

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume XLVII No. 9 October 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.

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From the Pastor

Isaiah 40

- 3 A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
5 Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."
6 A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass; their constancy is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers; the flower fades,
[[when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers; the flower fades,]] but the word of our God will stand forever.

I quoted that last bit, "The grass withers; the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever" this past week. It is what we used to say at the end of the readings during worship - it's the kind of thing we say in worship with huge implications that maybe we don't have time to consider, in the moment.

I like the context of the preceding verses of Isaiah 40, because we are reminded that this is also a text we read in the Lectionary, often during Advent. Prepare ye the way. The voice cries out in the wilderness (which is the way my grandfather described serving as an Elder in his church, I suddenly remember) - the voice cries out to make the path straight for the Lord, and then immediately after, cries out that all flesh is grass.

We think of the breath of God as life-giving, and it is. The words for spirit in Hebrew and Greek mean breath, and the breath of God is what transformed inert clay into the first living people in the creation story of Genesis. We have hymns, like "Breathe on Me, Breath of God."

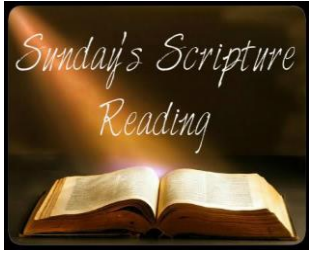
In this passage from Isaiah, there is more. The breath of God brings life as well as death - in the text, the grass withers and the flowers fade when the breath of the Lord blows upon them. In the context of the ancient world, people were able to see both good and ill coming from God. For them, God was the source of all things, good and bad, life and death. The grass and flowers grew at God's will, and withered by the same will.

Now, in 2022, we understand some things differently. We have better explanations for why many things happen - meteorology, ecology, social sciences and so on. This doesn't mean that God does less, just that we have a better understanding of the world around us, and of ourselves. More knowledge, if not more wisdom.

But God can still be the god who withers the grass and the flowers. God can act to remind us of our mortality, our limited nature. We have an excellent reminder of that limited nature towering in our sanctuary - we call it "Stairway to Heaven." There is a huge scaffold holding up our ceiling and to some degree, possibly our whole roof as well. When it rains, some water is trickling into the sanctuary, and we are catching it in a bucket. This is not at all what we want to be happening - it is frightening to think about something falling apart around us, even if it is not to a point where it cannot be repaired.

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of God will stand forever. In being reminded of what does not last, what cannot last, we are also reminded of that which endures. Grass and flowers do not last forever; buildings do not last forever; bodies do not last forever. But when we shape our lives to reflect the life of Christ, when we participate in building up in the kingdom of God, we are part of something eternal.

Perhaps God puts cracks in our ceiling to remind us of that.



Upcoming Scripture Readings

October 2nd: Lamentations 3:16-36; 2 Timothy 1:1-14

October 9th: Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7; 2 Timothy 2:8-15

October 16th: Genesis 32:22-31; Luke 18:1-8

October 23rd: Blessing of the Animals – Outdoor service

October 30th: Isaiah 1:10-18; Luke 19:1-10



Remembering Loved Ones

On November 7th, All Saints' Sunday, we will note in the bulletin the names of the saints (believers) from our congregation who have died during the past year. We will also note other relatives and loved ones who have died in the past year but were not members of this church.

If you would like the names of those loved ones listed, please send a message to Sue Smith at secretaryfpc145@gmail.com or call the church office at 610-933-8816.



WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Prepare to celebrate our oneness in Christ with all our brothers and sisters around the world. Join us this Sunday for this once-a-year special recognition of unity. Worship begins at **10:30 AM**, onsite or [online](#).

Let us pray - *We will become bread for a hungry world. And we will become drink for those who thirst. And the blessed will become the blessing. And everywhere will be the feast. Amen.* (Source: Jan Richardson, Painted Prayerbook)

Financial Committee Report

- Total income is over budget by \$53,000 due to a member "angel gift"
- Pledges are behind budget by \$17,000
- Expenses are favorable by \$4,300

The Finance Committee thanks you for your continued support.





Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

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

October 2: Peace and Global Witness / Offering of Letters

On Sunday, October 2, we will collect two offerings: The Peace and Global Witness Special Offering and the Offering of Letters. If you use the church-supplied envelopes for offerings, there is a special envelope for Peace and Global Witness. And, be sure to bring your letters to representatives on October 2 to be offered and dedicated before we place them in the mail. Information about the Offering of Letters (including a sample letter) are available in the narthex or by emailing Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com. See below for more information about Bread for the World, the Christian advocacy group that sponsors the Offerings of Letters.

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. Volunteers are 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.

Meals for St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

During the week of October 3 to 7, we will again be providing dinners for the residents of St. Mary's Shelter. If you did not receive a sign-up link via email, use this link to sign up for all or part of a meal (for 12 to 14 people): <https://tinyurl.com/yckwtfnd>. There is also a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

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.

Bread for the World

Bread for the World is a Christian advocacy organization that works to urge U.S. decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger. Their mission is to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger in the U.S. and around the world.

Here at First Presbyterian Church, we engage in a wide variety of direct assistance to our neighbors in need. But it's also important that we change the hearts of the lawmakers who enact federal hunger-related policies. It is a fact that federal nutrition programs provide roughly 10 times as much food assistance as private churches and charities combined. With the stroke of a pen, our government leaders have the power to create policies and programs that impact millions of people at once.

Faith in Christ is the foundation for the mission of Bread for the World. Like our local community of faith, the advocates at Bread for the World are compelled by their Christian commitment to stand up for all brothers and sisters experiencing hunger. Participation in the Offering of Letters is one way that we, as a congregation, can contribute to that effort.



Church School



Sunday School in Underway!

Our first Sunday School session for 2022-2023 took place on September 18. Beginning on Sunday, October 2, we will be meeting in three separate age level groups in the Sunday School rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors. Sunday School takes place during the worship service; children will be guided to their rooms following the pastor's children's message. If you have any questions about the Sunday School program at First Presbyterian Church, contact Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com.

Heifer International Project

Thanks to those who have already contributed to our Heifer International Project, thereby helping our Sunday School children engage in practical Christian love and compassion. Contributions to the Heifer Project will 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!



Worship and Music Notes

October starts out with the first Sunday as World Communion Sunday.

If you have something to wear or bring that is from another country (not "made in China"), feel free to wear/bring it with you to church.

We will have four Communion stations, all providing the same gluten free bread (handed to you with clean tongs) and grape juice (served in our traditional serving trays, but with each serving separated from the rest).

We intend each serving location to provide the usual greeting, but in a language other than English. The prepackaged Communion settings will be available, if you prefer.

This along with other elements of the service reflecting other countries throughout the world should make for a very meaningful service.

The rescheduling of the Blessing of the Animals has not been set as of this writing. Keep your eyes and ears open for that announcement.

See you in church.



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**



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

It's never too early to begin thinking about Christmas shopping and gifting. Seriously, Christmas is coming!!!

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 **October** we will be placing orders on **Wednesday, October 12** and **Wednesday, October 26**.

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 (**October 11** and **October 25**). 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 August 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 172.
 - Birth: none
 - Death: Ann Miller joined the church triumphant on August 26, 2022. Memorial Service was held in the sanctuary on Saturday, September 10. Pastor Hagler officiated.
 - Wedding: none
 - Baptism: none
- ❖ Session Meeting Information:
 - Session joins the congregation in mourning the loss of Ruling Elder, Ann Miller.
 - The next Stated Session Meeting is on October 25.
 - 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.



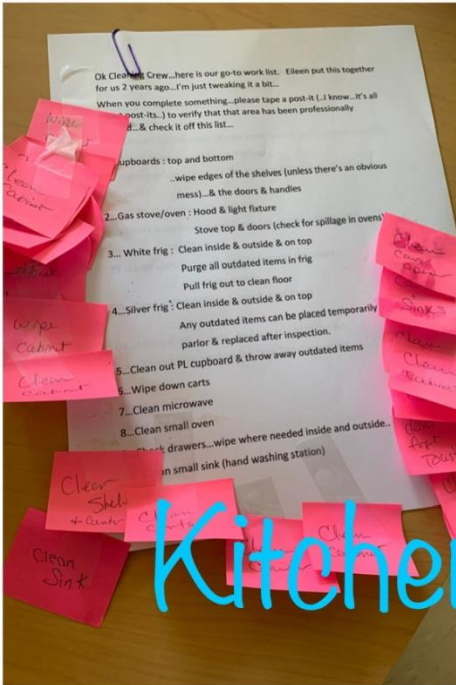
Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session

Parish Life

Kitchen inspection has happened and WE PASSED...well that's what we're hoping since this is being written the week before the inspection happens! Either way thanks to everyone who helped with cleaning.



Kitchen Cleaning -Day 1



Kitchen Cleaning-Day 2

Seems we jumped the gun on the Bocce announcement...but look for Bocce & hot dogs in the spring of 2023.

Get your smiles ready because we will begin taking photos for a new photo directory soon.
Jewell Baker for the Parish Life Committee



Presbyterian Women Circle

All women of the church are welcome to join our Circle meeting following worship on the third Sunday of the month. This year we are using the PW/Horizons 2023 study *Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight* by Carol M. Bechtel. Please pack your lunch and join us, study guides are available. Jewell Baker



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 fpc treasurer145@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.



The Volunteer English Program in Chester County will sponsor a 3-session training workshop for those who wish to tutor English as a second language to an adult immigrant or refugee. The workshop will be held via Zoom on Thursday, October 20; Tuesday, October 25; and Thursday, October 27, 2022.

Each session will run from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

For more information about this exciting and rewarding volunteer opportunity or to register for the workshop, contact (610)918-8222 or visit the website at www.volunteerenglish.org. A one-year commitment of approximately 3 hours a week is requested.

FPC Men's Group

As we move into the Fall, I just wanted to remind the men of the congregation that on the third Sunday of each month, the Men's Group meets. We gather at noon in the church office, and then usually walk down to Molly Maguire's to share lunch and discussion. All men are welcome. –DH



October 2022

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 9am-1pm People to People Flea Market
Offering: J Baker 2 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom World Communion 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School	3 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Property Shelter Meals →	4 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p MAC Shelter Meals →	5 7:30p Handbell rehearsal Shelter Meals →	6 9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir Shelter Meals →	7 9:00a WIC Shelter Meals →	8 8am-11am MaxSold Pick Up 10:30a – 1pm Good Works lunch preparation
Offering: G Cockerill 9 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00p Worship & Music 12:30p Deacons meeting Via Zoom 7:00p Pub Theology @ The Foodery on Bridge	10 9:00a Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance & Stewardship	11 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life	12 7:30p Handbell rehearsal	13 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Compassionate Friends	14	15 9:30a Zumba 10:30a Books thru Bars
Offering: JMcLaughlin 16 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Men's Group 12:00n Women's Circle	17 9:00a Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Staff meeting	18 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Christian Educ 7:30p Sunday School Teachers meeting	19 7:30p Handbell rehearsal	20 9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p "We Are" Live Vigil @ Main & Bridge	21 9:00a WIC	22
Offering: A Smith 23 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom 10:30a Worship-outside Blessing of the Animals NO Sunday School 7:00p Antiracism Book Study via Zoom	24 9:00a Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class	25 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Session	26 7:30p Handbell rehearsal	27 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 6p-9p Parking Lot rented 7:00p Choir	28	29
Offering: C Wittrock 30 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School	31 9:00a Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class					