

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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First Presbyterian Church
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From the Pastor

1 Corinthians 7:7-9

7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind. 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain unmarried as I am. 9 But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

I'm trying to stay on Sue's good side (a very important aspect of my ministry), and so I am starting work on this Perspective article on February 15th, otherwise known as Friends Day. It comes in the candy-strewn aftermath of Valentine's Day, during which, as we learned last night at trivia, billions of cards and flowers and candies are exchanged each year. It is a lot of time and attention each year celebrating a particular relationship that is not universal. Not only are there many who are not part of a couple now, but there are many who never will be, or who often are not. I quoted the passage from Paul in 1 Corinthians above to remind us that Paul's preference was for everyone to

be chaste and single. His allowance for marriage was for those who couldn't practice self-control, though he wished that all could be as he was: single and presumably content.

We forget, too, that as far as we know Jesus never married. Dan Brown notwithstanding, the idea that no gospel would mention Jesus' marriage if he was in fact married is hard to believe. As a Rabbi in his 30s, it would have been expected that he would be married, and no one would have thought much of it. I imagine many of the people who heard him speak or saw him heal or exorcise assumed that he had a wife at home and possibly children. But as far as we know, he went against his own culture and never married, similar to Paul, and to others in the early church and since.

In the church, we often put a premium on married couples, and in almost all churches, this means married heterosexual couples (with children) specifically. We love seeing so many children on Sundays, and welcoming more children and more young families is a sign of health. But welcoming more widows and widowers, and more adults who never married, and more young people who are dating, would also be signs of health. Despite ourselves, we easily buy into the idea that the church is supposed to look a certain way, when the whole history of the church, and the message of scripture, goes against this idea.

Remember that being single in the ancient world would have been incredibly difficult. It would be assumed that something was wrong with you, and you would be looked upon with pity. Children were seen as a blessing from God, and a guarantee of legacy, and well as a source of income from labor and shrewdly-negotiated marriages. To be single back then would have taken far more courage than is the case now, and yet many in the early church did so, and some in the worldwide church always have.

If the cultural pressure to marry is taken away, or alleviated, some people simply won't pair up and get married. Others might pair up, but never have children. It isn't how they're called to live, in Paul's terms. Others are single because of where they are in their life's journey. I don't get the impression that God has strong feelings either way. Love of self, neighbor and enemy applies no matter what one's relationship status is, and there are a lot of different ways to be a healthy, growing church, with or without married couples. It is good to celebrate a particular kind of relationship, as we do on Valentine's Day, but we should remember to take time to celebrate all kinds of relationships, reflecting what people actually experience over the course of their lives.

Friendship is as Christ-like as marriage can be, and there are many kinds of families, and many kinds of people. We should ensure that all are truly welcome, and all are celebrated.

Pastor Doug



Palm Sunday Worship
 April 2nd at 10:30 am
Maundy Thursday Communion Service
 April 6th at 7:30 pm
Good Friday Service @ 1st United Methodist
 April 7th at 7:30 pm
Easter Sunday Worship
 April 9th at 10:30 am

From the Clerk of Session

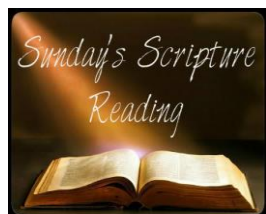
- ❖ Average Sunday morning attendance in January 2023:
 - In January we had an average of 52 worshipping in person (masked) and an average of 18 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 2 *chatting*.
 - Please think of *chatting* as the YouTube version of signing the Red Friendship Book and join in the chat, if you are able.
- ❖ The Life of the church
 - Membership:
 - Barbie and Turrey Kepler have requested removal from active roll to friend status.
 - Current membership is 168.
 - Birth: none
 - Death: October 22, 2022 William Wagner (Elder) 1068 Balfour Circle, Phoenixville, PA. Memorial service held on November 12 at Spring Mill Center. Pastor Hagler, officiant.
 - Wedding: none
 - Baptism: none
- ❖ Session Meeting Information:
 - Motions received and passed unanimously:
 - Ordination/Installation to take place during worship on January 15, 2022.
 - Annual Congregational/Corporate Meeting will be held on January 29th in person, following worship.
 - From Finance Committee:
 - That the Session approve using \$1000 of Sedlacek Family Foundation donation to fund the deacons in 2023.
 - To approve \$6290 Apportionment
 - To approve 2023 Budget as presented
 - From Worship & Music
 - To add Communion to 5:00 service.
 - To join Methodists for 9 PM service, with Communion
 - To move Communion from January 1 to January 8 as Pastor is on vacation on January 1.
 - Communion dates for 2023: February 5, Feb 22 Ash Wednesday, March none, April 6 Maundy Thursday, April 9 Easter, May 7, May 28 Pentecost, June none, July 2, August 6, September 3, October 1 World Communion, November 5, December 3 First Sunday of Advent, December 24 Christmas Eve (both services), January 7, 2024.
 - To allow Worship and Music Committee to change Communion dates as needed.
 - Session voted to table sanctuary repair discussion until the January Stated Session Meeting or at a Special Session Meeting called if insurance coverage information becomes available before January 24.
 - Minutes of the January 24, 2023 Session Meeting will be reviewed at the March 28, 2023 Stated Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.





Men's Group Book Discussion

Join the Men's Group on the 3rd Sunday of each month after church for lunch and discussion. Starting in 2023 they will be reading *The Fellowship of the Ring* by JRR Tolkien, followed by *Cry Like A Man* by Jason Wilson, founder of the Cave of Adullam in Detroit. Come see Pastor Doug if you have any questions, or would like for him to order you a book, and feel free to join the group any 3rd Sunday whether you are reading the books or not.



Upcoming Scripture Readings

March 5th: Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

March 12th: Exodus 17:1-7; John 4:5-42

March 19th: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 1 Samuel 16:14-23

March 26th: Ezekiel 17:1-14; John 11:1-45

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

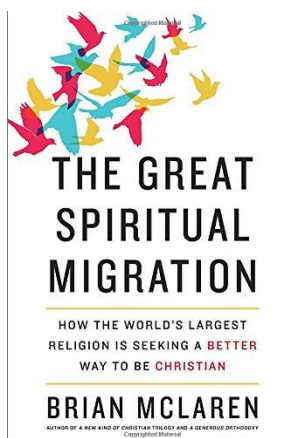
Lenten Book Study

Join Bob & Chris Wittrock in reading and discussing Brian McLaren's book **"The Great Spiritual Migration, How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking A Better Way To Be Christian."**

The author explores three main topics: The Spiritual Migration (from a system of beliefs to a way of life); The Theological Migration (from a violent God of domination to a nonviolent God of liberation); and The Missional Migration (from organized religion to organizing religion). We will meet on Thursday evenings at 7PM via Zoom, beginning February 23 and ending March 30.

Please email Chris to sign up and get the Zoom link.

Cwittrock22@gmail.com





Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. (Proverbs 25:21)

MAC Updates:

If you would like to get in touch with the MAC Committee, please email us at MissionsFPC145@gmail.com.

The MAC Committee is looking for new members. If you would like to assist in planning local, regional, national, and global mission activities, we are the place for you! We meet via Zoom on the first Monday of the month at 2:00 pm. The next meeting is on Monday, March 6.

Thank you!

The MAC Committee would like to thank those who participated in the *Meals for St. Mary's* shelter including our Sunday school children and their families. Through this effort, fourteen members of our community enjoyed delicious meals provided by our congregation.

The MAC Committee would also like to thank those who gave through the *Souper Bowl of Caring* collection, we collected 155 cans and food items and \$120 for the purchase of food to help in our local area.

Missions: Local Focus

The MAC Committee will be collecting food and items for *Phoenixville Area Community Services (PACS)* who are dedicated to helping people get through difficult or challenging periods in their lives.

Below are their "HOT ITEMS" that are currently in high demand. Before donating, please check expiration dates and no glass containers or opened products. It is also helpful if you buy a mix (pancake, mac and cheese) to make sure the items needed to make it (milk, eggs, water) are readily available. With the increasing price of milk, eggs, and butter, it is recommended that mixes only need water.

HOT Items:

Cooking oil, juice (shelf-stable), condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise), coffee, spices (adobo, basil, chili powder, cinnamon, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, oregano, parsley, red pepper flakes, salt & pepper sets), sugar, shelf-stable non-dairy milk (almond, oat, soy), salad dressing, pancake mix, syrup, flour, bottled water, jelly (grape and strawberry), hot chocolate packets, grits, masa (corn flour), alfredo sauce, baking mixes (brownies, cake) and icing, canned fruit, Chef Boyardee, Crisco, mac and cheese, peanut butter, ramen, snacks (sweet, salty), spaghetti

Non-Food Items that cannot be purchased with SNAP:

Diapers (sizes 5&6), baby wipes, baby body wash, baby food, pull-ups (size 3T-4T, 4T-5T), toilet paper, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, paper towels, body wash, sanitary pads, shaving cream, tooth brushes, cat food (wet and dry), dog food (wet and dry), kitty litter, laundry detergent (regular and hypoallergenic), bleach/clorox, cleaning spray, dish soap, dishwasher detergent, all purpose cleaner, Clorox wipes, tissues, trash bags

For more information on PACS, please visit them at <https://www.pacsphx.org/>.

Mission Focus: National Focus

We will again participate in Bread for the World's Offering of Letters in March. Following the worship service on March 26, we encourage you to remain in Fellowship Hall to participate in some letter writing on behalf of poor and hungry people in the U.S. and worldwide. In this month's letter campaign, we will continue to urge our elected representatives to support the 2023 Farm Bill. A significant part of this bill is funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps). For this reason, the Farm Bill has a real and lasting impact on those in our community who struggle to feed their families. Stay tuned for more information in the March Offering of Letters bulletin.

Mission Focus: Global Missions

The scale of the disaster facing Syria and Turkey after the Feb. 6 earthquake is becoming more apparent. The 7.8-magnitude quake and its aftershocks have left more than 11,000 people dead and thousands more injured; these numbers will rise as search and rescue continue. Buildings have been reduced to rubble, and roads and bridges have been severely damaged, resulting in dangerous conditions for first responders. In some places, such as Aleppo, this destruction is compounding the damage of the 11-year war in Syria.

One of the ways that we can help is through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). Giving through PDA provides emergency relief and short-term recovery in the impacted areas through long-standing partners in Syria and ACT Alliance members in Syria and Turkey, all of whom are already on the ground. PDA will remain active throughout the recovery process, accompanying our partners in the area as they determine long-term program needs and providing financial support for building resilience.

To assist, please write "Turkey & Syria" in the memo line of a check and drop it off at the church office or through the offering plate during service.

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Worship and Music Notes

Just a reminder that, to add to your journey through Lent we have provided you with a Lenten Devotional. The web address for this devotional has been emailed to everyone. Hard copies are available on the round table in fellowship hall on Sundays or in the office during weekly office hours.

I want to give you advanced notice of two wonderful worship opportunities coming up soon. So get our your calendars and mark the evenings of April 6 and 7. Those dates are Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. At both services we will be joining with our Methodist friends down the road. That means that we will have both choirs, both music directors, and both Pastors at both services.

Maundy Thursday's service will be at our church and the Good Friday service will be at the Methodist church. Both services are at 7:30 PM. Both services will provide a very meaningful experience for these two most meaningful days in the church year.

See you in church





One Great Hour of Sharing

As Christians we are called to love one another by sharing what we have with those in need. One way to answer this call is through our gifts to “One Great Hour of Sharing”. This is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to help our neighbors in need around the world.

A gift to this offering enables the church to share God’s love by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, by providing food to the hungry, and by helping low-income communities overcome injustice and oppression.

During the season of Lent, we invite you to give generously to “One Great Hour of Sharing”. Envelopes are available in your offering envelope boxes, on the table as you enter Fellowship Hall, or you may send a check with OGHS noted in the memo line.

Offerings will be received throughout Lent, with a special dedication on the Sunday after Easter, April 16.

Together we can once again help change the lives of many.

Thank you for your life changing offering.



Your Board of Deacons brings you a quote from Nana Dolce this Lenten Season.

Nana Dolce teaches women and children at The New Macedonia Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Nana writes 'The command to love and serve—not merely tolerate—each other requires more commitment and sacrifice than we care to give, and so we do the polite minimum from afar. The seasons of Lent and Easter bring thoughts of surrender and sacrifice.'

In these times of division, perhaps we break from the controversy, the noise, and what separates us. Perhaps we look inside ourselves and observe what unites us, as we look forward to Easter. A time of renewal. A time when we join together in celebration of the Resurrection.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,

Ellen Williams



Church Growth

Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:20

Gratitude Amidst Chaos

You are invited to join Church Growth in a journey of gratitude. We will be reflecting on weekly prompts throughout the year, and building up a regular practice of gratitude in our lives. Journals are available on a first come, first served basis, and Pastor Doug will purchase more if there is a need. For March, our theme is “Gratitude Amidst Chaos.” Watch for reminders and examples in the BEAT and in our FPC Family Facebook group. Here are the prompts for each week ahead of time:

- March 5th: What is my positive affirmation each day this week?
- March 12th: Who will I help this week?
- March 19th: What is my prayer this week?
- March 26th: How do I give thanks for chaos?

Bridge of Hope

Our Mom had some fairly costly and always untimely car problems that caused the family some stress. Please keep the family in your prayers, as Mom looks for a job that's closer to her home, with greater flexibility and good health benefits. Please pray with us for our family, and if you know of a used, reliable car for sale, please reach out to Pastor Doug.

Prison Ministry: Books Through Bars

Thank you for all of the calendars for our friends behind bars. They were in high demand! Join us for one of the upcoming visits on the third Thursday of the month as we assist in packing books for prisoners and organizing their library. Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050f4aada722a1fb6-books1#/>

We are always accepting books on behalf of BTB. Please visit the website to read the requirements and follow the donation rules. <https://www.booksthroughbars.org/donate-books>.

Website Redesign

Our small IT/social media team has made a first pass at the website. We are in the process of making improvements to showcase our enthusiasm for children, commitment to adults, and passion for community and social activism.



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.

A Year of Gratitude



You are invited to join Church Growth in a journey of gratitude. We will be reflecting on weekly prompts throughout the year, and building up a regular practice of gratitude in our lives. Journals are available on a first come, first served basis, and Pastor Doug will purchase more if there is a need. For March, our theme is “Gratitude Amidst Chaos.”

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Sunday School

Our Sunday School classes continue to be well-attended and we have been exploring a variety of Biblical topics. Our children are very involved and curious; some inspired discussions can be heard behind the doors of our three Sunday School rooms! We are beginning to collect some of the children's theologically-oriented questions to pass on to Pastor Doug for inclusion in future sermons.

On March 5, Rebecca Barkley will visit our Sunday School classes to introduce the ukulele and begin teaching some simple songs. She will be bringing her collection of ukuleles (enough for each child to play one). In addition to just making some joyful music in Sunday School, we hope to develop a song or two for performance during worship.



March 5 is also the kick-off day for One Great Hour of Sharing. Children will receive their OGHS fish banks on that day and will be asked to return them – with donations – on Palm Sunday (April 2).

Children will participate in the Palm Sunday worship service, at the beginning (procession in with palms) and at the end (procession out). The choir and congregation will sing the hymn *Filled With Excitement* during both of these times. Children will learn and review the hymn in Sunday School so they can sing along during the processions. On Palm Sunday, children will attend regular Sunday School classes in between these two processions.

A group of parents within our congregation is currently working on a variety of intergenerational events, service projects, and other activities to occur through the spring and summer months. Stay tuned for more information!

As a reminder, Sunday School classes take place every Sunday during the regular worship service, from about 10:45 until 11:45. To assure adequate time for our teachers to complete their lessons, we encourage parents to delay walking upstairs until 11:45, so children don't become distracted at the end of their Sunday School time.



One of the key factors contributing to the success of our Sunday School program is our talented and energetic crew of Sunday School teachers. So, if you have a chance, thank a teacher!

If you have any questions about Sunday School – or wish to volunteer to help out with the program – contact Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com.



Pub Theology

The next Pub Theology will meet on Sunday, March 12th at **7:00 PM** at **The Foodery**, (325 Bridge St, Phoenixville).

Join Pastor Doug in a discussion of theological topics and current events over food and drinks. Listen, chat, and hash things out... it's fun and thought-provoking!



Raise Right Gift Cards

We will be placing orders for gift cards on **Wednesday, March 8** and **Wednesday, March 22**. If you would like to place an order, please complete an order form and give to Lynne Williams. You may also call or text Lynne at 610-955-4749 (cell), or send an email to (brettdrew@comcast.net).



Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (**March 7 & March 21**).

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

As always, **thank you** for continuing to support this program.

All money raised goes directly to the church.

The Stewardship Committee

Note: There are copies of the list of retailers and order forms on the table as you enter Fellowship Hall and in the office.





On-Line Contribution Information

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

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

You can also access the link on the church web site. Direct any questions to fpctreasurer145@gmail.com. Thank you.

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

Become a Volunteer Tutor!

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 Tuesday, March 21; Thursday, March 23; and Monday, March 27, 2023. Each session will run from 6:00pm – 8:00pm. 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.

Thank you. Rachel Van Tassel, Program Director

March 2023

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:30p Bell Choir <i>Jeff McLaughlin-vacation</i>	2 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Lenten Book Study <i>Jeff McLaughlin-vacation</i>	3 9:00a WIC	4 9:30a Zumba class
5 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Deacons meeting	6 9:00a Clothing Ministry 2:00p MAC 6:30p Zumba class	7 6:30p Zumba class	8 10:00a AARP Board Meeting 7:30p Bell Choir	9 9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Lenten Book Study 7:30p Compassionate Friends	10	11
12 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Worship & Music 7:00p Pub Theology <i>Daylight saving time begins</i>	13 9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance 7:30p Staff meeting	14 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel 7:00p Parish Life	15 12:30p Church Growth 7:30p Bell Choir	16 9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Christian Education 7:00p Lenten Book Study	17 9:00a WIC	18 9:30a Zumba class 10:30a Books Through Bars
19 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Men's Group 12:00n Women's Circle	20 9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba class <i>Perspective articles due for April</i>	21 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Property	22 7:30p Bell choir <i>Set up for flea market</i>	23 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Lenten Book Study <i>Set up for flea market</i>	24 <i>Set up for flea market</i>	25 8:00a – 1:00p People to People Flea Market
26 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Letter Writing Event 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	27 9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba class	28 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Session	29 7:30p Bell choir	30 9:00a Clothing ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir – Joint rehearsal with 1 st UMC 7:00p Lenten Book Study	31 6:00p “Nailed It” FPC Family event	