

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume XLVII No. 8 September 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
Christian Education News.....	4
Parish Life Committee.....	5
Deacons Dialogue.....	6
Choir News.....	6
Worship & Music Notes.....	7
Finance Committee.....	7
Personnel Committee.....	7
Scrip Card Orders.....	8
Clerk of Session report.....	8
Women's Circle.....	9
September calendar.....	10

From the Pastor

Matthew 5

5 When Jesus^[a] saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

You may have heard the term “Christian Nationalism” more often recently, as well as similar terms like “White Nationalism” and “Christofascism,” though I say “might” because of how siloed and separate our news sources and connections are. It might seem to be that a term or idea or story is everywhere, and you might not have heard of it at all. But “Christian Nationalism” is something that some politicians have been saying about themselves, and has also been a criticism and a warning about a growing movement in our society. Christian Nationalism has been linked to mass shootings and acts of terrorism, both recently and in our history, and in world history it has been an explicit part of Fascist movements in places like Italy and Germany. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for example, rejected the Christian Nationalism of Germany and helped organize an ‘underground seminary’ which was condemned by the political and religious authorities of the Third Reich who were, among other things, Christian Nationalists.

A pithy definition of Christian Nationalism can be a challenge, but here is one: *Christian Nationalism is the belief that a particular kind of Christianity should be forced upon a society through legislation and ultimately law enforcement.* It combines Nationalism, the belief that one’s nation is superior to all others, with a perversion of Christianity that espouses repression and bigotry. It is a version of Christianity that rejects scripture and the example of Christ in particular, and replaces it with a national myth of past purity and greatness that must be regained. Christian Nationalism demands that people be marginalized, driven out, or harmed if they don’t fit the narrow view of Christianity being imposed. It is similar to Theocracy, where religious and political authority are held by the same group, and if successful, could easily become Theocracy.

When Christian Nationalism was on the rise in Germany (it was then called the German Christian movement), some in the Roman Catholic Church and some Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Reformed Churches sided with the Nazi party. Outwardly this was for the sake of the unity and strength of the German nation. In the midst of rising inflation and perceived national embarrassment and loss of honor, Christian Nationalists came together for a return to former greatness (sound familiar?). This greatness was served by targeting marginalized people, including LGBTQ persons and the disabled, as well as socialists and pacifists, and of course Jewish communities who were religious minorities.

In our Presbyterian Constitution, Book 1 is the Book of Confessions, and one of those Confessions is the Theological Declaration of Barmen. I encourage you to read it (it is available [free online as a pdf](#) through the PCUSA website) but in brief, the Barmen Declaration is a theological declaration against Christian Nationalism. In Article 5 specifically, it makes it clear that the church can never become an arm of the state, and that the state can never become an arm of the church. Even though the tradition around separation of church and state is different in Europe, this statement meant that for the Confessing Churches of Germany at the time, Christian Nationalism would never be a

2. *continued.....*

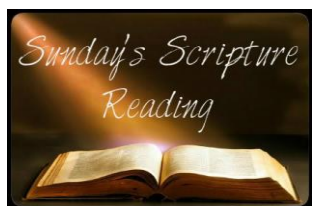
faithful option. Christian Nationalism in the United States now is different, of course, from Christian Nationalism in Germany in the 1930s. It is similar, however, in that it is heretical, and an abandonment of what I see as genuine Christianity, and a move in the direction of marginalization and violence.

I referenced the Beatitudes at the beginning of this perspective because I wanted a pithy reminder of what the kin-dom of God actually looks like. Reading the New Testament itself is probably an excellent cure for Christian Nationalist leanings. (As with Fundamentalists, I think that Christian Nationalists can hold their position specifically because they do not know scripture very well) What's clear is that the kin-dom of God does not look like Christian Nationalism, whether the German or the American variety. It looks like belonging to the poor in spirit, and comforting those who mourn, and inheritance that is won through humility, and hunger for doing what's right, and showing mercy, and purity of heart, and being peacemakers. Where we see these things, we can say that we see followers of Jesus, and we do not see these things in Christian Nationalism.

Pastor Doug

"Jesus was not killed by atheism and anarchy. He was brought down by law and order allied with religion - always a deadly mix. Beware those who claim to know the will of God and are prepared to use force, if necessary, to make others conform. Beware those who cannot tell God's will from their own."

- Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor



Upcoming Scripture Readings

September 4th: Exodus 19:1-9; 1 Peter 2:1-10

September 11th: Psalm 148; Selections from Job

September 18th: Proverbs 22:1-16; Matthew 21:12-17

September 25th: Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Luke 16:19-31



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

You shall go out in joy and be led back in peace. (Isaiah 55:12)

Peace and Global Witness

The PC(USA) Peace and Global Witness Special Offering is coming up on Sunday, October 2. Between now and then, we will be highlighting the kinds of efforts that are supported by our gifts. Watch for special announcements and bulletin inserts. Also, children in Sunday School will be engaging in activities and discussions related to Peace and Global Witness. See below for more information about the special offering.

Donations for the Next Garage Sale

The next People to People Garage Sale will take place on Saturday, October 1, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We are currently accepting donations of household items and clothing for the Garage Sale (no furniture or computers/TVs, please). In addition, volunteers will be needed for pre-sale set up (Wednesday to Friday, 9/28-9/30), assistance during the sale, and clean up afterwards. Contact Sandy Heidel at csheidel@verizon.net or check the P2P Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FPCPeopleToPeople>) for more information or to volunteer. Donations are also welcome for the next MaxSold online auction, to take place in late September or early October.

3. *continued.....*

Good Works Lunches – Volunteers Needed

We will again be providing bag lunches for Good Works volunteers working in the Phoenixville area on Saturday, October 8. Assistance is needed from 10:30 a.m. until about noon. Check the P2P Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FPCPeopleToPeople>) or contact Bob Russell at Bob@rtact.com.

September Offering of Letters

In September, we will again come together as a congregation to participate in a Bread for the World Offering of Letters. The focus of our letters this time will include advocacy for Farm Bill legislation, which actually includes a number of provisions for addressing poverty and hunger in the United States. Stay tuned for specific information and instructions for the September Offering of Letters.



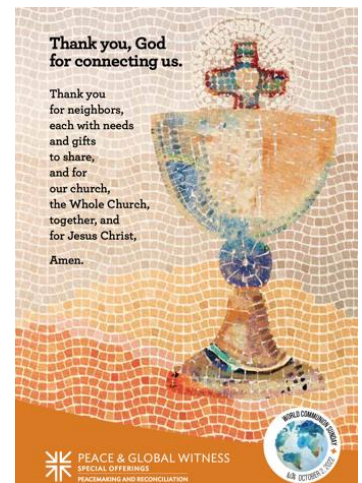
Meals for St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

During the week of October 10-14, we will again be providing dinners for the residents of St. Mary's Shelter. Instructions for signing up for all or part of a meal will be emailed later in September. There will also be a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

Peace and Global Witness Offering – October 2

We will be collecting the Peace and Global Witness Offering during worship on Sunday, October 2, which is also World Communion Sunday. (If you use our offering envelopes, you will find a special one for this purpose.) This offering is intended to draw Presbyterians together by increasing our awareness of ways to share the peace of Christ with one another in our church community and also beyond our doors, beyond our communities, and beyond our borders. God's peace, empowered by God's love, reminds us that we are connected to each other. Peace begins with each of us. Of the total offering we collect, 25% will stay with our congregation to use for local priorities, 25% will go to the Presbytery and Synod for regional peacemaking efforts, and 50% will support work for peace and reconciliation across the globe. You can learn more here:

<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/peace-global-witness/>



Christian Education

Sunday School Begins September 18

Our first Sunday School session for 2022-2023 will take place during the worship service on September 18. We have a dedicated group of teachers ready to provide meaningful and fun Biblically-based experiences for the children of our church. If you have not yet volunteered to assist with Sunday School, but would like to, please contact Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com. Prior teaching experience is not a requirement. Lesson plans will be provided and each group will have two adults on hand at all times. We are looking forward to launching the new Sunday School year on September 18!

Heifer International Project

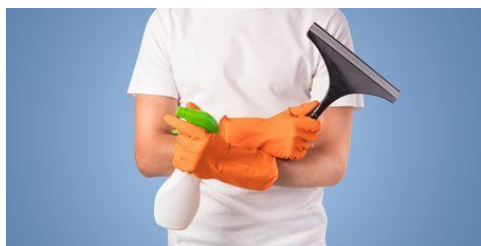
One theme we have emphasized in our Sunday School curriculum is practicing Christian love through acts of kindness, particularly in our families and in our local community. Now, through the Heifer International Project, we're opening our arms wider to include those in need even beyond where we live. Sunday School children have been collecting coins to put into our piñata, named Barnie. We now invite everyone in the congregation to join us in this effort. By contributing to the Heifer Project, we can help farmers and communities improve their access to food and clean water and improve their standards of living. Donations will be used by Heifer International to provide seeds, chickens, cows, saplings, bee hives, irrigation systems, water purification kits, and more. Look for the basket in the narthex and help us watch our gifts grow!

PARISH LIFE



Thank you, Celia!

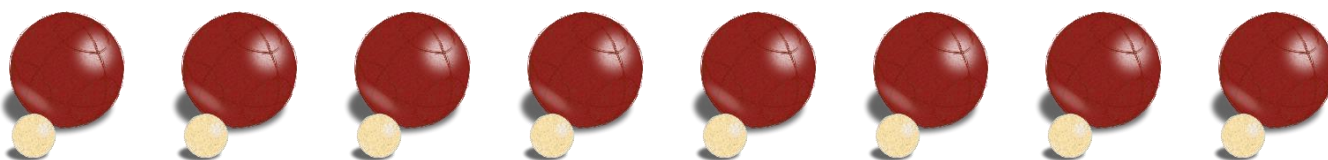
As summer dwindles and our thoughts turn to fall, we are approaching the countdown to the end of Lemonade in the Shade. This fond tradition brings folks together to share refreshments and conversation at the end of service, and we have enjoyed hosting this fun event weekly. We would like to thank Celia Breden for preparing the lemonade weekly throughout the summer.



Volunteers Needed – Kitchen Cleaning!

FPC's annual kitchen inspection by the county Department of Health is fast approaching. Parish Life is looking for volunteers to help prepare for this critical event. Can you spare a couple of hours and a bit of elbow grease?

Generally, the cleaning is done immediately prior to the inspection. We do get a few days' notice of the visit, to be announced. An early September date is anticipated. Please reach out to Jewell Baker at jebaker38@gmail.com to volunteer.



Bocce is Back!

As one summer gathering comes to an end, a fall gathering returns! Parish Life is pleased to announce the return of our annual Bocce tournament. Save the date of October 2nd to join us for Bocce, hot dogs and other fun snacks. Rain date is October 16th. May the best member win!

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!



Deacons' Dialogue

Feel free to reach out - We're here for you!



Your Board of Deacons would like you to know that there is more than one way to reach out to the leadership of our church. There can be numerous scenarios where a call or visit from church leadership may be helpful - or maybe just comforting. Please feel free to reach out to any of your Deacons, or to Pastor Doug, if you find yourself in need of a helping hand.

Meals needed!



Do you have an inner cook just waiting to get out? Or, can you purchase a prepared meal to assist a fellow congregant during challenging times?

As Deacons, our group reaches out to members who may be having a difficult time due to illness, stress, a new baby, or any other reason preparing meals presents a challenge. We are looking for volunteers to provide and deliver an occasional meal to our church family members in need. Please contact Mona Sabia at msabia2454@comcast.net to assist with this vital function. Your Board of Deacons thanks you in advance for your service.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,
Ellen Williams

FPC 'S CHOIR IS BACK!

We will be having our first rehearsal on Thursday, September 8th, at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, September 18th will be our first Sunday to lead our worship service. I am hoping to see all of our returning members and hopefully a few new ones, too.

You can always find me at the organ on Sunday morning if you have any questions about our Fall startup.

See you soon!

Diane Legnini, diane.legnini1@verizon.net



Worship and Music Notes

Oh my, is it really September already. Then it is time to get things going again. Yes, there is a seat in the choir for you. Rehearsals begin Thursday, September 8. See Diane for details.

Not a singer? Perhaps you would like to ring bells. Rehearsals start on Wednesday, September 7. See Barb for details.

Not a musician? Perhaps you would like to assist in the service by being the lay reader. Contact Sue Smith if you are interested.

Not comfortable reading in front of the congregation? Perhaps being an usher one Sunday a month would be good for you. See Jewell if you are interested.

Not interested in any of the above? Then just come out and be part of the congregation.



See you in church

Financial Results / Mid-Year

- Pledges to date are short of planned giving by \$11,500
- Non-pledged giving is favorable by \$300
- Expenses are favorable by \$3,300
- We have received a generous donation from a church member. This donation will enable the church to end the year much closer to budget than we were tracking year-to-date.



Your continued support of the church is greatly appreciated. Contribution statements were emailed/mailed out in July. Call the church office if you have not yet received your statement.

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.





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:6109338816) and she will forward your requests on to Amy.



Raise Right Gift Cards

We ask that you consider shopping with **gift cards** to your favorite stores while at the same time you benefit the church financially.

A percentage of each gift card is donated to our church.

In **September** we will be placing orders on **Wednesday, September 14** and **Wednesday, September 28**.

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 (**September 13 & September 27**).

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

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

The Stewardship Committee

From the Clerk of Session

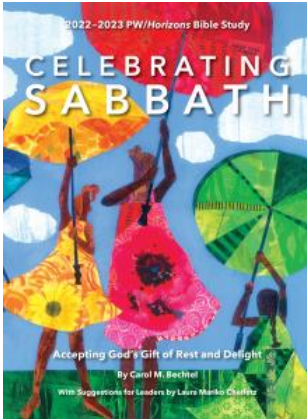
- ❖ Average Sunday morning attendance:
 - In July we had an average of 45 worshipping in person (masked) and an average of 18 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 4 *chatting*.
 - Please think of *chatting* as the YouTube version of signing the Red Friendship Book and join in the chat, if you are able.
- ❖ The Life of the church
 - Membership: no changes. Current membership is 173.
 - Birth: none
 - Death: none
 - Wedding: none
 - Baptism:
 - Thomas Hart Smith son of Megan and Adam Smith (members) baptized 7/24.
 - Hudson Charles Josel son of Elianne (member) and Brian Josel and grandson of Mona and Bill Sabia and great-grandson of Vivian Sedlacek baptized 7/31.
- ❖ Session Meeting Information:
 - Motions from the May 24, 2022 Stated Session Meeting:
 - Permission granted to Christian Ed Committee to fundraise for Heifer Project with the congregation. Also as extension of the CE motion to allow use of a piggy bank in the narthex for congregational contributions.
 - Motions from the July 18, 2022 Special Session Meeting:
 - To have a letter from Session sent to the congregation advising them of the generous gift received from the estate of Grace Harrop.
 - As per current practice 6% of Grace Harrop estate donation will go to Mission Action Concern Committee, with a one-time Session review of how monies will be used.
 - Minutes of the August 23, 2022 Session Meeting will be reviewed at the October 25, 2022 Stated Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective. A Special Session Meeting has been called for November 22 to discuss the budget and the December Session meeting will be a week earlier on December 20.



Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



Presbyterian Women Circle



Looking to September, Circle will use the PW/Horizons 2023 study *Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight* by Carol M. Bechtel. We meet on the third Sunday following worship, September to June so please join us.

I'll be ordering study guides soon so let me know if you would like a copy.

Jewell Baker, jebaker38@gmail.com, 484-459-3585



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.

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 fptreasurer145@gmail.com. Thank you.

<https://faithlife.com/fpcop-n/give>



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.

September 2022

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food ministry	2 9:00a WIC 5-8pm Parking Lot	3 9:30a Zumba
Offering: K Brown 4 Communion 10:30a Worship	Labor Day 5 Church office closed.	6 6:30p Zumba 7:00p MAC	7 7:30p Handbell rehearsal	8 9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal 7:00p Compassionate Friends	9 S. Smith vacation	10
Offering: K Carrabine 11 <i>Blessing of the Animals</i> <i>Outdoor Service</i> 10:30a Worship 12:00n Worship & Music 7:00p Pub Theology @ The Foodery	12 9:00a Clothing Ministry 5:00p Staff meeting 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Finance S. Smith vacation	13 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life	14 7:30p Handbell rehearsal	15 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food Ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal 7:00p "We Are" Live Vigil @ Main & Bridge St J. Allen vacation	16 9:00a WIC J. Allen vacation	17 9:30a Zumba 10:30a Books thru Bars J. Allen vacation
Offering: A Miller 18 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Women's Circle 12:00n Men's Group J. Allen vacation	19 9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba J. Allen vacation	20 6:30p Zumba 7:15p Church Growth & CE 7:30p Property Perspective articles due for October J. Allen vacation	21 7:30p Handbell rehearsal	22 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal	23 10:00a Kitchen Inspection	24 Church parking lot rented for the entire day & night.
Offering: J McLaughlin 25 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	26 9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	27 6:30p Zumba No Session	28 <i>Set up Garage Sale</i>	29 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal <i>Set up Garage Sale</i>	30 <i>Set up Garage Sale</i>	October 1 9am-1pm People to People Garage Sale