

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume XLVII No. 6 June/July 2022

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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

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From the Pastor

Leviticus 25:8-12

⁸ “You shall count off seven weeks^[a] of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years. ⁹ Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the Day of Atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. ¹⁰ And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. ¹¹ That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee for you: you shall not sow or reap the aftergrowth or harvest the unpruned vines. ¹² For it is a Jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.

Around the time we were praying for the victims of a mass shooting in Buffalo in worship last Sunday (5/15/22) there was another mass shooting in a Presbyterian Church in California. I tried to write about these events twice, and find I’m not able to at the moment. It’s too much. We pray for our siblings in Christ, of course, but we have been praying for victims of horrifying mass shootings for my entire adult life (I was 18 when the Columbine shooting occurred). Prayer is not enough, and the United States is both profoundly troubled and profoundly idolatrous. It’s a hard place to talk about sometimes.

Instead, I’m going to talk about rest. I continue to think that Sabbath is one of the most radical teachings in all of scripture, and the most radical form of Sabbath in scripture is the Jubilee. I’ve talked about the Jubilee before, and I’ll talk about it again. While we will do things like argue bitterly about whether to save \$40 in taxes by cutting millions from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), scripture gives us a plan to totally reorder society every 50 years so that it is more just and equitable. The most wild-eyed revolutionary is weak tea compared to Jubilee.

To be clear, there isn’t archaeological evidence that the Jubilee was strictly practiced in the ancient world, any more than we practice it today. It’s just worth noting that by not practicing it, we are disobeying God, just as our ancestors in faith disobeyed God. But what is the Jubilee?

It is, in effect, a Sabbath of Sabbaths of Sabbaths. Every seven times seven years, a full year is set aside for rest. The people and the land are both to rest for the full year. There is to be as little economic activity as possible. All slaves are freed and allowed to go where they will. All property sold over the last 50 years is returned to its previous owner. All migrant workers return home. Nothing is done for the sake of profit, and all accumulation is reversed. You cannot work, and you cannot pay anyone (or force anyone) to work for you. You subsist on what the land provides and hit the reset button on your entire economy.

From the first chapter of Genesis onward, the people of God are defined by Sabbath. The people of God are the people who *stop*, the people who rest. This is such an important distinction that we have stories of people being killed for violating the time of rest. In contrast, as Protestants in a Capitalist culture, we hear much more often about being people who *go*. We are constantly on the go, and 60 hour workweeks with constant availability is now the norm for many workers. We are called to go, in the missionary sense, to our neighbors and to other parts of the world. We respect and reward those who go.

2. *continued...*

Talking about how busy we are is a mark of honor, and most of us love to humble-brag about how exhausted we are and how we just can't find a moment to rest. It starts early - even though I value rest and free time, we still have Poppy practicing trumpet and Taekwondo and art and theater and swimming, in addition to school five days a week and homework every night. And chores. And soon, some summer camps.

For us, to live the good life, or even just to survive, is to always be going.

What would it mean to stop?

Of course, and unfortunately, Jubilee only works if a large group of people do it together, and it would look very different in our society than it would have in Bronze and Iron-Age Palestine. Even devout Orthodox Jews haven't found a way to practice Jubilee fully. Still, there are at least two principles that are at the heart of Jubilee, of the Sabbath of Sabbaths, to consider.

The first principle is freedom for everyone, and not freedom in the vague sense in which we usually talk about it, but specifically freedom from economic exploitation and coercion. We still have slavery in our day and age (see the 13th Amendment), but we also have plenty of situations where debt or poverty traps people in situations where they have to work long hours at unfulfilling jobs, put their health at risk, and still not have enough at the end of the month to cover basic bills. We can say they should just find a new job, but that's easier said than done with generational poverty and racial segregation and stagnant wages. God's judgment on systems that require exploitation is clear - they are to be dismantled and overturned, at the very least, every 50 years. (And if you read the prophets, Jubilee the gentle form of judgment)

The second principle is that the land, and all that it produces, belongs first to God. If you read farther in the text it reminds us specifically that we are merely migrant workers, here for a short time, working someone else's land. This is true of Elon Musk and Bill Gates and of you and me. The land is not mine; it is not yours. It belongs to God. If we treated our natural world and the resources we use as if they were borrowed from God, it would be a very different world; much closer to the world as God intends it.

Those are principles, but what can we do with them in our everyday lives? What I want you to consider is whether you can *stop*. Not necessarily everything, but what can you stop in your life right now? What time can you commit to stopping? Can you stop for ten minutes? For an hour? For a day?

Of course family and work and play make it hard to stop, but there's no one who has time to read this Perspective who couldn't find ten minutes in which to stop. And like any spiritual practice, Sabbath can grow within us, when we simply trust God and find when and where we can stop for a while.

How do we remind ourselves that we belong to God? How do we demonstrate our trust in God? What do we do in response to the principles that we are called to be free of coercion (even self-coercion) and exploitation, and that the land and all it produces belongs first to God? We can know, and show, when we stop.

Pastor Doug

Church Growth Update



Prison Ministry

We have established a regular visit to volunteer at Books Through Bars (BTB)! Please consider joining us on the third Saturday of the month to help pack books for prisoners and help organize their library. Our volunteer time is 11:30 a.m. through 1:30 p.m. which means the

carpool leaves the FPC parking lot at 10:30 a.m. You can sign up through Sign-Up Genius, or you can contact Sue Smith to register. We can always use drivers.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050F4AADA722A1FB6-books>

Speaking of books, we are accepting books on behalf of BTB. The books must meet the requirements set forth by the Department of Corrections and organized by BTB. Please visit the website to read the requirements, and please follow the rules. Thank you.

<https://www.booksthroughbars.org/donate-books>.

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. Our recycling event is on June 11 from 9 am - 1 pm and will be held in the FPC parking lot at 145 Main Street in Phoenixville.

Would you like to be part of this growing prison ministry? Come to the prison Ministry 102 meeting on May 29 following worship and bring your ideas. All are welcome!

From the Grant Writing Team

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

Amy Myers and Chris Wittrock are working on a Prison Ministry grant focused on the re-entry process. As you know, people returning to society following incarceration find the re-entry process difficult due to a lack of job skills, advocacy, assistance with basic needs, and connection to social services. These challenges often persist for a few years after reentry. Utilizing a community-based strengthening model, we will be a partner to returning citizens and their families (whom we call Neighbors) and connect them with critical resources.

We invite your ideas (and partnership) for obtaining grants for First Presbyterian. Please access the [Grant Writing Request Form](#) electronically or pick one up in the Narthex.

Bridge of Hope

Our Bridge of Hope family has moved into their new home in Norristown, and everyone seems to be making a positive adjustment. Our eldest is a rising junior at Lincoln University and she is looking forward to spending the summer with the family in their new home. Our high school senior was accepted to Kutztown and will major in social work. Our rising high school senior is excited about his new role in an upcoming play, written by none other than Termaine Hicks, our special guest for the Prison Ministry meeting.

4. *continued.....*

Through his company S.T.E.P.U.P., Termaine creates educational videos for youth to teach conflict resolution and critical thinking to address challenges such as gun violence and bullying. His work was featured on NBC 10 news. Watch the video at this link:

<https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/seeking-peace-in-philly/exonerated-man-creates-educational-videos-on-conflict-resolution/3178015/>

Our rising fourth-grader and her little sister will both attend summer camp at Magic Memories and visit the zoo as often as possible. Overall, the family is doing well, and they ask for continued prayers and God's favor as the older children can secure summer jobs, and mom can get a new (better paying) job.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Wittrock

Worship and Music Notes

There are several interesting worship services available to you in June and July. Please take note of them and join us in worship.

The very first Sunday in June is also Pentecost. We will be having Communion as part of the service and all will be, weather permitting, outside.

Sunday, June 12 is the first pick up choir. Join others around the piano at 9:45 a.m. to practice.

June 19 is Juneteenth. Come help us celebrate.

June 26 is Old Time Religion Sunday. Come worship in your old time finest.

July 10 is the pick-up choir again. Be around the piano to practice at 9:45 a.m.

There may be other unique elements to our summer worship services.

Come see what happens.

See you in church



Nominating Committee Update

Thank you for the names you submitted to the Nominating Committee for consideration for open positions for Elder and Deacon for 2023.

The committee had its first meeting on Monday, May 23, and developed our first round of selections. Please pray for our continued discernment.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Wittrock





Deacons' Dialogue

Meals Needed!



Your Board of Deacons is looking for volunteers to help with meals for fellow congregants in need due to their own, or a loved one's illness, or any other reason a nutritious meal might help make life easier. Please contact Mona Sabia at msabia2454@comcast.net if you're interested in helping.

Music brings joy to the soul - get your joy on at Music Fest at Anderson Farm Park Saturday, June 4th from 11:30 - 8:30. Food, fun and music for all! This is a drop in event - come whenever it's convenient and stay as long as you like!

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,
Ellen Williams

Caregiver Support Group

Pastor Doug is wondering whether this is interest in a Caregiver Support Group for our congregation and community. The focus would be people who are caregivers at home, not necessarily professionally (though professionals would be welcome too). Meeting time and day would be TBA based on who is interested. This would simply be a time to gather and support one another. Contact Pastor Doug if you are interested. 415-300-7912 cell, pastor145@comcast.net





Taco Dinner Kits

Keep your kitchen *C O O L* on Pentecost Sunday – June 5!

We will have another parking lot event of Taco kits from Moe's Southwest Grill in Oaks.

Click on the link below to place an order for the # of taco kits you want (each feed 4 – 6 people).

Each kit comes with all the fixings to make up to 12 tacos, and are \$39.99(+tax).

Choose from chicken, ground beef, ½ chicken and ½ ground beef, or vegetarian.

This is a fun, convenient, and safe way to have dinner ready to pick up while supporting the church. Take a much-deserved night off from cooking, order your family a night of tacos, and show your support!



How to Order:

1. Please place your order by 1:00pm on Saturday, June 4th.

Fill out this form to submit your order: <https://form.jotform.com/213323128724146>

2. Pick up will be at First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville (145 Main St, Phoenixville, PA 19460) between 5:30-6:00pm on Sunday, June 5th.

Raise Right Gift Cards



“Great Lakes Scrip” is now “Raise Right”

The program is the same and your purchase of gift cards will continue to financially benefit the church.

In June and July we will be placing orders on the following Wednesdays: **June 1, 15 & 29 and July 13 & 27.**

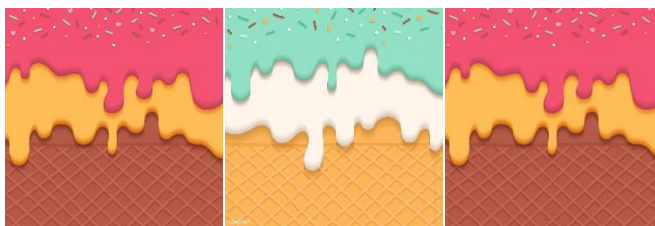
If you would like to place an order, please call or text Lynne Williams at 610-955-4749 (cell), or send an email to (brettdrew@comcast.net).

We will complete the order forms for you.

Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (**May 31, June 14 & 28, July 12 & 26**). Please make checks payable to “First Presbyterian Church DR”.

As always, thank you for continuing to support this program! The Stewardship Committee

PARISH LIFE



I scream, you scream, we all scream for **ICE CREAM!**

Save the date – June 26th – for FPC's annual Ice Cream Social. We will meet on the lawn, weather permitting. If Mother Nature doesn't bless us with fair weather, we'll meet in Fellowship Hall. The party will start after service.

PS – don't forget to dust off your Sunday hats for Olde Time Religion!

It's back! Enjoy a glass of lemonade and a snack Sundays after service.



Servers needed! See the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

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!

Volunteer English Program

Change someone's life and see how it changes yours!

Tutors provide weekly, one-to-one English language instruction for adult immigrants or refugees who speak one of over 50 languages spoken in Chester County. Tutors must be available for a one-year commitment to tutoring. Prior teaching experience is not required. Life experience, time and compassion for helping others is a plus!

Join us at the June 2022 Virtual Tutor Training Workshop

Dates: Thursday, June 2; Tuesday, June 7; Thursday, June 9

Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm each evening

Where: Zoom Virtual Platform

Workshop fee: \$40 for materials

Register online at volunteerenglish.org

References and background checks will be conducted before being matched with a student.



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Proverbs 31:8-9)

Offering of Letters – Join Us on June 12!



In June, we will again participate in Bread for the World's Offering of Letters campaign. On June 12, after the Sunday worship service, we will gather in Fellowship Hall for an introduction to the relevant legislation and a letter-writing session. Adults and children are all invited to participate and snacks will be provided. In our letters we will urge elected representatives to support domestic programs that address child hunger and malnutrition.

For example, we will advocate for an extension of the Child Tax Credit and an expansion of free school lunch programs. Our letters will then be dedicated during the worship service on June 26, before being mailed to Washington, DC. As you may recall, the letters we wrote in March were in support of the *Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021*, which has since passed in the U. S. House of Representatives. This success was at least partly a result of advocacy by constituents like us. Though it's not always obvious amid the clamor and clatter of political noise, our individual voices do matter! If unable to join us on June 12, you are still encouraged to write letters to be included in the June 26 dedication and offering of letters. Additional information will be provided in the church bulletin.

Good Works Lunches

Thanks to all who assisted with and/or donated items for Good Works lunches on Saturday, May 14. The team prepared, packed, and delivered 28 lunches to four different work sites in the area. Our next opportunity to prepare lunches for Good Works crews will take place in October.

Kate's Casa – A Local Resource for Latinx Families

At the May 3 meeting of the MAC Committee, Kate Camarda provided us with an overview of her ministry's work on behalf of Latinx families in the Phoenixville area. Kate's Casa (www.katescasa.org) is a non-profit organization that serves families through individual and corporate sponsorships, community events, and assistance with housing needs. Kate Camarda teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Phoenixville School District and has established fruitful relationships with many families (mostly Guatemalan) from around the area. The vision of Kate's Casa is "to create a partnership between cultures in our community with the goal of empowering immigrants, while simultaneously helping to meet the basic needs of immigrant families who left everything behind." A major future goal for Kate's Casa is to expand the availability of reasonably-priced local housing options for families. You can learn more about Kate's Casa by visiting www.katescasa.org.



When Organizing and Cleaning

Please give unneeded items like:

- *linens (all sizes of sheets, blankets, comforters, towels),
- *kitchen items (pots and pans, dishes, utensils),
- *household items, clothing (children, men, women),
- *and more (not TV's, computers, furniture)

for **People to People** to fill requests from those in need.

To date this year (2022), we have had 60 requests helping 89 people.

Please leave your donations, or those of family & friends, on the stage or steps to the left of the stage. Drop off any Thursday from 9am-11am.

We appreciate all your support.

If you have any questions, see Sandy Heidel. 610-948-6319

Thank you!!!

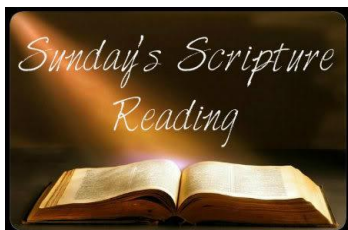


From the Clerk of Session

- Average Sunday morning attendance:
- In April we had an average of 78 worshipping in person (masked) and an average of 20 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: Current membership is 174.
 - Birth: none
 - Death: none
 - Wedding: Amy Osterhoudt and Tyler Ellis were married on May, 7th.
 - Baptism: none
- Session Meeting Information:
 - March 22nd Stated Session Meeting
 - Session unanimously approved the following Personnel Committee motion: **to hire Jeff McLaughlin as the Children and Youth Coordinator position, effective 4/3/22.** Additionally Session unanimously added **Members of Session who are also on staff will recues themselves from Session debate and voting on matters that pertain to their position in any way.**
 - Information from the May 24, 2022 Stated Session Meeting will be reviewed at the next Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.



Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



Upcoming Scripture Readings

June 5th: Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21

June 12th: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; John 1:1-13

June 19th: 1 Kings 19:1-15a; Luke 8:26-39

June 26th: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Luke 9:51-62



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](tel:(610)933-8816) and she will forward your requests on to Amy.

Report from the Finance Committee

The financial results for the January through April period are as follows.

Pledges are \$6,521 under budget.

Unpledged are \$3,022 under budget.

Expenses are \$4,174 under budget.

Year to date net operating loss is \$23,800, \$3,420 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.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel committee is interested in receiving feedback from the congregation about our staff's performance. Please feel free to email Jean Osterhoudt (jeanoster@comcast.net) or any committee member with your thoughts. If you would like to speak to the committee in person, please let us know and we will schedule a time at our next meeting.



Personnel
Committee



Attention Redner's Shoppers

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.

June 2022

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
				9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry	9:00a WIC 5:00p Parking	9:30a Zumba class 5:00p Parking
<i>Day of Pentecost</i> 5 8:30a Bible Study <i>Communion</i> 10:30a OUTDOOR WORSHIP 5:30p Moe's Taco Dinner Fundraiser Pick Up	6 6:00p Staff meeting 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Alianzas Fair Planning Meeting	7 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p MAC	8	9 9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:30p Compassionate Friends	10 5:00p Parking	11 9:00a-11:00a Recycling Event in Parking lot 9:00a-11:00a MaxSold Auction Pick Up 10:00a – 6:30p Mosaic Music Recitals in Sanctuary 5:00p Parking
<i>Trinity Sunday</i> 12 8:30a Bible Study 9:45a Pick Up Choir 10:30a Worship 12:00n Offering of Letters writing event 12:00n Worship & Music 7:00p Pub Theology	13 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance	14 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life	15 10:00a AARP Board	16 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p “We Are” Vigil Live	17 9:00a WIC 5:00p Parking	18 9:30a Zumba class 5:00p Parking
19 10:30a Worship 12:00n Women's Circle <i>Father's Day Juneteenth</i>	20 6:30p Zumba class	21 6:30p Zumba class 7:15p Church Growth & Christian Education 7:30p Property	22	23 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry	24 5:00p Parking	25 5:00p Parking
26 10:30a Old Time Religion Sunday 12:00n Ice Cream Social 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	27 6:30p Zumba class	28 6:30p Zumba class No Session	29	30 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry		

July 2022

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 9:00a WIC 5:00p Parking	2 9:30a Zumba class 5:00p Parking
3 10:30a Worship	4 <i>Independence Day</i> Church office closed	5 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p MAC	6	7 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry	8 5:00p Parking	9 5:00p Parking
10 9:45a Pick Up Choir 10:30a Worship 7:00p Pub Theology	11 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance	12 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life	13	14 9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:30p Compassionate Friends	15 9:00a WIC 5:00p Parking	16 9:30a Zumba class 5:00p Parking
17 10:30a Worship	18 6:30p Zumba class	19 6:30p Zumba class 7:15p Christian Educ/ Church Growth 7:30p Property	20 <i>Perspective articles due for August</i>	21 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p “We Are” Live vigil	22 5:00p Parking	23 5:00p Parking
24 10:30a Worship 7:00p Antiracism Book group via zoom	25 6:30p Zumba class	26 6:30p Zumba class No Session	27	28 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry	29 5:00p Parking	30 1:00p-5:00p Alianzas Festival in Reeves Park 5:00p Parking
31 10:30a Worship						