanks to all who signed up to deliver meals to St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter during the week of February 7 – 11. St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter provides vital and important services to local homeless families. (See below for more about St. Mary's.)

Winter Clothing Giveaway: February 12

The next coat and winter clothing giveaway is scheduled for Saturday, February 12, from 10:00 a. m. to noon. Masks will be required for entry to Fellowship Hall and, if necessary, limits will be placed on the number of browsers allowed indoors simultaneously. For more information, check the People to People Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FPCPeopleToPeople>.

People to People: Call for Donations

In addition to clothing donations, People to People accepts linens (sheets, blankets, towels) and other general household items such as cookware, toys, tools, and knickknacks (but no TVs, computers, cribs, or furniture). Also, another MaxSold auction will be scheduled soon, with proceeds benefiting local community ministries. Contact Sandy Heidel (csheidel@verizon.net) or Cheryl Messere (cheryl.messere@gmail.com) to donate or for more information.

3. *continued....*

Souper Bowl 2022!

This year's Souper Bowl of Caring event will take place at First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 13. Stay tuned for further details in the church bulletin and BEAT but, in the meantime, start setting aside your canned goods for Souper Bowl Sunday!

Focus: St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

Our church has many important relationships with local ministries that serve poor and marginalized members of our community. One organization with which we have current and long-term connections is St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter, located on Emmett Street in Phoenixville. Founded in 1987, St. Mary's Shelter has – to date – provided over 173,000 nights of shelter and over 519,000 meals for between 700 and 800 families. St. Mary's is one of the few shelters in the area that allows parents to stay with their children. It is obviously a great benefit when families can remain together during difficult times. The staff at St. Mary's is committed to fostering the dignity of each individual and to seeking innovative ways to help families move toward independence. Recently, transitional apartments were established at St. Mary's and the first two families have now taken up residence. St. Mary's holistic concern for residents is further demonstrated by a lovely garden established as a quiet space for families and by visiting volunteers who provide recreation, organize play groups, and direct creative activities. At First Presbyterian Church, we are blessed to have the opportunity to partner with St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter in helping homeless families find stability, independence, and a place to call home.



Wanted: Used Ink Cartridges

We are continuing to collect used cartridges to recycle at Staples. The church receives a \$2 credit for each cartridge. You may drop off your cartridges in the church office or through the mail slot on the office door. This program helps you recycle your cartridges, while at the same time assisting the church.



Deacons Dialogue

Your Board of Deacons is reaching out this month to see if any of our fellow congregants might know someone who would be interested in applying for FPC's part-time position as a Children and Youth Coordinator. This creative, trustworthy person would be responsible for the programming for children and youth on Sundays during Church School, and for the development of other events throughout the year.

The successful candidate will have all required federal and state clearances to work with children. We seek someone who will be able to provide an environment of grace and welcome for parents and visitors, and demonstrate a Christian practice that is broadly compatible with First Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church USA.

Also regarding our church school program, please note the following:

- Sunday school will resume in February, at the earliest. When we do come back together, class will be held during worship.
- There will be no nursery program until further notice.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by, Ellen Williams

PARISH LIFE

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



Foodology

Did someone say chocolate? This recipe is sure to melt the heart of your Valentine!

Chocolate Strawberry Jelly Roll

INGREDIENTS

One 15.25-ounce box white cake mix (plus required ingredients)
1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
2 cups confectioners' sugar
One 1.2-ounce bag freeze-dried strawberries, plus more for decorating
2 pounds dark chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons refined coconut oil or vegetable shortening

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Prepare the cake mix as directed; pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until a cake tester inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely.

Meanwhile, combine the butter and cream cheese in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large bowl if using a handheld electric mixer). Mix on medium-high speed until combined and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Reduce the speed to low and gradually add in the confectioners' sugar. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat until fluffy and combined, about 2 minutes.

Crumble the cake into a large bowl. Add 1/4 cup of the frosting and mix with your hands until smooth and combined. Line a 15 1/2-by-10 1/2-inch jelly roll pan with plastic wrap. Put the cake "dough" on top. Cover with another sheet of plastic wrap and pat the mixture into an even rectangle that fills the pan.

5. *continued.....*

Transfer the mixture in the plastic to a work surface (the shorter side facing you) and roll out just enough so that the surface is smooth. This helps make the dough even and not patchy. Press the flat side of a ruler against all the sides of the dough so they are straight. The dough should be about 10-by-15 inches.

Put the freeze-dried strawberries in a spice grinder and pulse until finely ground. Add to the bowl with the remaining frosting and beat until combined. Remove the top sheet of plastic wrap from the dough. Add the strawberry frosting and spread out evenly with a small offset spatula, leaving about a 1-1/2" border on the short side furthest away from you.

Roll the dough away from you into a jelly roll shape, using the plastic to roll tightly until it's covered by the plastic. Place it on a baking sheet. Freeze while you make the chocolate coating.

Combine the dark chocolate and coconut oil in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Stir until melted and smooth, about 6 minutes. Remove the bowl from the saucepan and set aside until cooled and thickened slightly, about 7 minutes. Meanwhile, unwrap the jelly roll cake and place on a rack set over a baking sheet. Pour the chocolate over the cake until completely covered. Decorate the top with freeze-dried strawberries. Freeze until the chocolate is set, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and cut into slices. Serve chilled.

Submitted by Your Parish Life Committee, from The Food Network.

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 Zoom Parlor...Please join us!

Scrip Gift Card Orders

We will be placing orders for gift cards every other Wednesday in February (Feb. 2 and Feb. 16).

If you would like to place an order, please call or text Lynne Williams at 610-415-1581 (home) or 610-955-4749 (cell), or send an email (brettdrew@comcast.net).

As always, we will complete the order forms for you.

Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (Feb. 1 and Feb. 15).

Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR".

Thank you...Thank you for continuing to support this program!

Happy Groundhog Day & Happy Valentine's Day!!



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

Amy Myers will be happy to forward your prayer requests to the members of the prayer chain.

You can email Amy at fpcprayerchain1@gmail.com and members will be lifting you up in prayer.

You may also call Sue Smith at (610) 933-8816 and she will forward your requests on to Amy.

From the Clerk of Session

From the Clerk of Session

❖ Average Sunday morning attendance:

In December we had an average of 57 worshipping in person (wearing masks) and an average of 18 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 3 *chatting*. Christmas Eve attendance was: 5:00 service – 61 in person, 7 on line with 2 chatting.

9:00 service 53 in person, 15 on line with 2 chatting.

Please think of *chatting* as the YouTube version of signing the Red Friendship Book and join in the chat, if you are able.

○ The Life of the church

- Membership: Current membership is 171.
 - Pam Bodam has requested transfer to Great Valley Presbyterian Church
- Birth: none
- Death: none
- Wedding: none
- Baptism: none

○ Session Meeting Information:

- Motions passed at the December 21, 2021 Stated Session Meeting
 - Email Motion: Bob Russell is asking for approval to purchase a new pump for the church heating system. The cost of the part will be approx \$1,400. Bob will do the installation himself. Approved by email vote 11 yes, 1 no reply. Approved unanimously.
 - From Worship and Music Committee: Celebrate Communion on the following days in 2022: January 2, February 6, March 2 – Ash Wednesday (service in the sanctuary), April 17 – Easter, June 5, July 3, August 7, September 4, October 2 – World Communion Sunday, November 6, November 27 – first Sunday in Advent, December 24 – Christmas Eve, January 2, 2023. Approved unanimously.
 - From Finance Committee: The 2022 Budget as presented. Approved with 9 in favor, 1 against.
 - Motion: Dawkins, as a certified Therapy Dog, is welcome outside the church before worship, in the narthex during worship, and outside following worship. Motion approved 9 in favor and 1 abstaining.

Information from the January 25, 2022 Stated Session Meeting will be reviewed at the March Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



On-Line Contribution Information

Several visitors to the church have asked about on-line giving. Below is the link to Faith Life, the app. that handles our on-line contributions.

If you are a friend or member of the church, and you have an envelope number, you can include when the on-line account is set-up. If you do not have an envelope number, you can contribute as a friend.

You can also access the link on the church web site. Direct any questions to fpctreasurer145@gmail.com. Thank you. <https://faithlife.com/fpcop-n/give>

Worship and Music Notes

Well, February is a short month. There is nothing much special happening that needs to be noted. So let's look at the normal things. The first Sunday of February we will celebrate Communion together. Please note that we are using the pre-filled cups with bread and juice in order to help protect us from COVID. The next 3 Sundays are regular services, so all the more reason to attend in person or via YouTube. You will note that we are still collecting the offering by the ushers walking around, holding the plate (not passing it around) to receive your offerings.



Just a heads up that Ash Wednesday is on March 2 and we will have a church service at 7:30 PM in the sanctuary and broadcast via YouTube also.

See you in church



Attention Redner's Shoppers

SAVE-A-TAPE PROGRAM

Redner's has a rebate program which will pay the church 1% of the value of all register receipts processed at their locations.

You may place them in the box in the narthex or the church office.

Please make sure that you are a member of the Redner's Rewards program. You must have your rewards card scanned when you make your purchase for the church to be able to benefit from the purchase. To become a rewards member just stop by the customer service desk to pick up your application and a rewards card.

Pub Theology

The next Pub Theology will meet on Sunday, March 13th at **7:00 PM** at **The Foodery**, (325 Bridge St, Phoenixville). Join Pastor Doug in a discussion of theological topics and current events over food and drinks. Listen, chat, and hash things out...it's fun and thought-provoking!



Men's Group

All men of the congregation are welcome to meet with Pastor Doug for a Men's Group gathering after the service on Sunday, February 20th. Chat, bond, and learn something new.

February 2022

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		6:30p Zumba 7:00p MAC	7:30p Bell Choir	9:00a Clothing ministry 9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p “We Are” vigil via Zoom	9:00a WIC	9:30a Zumba 11:00a MAC Sold Pick Up
Communion 6 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 12:30p Deacons meeting	7 6:30p Zumba 7:30p Property <i>Shelter Meals →</i>	8 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Parish Life 7:00p Personnel <i>Shelter Meals →</i>	9 7:30p Bell Choir <i>Shelter Meals →</i>	10 9:00a Public Health Mgt Corp 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:30p Compassionate Friends <i>Shelter Meals →</i>	11 <i>Shelter Meals →</i>	12 10:00a – 12:00n Winter Coat Give Away
13 8:30a Bible Study 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Worship <i>Souper Bowl of Caring</i> 12:00n Worship & Music	14 6:30p Zumba	15 6:30p Zumba 7:15p Church Growth/ Christian Education	16 7:30p Bell Choir	17 9:00a Clothing ministry 9:00a WIC 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p “We Are” vigil LIVE	18 9:00a WIC	19 9:30a Zumba
20 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 12:00 n Men’s Group 12:00 n Women’s Circle <i>Perspective Articles due for March</i>	21 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Finance and Stewardship Church office closed <i>Presidents’ Day</i>	22 6:30p Zumba NO Session	23 7:30p Bell Choir	24 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir	25	26
27 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 7:00p Book Club	28 6:00p Staff meeting 6:30p Zumba					