Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume XLVII No. 5 May 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

	2
	3
Parking Lot Collection Help	-
Children & Youth Coordinator	1
Presbytery Women's Circle	1
	5
	5
	5
	7
Personnel Open Forum Invite	7
Church Growth Committee	3
Parish Life	10
Deacons Dialogue	11
	12
1	13

From the Pastor

Mark 11:15-18

- ¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; ¹⁶ and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.
- ¹⁷He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written,
- 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'?

But you have made it a den of robbers."

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching.

Ephesians 4

25So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. 26Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27and do not make room for the devil.

I just got back from a conversation over coffee with my acquaintance John, a leader and organizer with POWER Interfaith. POWER is a faith-based organization that advocates for justice - their most recent initiative was weekly vigils in Harrisburg, advocating for fair school funding. If you didn't know already, school funding in the US is deeply segregated, with black-majority schools consistently receiving a fraction of the funding of white-majority schools. This stems from segregation in our housing, and the fact that schools are funded by property taxes. Black families are less likely to own homes, and the homes they own are less valuable on average than the ones in majority white neighborhoods, and the result is an incredible disparity in school funding all over the US.

For anyone who has tried to make change in our society, even on a local level, it's striking how incredibly difficult it is. In theory I imagine we mostly agree that schools should have equal funding — that a majority white school does not deserve more funding than a majority black school. And yet this disparity has been in effect in the US for generations, despite the Civil Rights Movement and racial justice movements that have also persisted for generations.

Given all of this resistance to doing what seems to be clearly right, it's easy to get angry. And John and I are both white. His kids went to great schools, and Poppy is going to a great school now. We aren't directly harmed by this systemic racism, so we are angry on principle, and on others' behalf. Imagine for a moment the feelings in neighborhoods who have been denied equal education for generations.

I find that people are often afraid of healthy anger, and at the same time prone to become addicted to unhealthy anger. Unhealthy anger tends to arise from social media and cable news, both of which are intentionally designed to evoke unhealthy anger in us because that sells more advertising and increases their profits. Calmly relating facts and sharing solutions is simply not profitable - to make money, you have to make people angry and afraid. Our media does this well. Unhealthy anger is holding a grudge, or acting in a way to get back at someone. It is returning harm for harm, or nursing our wounds and waiting until we can get even.

Healthy anger can be very important, by contrast. Anger has a 'job' to do in our emotional life. In simple terms, the job of our anger is to give us the energy to overcome obstacles. Think of the face someone makes when they are concentrating hard on a task - brows furrowed, maybe even a frown. It seems like an angry face, even if the person doesn't feel particularly angry. But frustration is the kind of anger that can focus us, and make us think "I'm going to keep doing this until I get it right!" We get angry when we care. I think that's a reason our families can make us so angry sometimes - because we care about these people, they 'get to us' easily. They push our buttons in a way that people we are less connected to simply could not.

In the text above from Mark, we see Jesus at perhaps his angriest in all the gospel stories. Angrier, I think, than when he calls out Pharisees for being hypocrites, or even when he says to Peter "Get behind me Satan!"

2. Continued......

Here Jesus is angry enough to disrupt the center of Jerusalem's economy and the Temple practices of his day. The moneychangers in the Temple might be compared to the commercialism of Christmas - ostensibly it is a religious time, but really it's about the money (hundreds of billions in the case of Christmas, and most of Jerusalem's economy in the case of holy days like Passover). And by disrupting the Temple economy in this way, Jesus puts himself in the most danger he's been in yet. Mark is clear - after this point, it's decided that Jesus has to be killed. And Jesus is willing to risk that because of his righteous anger. And the crowd is spellbound by his teaching - maybe because they were angry too.

Anger is a healthy response to injustice - the injustice of exploiting the poor who want to worship God, or anger at denying children equal access to education. But anger can't become everything, and that is why I also quoted a second passage from Ephesians above. Anger that we nurture, and nurse, and brood over, becomes toxic. It twists inside of us and becomes bitterness or hatred. Rather than giving us the strength we need to do what's right, it makes us look for opportunities to get even. Anger, righteous or otherwise, is no excuse for sin.

When we become angry at injustice we see or experience, that can be Christ-like. When we decide to disrupt an unjust system in a public way, that can also be Christ-like. But we must remain Christ-like no matter how angry we feel, and we must also not cling to our anger and let it take over our lives. It isn't easy to discern how to use our anger, and when our anger is using us, but there is a place for our anger in the Christian life, as there is a place for all of our feelings. We can love our enemies and be angry with them, but we cannot love our enemies and harm them. We cannot love our enemies and seek revenge, or work to humiliate them, or exclude them from the community we are trying to build. Be angry, but do not sin. We can recognize that our anger can be legitimate, and that it has a healthy function in our lives, while still remembering that it has limits too.

Pastor Doug



Upcoming Scripture Readings

May 1st: Revelation 5:11-14; acts 9:1-20 May 8th: Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30 May 15th: Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6

May 22nd: Acts 16:9-15; Revelation 21:10; 21:22-22:5

May 29th: Acts 16:16-34; John 17:20-26

Parking Lot Attendants Needed

Beginning in May, the Borough of Phoenixville will close Bridge Street for outdoor dining and events. We will once again need volunteers to collect parking donations on **Friday and Saturday evenings from 5:00pm – 8:00pm**. It is a great opportunity to spend some quality time with a fellow church member, as well as a chance to interact with folks in our



community. Not only does this benefit our church, but it also makes it convenient for those who park in our lot.

If you would like to help, you may sign up on the **Sign-Up Genius** that Sue Smith will email each Monday. If you have questions, please contact Jewell Baker (484-459-3585) or Lynne Williams (610-955-4749).

The Stewardship Committee appreciates your time and help.

Introducing to our new Children and Youth Coordinator

The search committee for this position began our task eager to find a faithful, energetic, creative teacher to lead the children of our congregation. Imagine our delight when the ideal candidate appeared within our congregation, in God's perfect timing for our church, and for Jeff personally. Please join in our excitement as we welcome Jeff McLaughlin this new role! Stay tuned for more information on a "meet and greet" reception to take place after church on May 22, to welcome Jeff to his new position. Read on to hear more about Jeff and the plans for this new position, directly from Jeff!

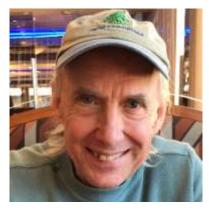
Respectfully submitted, Jill Kleppinger for the search committee

Jeff McLaughlin

I joined the congregation at First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville in 2003. Since then, I have taught Sunday School on a consistent basis and occasionally served on (and chaired) the Christian Education Committee. I welcome this new – but related – challenge!

I have been a teacher for most of my adult life. Most recently, I taught in the teacher education program at West Chester University, but I began my career as an elementary classroom teacher in 3rd, 5th, and 6th grades, as well as kindergarten.

I am honored and excited to assume the position of Children and Youth Coordinator at FPC. My "teacher brain" is already full of ideas for the coming year in the church school program. But I am also very aware of – and grateful for – the experience, dedication, and creativity that exists among our existing group of church school teachers. I plan to draw upon that talent in designing meaningful experiences for the children and youth of our church. These experiences will include Biblically-based and educationally-sound Sunday School instruction as well as opportunities to participate in intergenerational programs, service projects, holiday celebrations, outings, and other church-related events. By the way, suggestions and ideas from parents will be more than welcome for these "extra-curricular" experiences!



As you know, we have returned to monthly whole-group Sunday School. Our final session for the school year will be on May 22. We are planning (hoping!) to resume weekly Sunday School in September. So, stay tuned for more details about that. Also, as conditions allow, it would be great to schedule some group activities over the summer. Again, stay tuned.

When wearing my Children and Youth Coordinator hat, my email address will be fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com. Please reach out with any questions, suggestions, or other comments you have. As our population of young folks at FPC continues to grow, I predict that we are in for some interesting and inspiring times ahead!



Presbyterian Women Circle

After taking March off for Easter, we'll wrap-up What My Grandmothers Taught Me, Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus on Sunday, May 15, finishing with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Please pack your lunch and join us after worship for this last session, even if it's your first time.



As we strive to keep everyone safe, Sunday School continues to be held once a month in Fellowship Hall.

We have changed our time together to **during** the morning worship service. Children are to attend church with their families, and following the Children's message will go to Fellowship Hall with our teachers. Children age 3 and up will go to Sunday School, and those under 3 will go up to the nursery.

On **April 10**, **Palm Sunday**, the children welcomed everyone outside waving palms and collecting coins for One Great Hour of Sharing.

During Sunday School time they sang songs, listened to the story of Palm Sunday and even played a little Easter themed BINGO.

Children then returned to the sanctuary to pass out palms.

Our next Sunday School will be May 22.

We look forward to our time together!





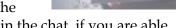




5.

From the Clerk of Session

- Average Sunday morning attendance:
 - In February we had an average of 52 worshiping in person (masked) and an average of 25 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 8 chatting.
 - In March we had an average of 63 worshiping in person (wearing masks) and an average of 21 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 6 *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:
 - New members Cassy and Forrest Gulden, Sarah Pilotti, Rick Schnaedter and Sue Tyson were received by Reaffirmation of Faith during Easter Sunday worship. Current membership is 174.
 - Birth: none
 - Death: none
 - Wedding: none
 - Baptism: none
- Session Meeting Information:
 - January 25th Stated Session Meeting
 - Committee Chairperson selections:
 - ➤ Christian Ed Gail Landazuri & Lynne Williams co-chairs
 - Church Growth Chris Wittrock
 - ➤ Finance/Memorials Kevin Carrabine & Roger Warwick co-chairs
 - Mission/Action/Concern Jeff McLaughlin

- ➤ Nominating Chris Wittrock chair, Adam Smith 2nd Elder
- Parish Life Ann Miller, Jewell Baker, Kathryn Grocki co-chairs
- Personnel OPEN (George Cockerill & Kathryn Grocki on committee)
- Property Ken Brown & Bob Russell co-chairs
- Stewardship Lynne Williams (Ron Williams & Mike Eitl on committee)
- Worship & Music Ken Brown
- o Jewell Baker unanimously elected Clerk of Session for 2022
- o Chuck Heidel unanimously elected Treasurer for 2022
- o Baptism request for Olivia Craven in March unanimously approved.
- Information from the March 22, 2022 Stated Session Meeting will be reviewed at the May 24th Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session

Report from the Finance Committee

For the first three months of the year, here are the FPC financial results.

- Pledges are \$6,849 below budget income
- Non-pledges are \$1,591 below budget income
- Expenses are \$3,005 less than budget
- Year to date net operating loss is \$18,286, \$1,435 greater than was budgeted



As presented and approved at the congregational meeting, we are forecasting a net operating loss for this year of \$59.867.

We continue to be short of our commitment to the Donegal Presbytery in Per Capita giving (Apportionment). If you have not yet made that commitment, please contribute.

6



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

The winter is past, ... flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come. (Song of Solomon 2:11-12)

Offering of Letters

In March, we – as a congregation – wrote and mailed 37 letters to Congress, advocating for support of the *Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021*. This legislation, if passed, will do much to improve the effectiveness of U. S. food aid to nations throughout the world and would significantly help reduce malnutrition among children. Our next Offering of Letters will take place in June.

Good Works Lunches – Volunteers Needed

We will again be providing bag lunches for Good Works volunteers working in our area on Saturday, May 14. Assistance is needed from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Check the P2P Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/FPCPeopleToPeople) or contact Bob Russell at Bob@rtact.com.

Responding to the War in Ukraine – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance



Thanks to all who have made contributions on behalf of Ukraine. Funds donated – through First Presbyterian Church – to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) are already being used for emergency humanitarian aid such as food items, shelter, medicines, and hygiene items. Technical assistance is also being provided by PDA in collaboration with faith communities both in

Ukraine and worldwide. As the violence in Ukraine continues, the number of people being displaced internally and fleeing to neighboring countries increases by the day. Let us all pray for an end to this violence and pray that the U.S. Government and our European allies maintain their commitment to the Ukrainian people for a peaceful solution. No one knows how long the war will last, but it is certain that the Ukrainian people will need help rebuilding their country so that those who are fleeing now may one day return home safely.

It is still possible to contribute to Ukrainian relief through our church. To do so, make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville and write *Ukraine* on the memo line.

Open Forum at the Personnel Meeting

The next Personnel Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 10th at 7:00 p.m. and you are encouraged to share with the committee how you feel about the job performances of the church staff at the Listening Session from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. You may attend in person in the church parlor or you may email your comments to Jeanie Osterhoudt at jeanoster@comcast.net or to any member of the Personnel committee, and they will share them at the Personnel meeting. Responses will be kept strictly confidential.



Church Growth Update

Prison Ministry

We had a wonderful turnout for the Prison Ministry 101 Information Gathering meeting with 40 people in-person and 8 online which indicated we have people who are interested in helping us and partnering with us (for free).



We were blessed to hear from several formerly incarcerated persons, including two of our panelists, who shared their experiences while inside. Each man underscored what seemed to be the most important needs: The importance of continually renewing their minds (learning/education), the importance of connections with people on the outside who are committed to their healing and restoration, and the challenges associated with re-entry (job skills, connections, housing, advocacy, and transportation).

Regarding learning and education, we learned that Books Through Bars has been a pivotal connection for men and women on the inside. Termaine for instance requested a King James Bible, which was a critical resource for him as he struggled to remain spiritually strong and filled with hope. Two other attendees shared they are now literate, writing poetry, and able to find employment because they learned how to read while in prison. We recently visited Books

Through Bars and want to share with you a letter that really gave us pause to reflect and pray at that moment.

Dear BTB,

I would first and foremost like to thank you all for always answering my requests over the years. Second, I would like to let everyone there know that as crazy as it is out there with COVID, the uprise in violence, etc., you are all in my thoughts and prayers daily. I don't know if you guys would be allowed to send prayer lists or not, but if you can, please feel free to do so. I want you to know that while I am also writing to request books, I want you to know the non-request part of this letter is more important than my request for books. May God Bless you and keep you safe.

If you are interested in a trip to Books Through Bars and are willing to spend a minimum of three hours volunteering (plus travel time), please reach out to Chris Wittrock.

To speak to the re-entry challenges, Bob Wittrock has connected FPC with PAR Recycle Works (https://home.par-recycleworks.org/). PAR-Recycle Works is a nonprofit electronics recycler that provides transitional employment to people returning from prison. They deconstruct electronics and destroy data to generate revenue and pay their employees. PAR-Recycle Works helps to build safer communities and contribute to stronger families by investing in people. Watch the bulletin for more details about our planned recycling event in the FPC parking lot. This is the first time this organization has been to Phoenixville, and we hope to give them a big PXV welcome!

Pastor Doug will be organizing a meeting for all interested persons at FPC and nearby churches to talk about the needs and where we might be able to make a simple start in prison ministry. If you would like to attend the meeting, please contact Pastor Doug. All ideas and people are welcome.

8. continued.....

From the Grant Writing Team

Jacqui Busch, Kristin Craven, Pastor Doug Hagler, Amy Myers, Lucinda Parrish, and Chris Wittrock.

Pastor Doug, Amy, Chris, and Lucinda were accepted as a cohort for the Parish Resource Center (PRC) grant writing program. We have identified a grantable project related to prison ministry, and have identified a primary grant for that project.

We invite your ideas (and partnership) for obtaining grants for First Presbyterian. Please access the <u>Grant Writing Request Form</u> electronically or pick one up in the Narthex. Respectfully submitted,

Chris Wittrock

Foundation	Progress Report	Notes	Next Steps	Contact
Oldham Little Church	Working on the	Construction grant		Kristin
Foundation	LOI	to benefit FPC		Craven
		buildings. The		
		amount of the		

		grant is presently unknown	
Synod of the Trinity Peacemaking Grant	I just finished distributing funds to support the vigils we've been holding twice a month since July of 2020.	These vigils have brought together a few dozen organizations and congregations from the Phoenixville area to stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and be a witness	Pastor Doug
		for racial justice.	



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

Amy Myers, our Prayer Chain Coordinator, 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.

9.

PARISH LIFE



Fun was had by kids of all ages at FPC's annual Easter egg hunt this year. Granted, only the younger set was doing the hunting. However, who can keep a smile from their face watching the kiddos hunt for their treasures?

The chill in the air didn't affect the warming of hearts on this special occasion. We're so glad we can once again join each other in worship, and in the fun times that accompany it.



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!



One Great Hour of Sharing...Thank You

Thank you for your generous gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing ministry. With your donations we have raised \$4,375.75. of that total, \$601.10 was collected by the children of our Sunday School with their fish boxes and coin collection. Your gracious contributions will help to support the many life changing missions of this ministry. Thank you.



And now our thoughts turn to Spring and Summer. Gone are the snowy and icy days that kept us house bound, and here are the warm days that break us free! We can see signs of God everywhere, all the time, of course. But at no time are they more glorious than Spring. Nature truly wears her best colors, painted pink, purple, green, and many other hues that lighten our spirits.

Speaking of breaking free, another wonderful contribution by my fellow Deacon Kristin Craven.

Are you looking for a place to burn off some energy and some calories? Check out a local playground! *This list is just some of the parks around town with playgrounds. Some have accompanying open space, trails, and other park amenities.

Victory Park (2nd Ave & Arch St	treet, Royersford)
---------------------------------	--------------------

- Spring-Ford Children's Park (434 Chestnut Street, Royersford)
- Rambo Park (43 W 5th Avenue, Collegeville)
- Reeves Park (148 3rd Avenue, Phoenixville)
- Brown Street Neighborhood Park (Brown Street, Spring City)
- Collegeville Community Park (Park Avenue, Collegeville)
- Manderach Memorial Park/Limerick Community Park (180 Swamp Pike, Royersford)
- Waterworks Park (220 W 1st Avenue, Collegeville)
- Reservoir Park (601 Franklin Avenue, Phoenixville)
- Black Rock Park (1286 Black Rock Road, Phoenixville)
- David Myer's Jr Playground (467 Gravel Pike, Collegeville)
- Carey Street Park (250 Carey St, Phoenixville)
- Anderson Farm Park (499 Hopwood Rd, Collegeville)
- Joe Rowan Memorial Park (435 W High St, Phoenixville)
- Maple Street Park (1430 Maple St, Pottstown)
- Heather Place Park (1420-1448 Heather Pl, Pottstown)

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,

Ellen Williams

11.

Worship and Music Notes

Wasn't it wonderful to see so many in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday? It was also great to see all the children down front for their time in worship. On May 15 we will have a special service, in that we are going to recognize our musicians' contribution to our worship services. Be sure to come out to be part of the thanks to our musicians. Speaking of special services, on June 5 it will be Pentecost and we will, weather permitting, celebrate outside.



See you in church



May Scrip Orders

Time to think about Mother's Day and Graduations!!! We will be placing orders on Wednesdays, May 4 and May 18.

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

We will complete the order forms for you.

Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (May 3 and May 17). Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR". As always, thank you for continuing to support this program!

The Stewardship Committee



Attention Graduates

Please notify the church office with the names of those people who will be graduating from High School, College, Technical School or Grad School this year. (secretaryfpc145@gmail.com or 610-933-8816) We will recognize all our graduates on May 22nd during the worship service.

Grass Cutters Needed, No Experience Necessary

For a number of years a few church members have been cutting the grass. We need some help. If you are able to join us, please email Paul Parrish at parrishps@gmail.com



May 2022 F

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday		Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship Rev Hagler @ retreat-PM	6:30p Zumba class Rev Hagler @ retreat	6:30p Zumba class 7:00p MAC meeting Rev Hagler @ retreat	7:30p Bell Choir	4	9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir	9:00a WIC	9:30a Zumba class
Mother's Day 8 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 12:00n Worship & Music 7:00p Pub Theology	6:00p Staff meeting 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance & Stewardship	6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Parish Life 7:00p Personnel – Open Forum	7:30p Bell Choir	11	9:00a Public Health Mgt. Corp. 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Compassionate Friends meeting	Sue Smith Vacation	14 10:30a-1:30p Make Lunches for Good Works volunteers
8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship Music Appreciation 12:00n Men's Group 12:00n Women's Circle	6:30p Zumba class Sue Smith Vacation	6:00a VOTING all day in Fellowship Hall till 7:15p Christian Educ/ Church Growth 7:30p Property Sue Smith Vacation	Sue Smith Vacation	18	9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p "We Are" Vigil	9:00a WIC Perspective articles due for June/July	9:30a Zumba class 1:00p Dogwood Festival Parade
8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship Graduate Recognition 10:45a Sunday School 12:30p Deacons meeting 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	6:30p Zumba class	6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Session		25	9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir	27	28
8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship	6:30p Zumba class Office closed Memorial Day	6:30p Zumba class					