Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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First Presbyterian Church Phoenixville, Pennsylvania 1846 – 2023

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From the Pastor

Thank you for the questions you've shared so far and placed in the box in the Narthex. I thought I would use this Perspective to answer some of them. They're not connected, so I'll take each one individually, and like any good question, each one of them could have a long answer, and I am going to split the questions into Part 1 and Part 2. For each, I'll add a brief passage from the Bible that comes to mind, which I think is connected to the question and my answer.

1. "The Apostles' Creed states: He rose again from the dead...Did that happen twice? I'm confused - "

Hebrews 10:11-14

¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God...

No, though I understand being confused. This is just a slightly older way of writing, but the intention is to say that Jesus rose from the dead one time. It's like the lyric from the classic Chumbawumba song, *Tubthumping*, which anyone who listened to the radio in 1997 or 1998 has almost certainly heard:

I get knocked down, but I get up again You're never gonna keep me down (Repeated a lot)

Jesus, paraphrasing Chumbawumba, might say "I got crucified, but I got up again/You're never gonna keep me down." The passage I quoted from Hebrews isn't about the resurrection but about the crucifixion, and how Jesus represents (among many other things) a final, perfect sacrifice that ends the sacrificial system. That is, he offered himself, a Lamb of God, to be sacrificed so that people would no longer need to sacrifice mundane lambs each year for atonement. The idea is that Jesus doesn't have to repeat either crucifixion or resurrection. In both cases, once is enough.

2. "So, the Trinity - 3 Persons one God, or 1 Person in 3? Can you go over the role of Father, of Son, of Holy Spirit?"

Ephesians 4

⁴ there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

In simple terms, 3 persons and one God is correct. That's what we sing about in Trinitarian hymns ("God in three persons, blessed trinity"), teach in Sunday School and Confirmation Class, etc. The earliest Christian texts we have reference the members of the Trinity - in the letters of Paul, about 20 years after Jesus, though Paul doesn't use the term. About 50 years after Jesus, the Gospel of Matthew ends with the command to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In both cases, early Christians were very clear that they were referring to only one God when they said Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

One way I explain this to a Confirmation class is that these are the three primary ways that Christians have experienced and understood God. These are not the only ways, as I periodically talk about from the pulpit - there is a huge diversity of images we have for God.

Scripture does not include a clear articulation of how the three members of the Trinity relate to one another, what precisely their roles and distinctions are, and so on. That theological understanding has developed over time, and continues to develop, as it is a mystery that cannot be fully understood or articulated. You can see in the Ephesians passage above, Paul lists the members of the Trinity, Spirit, Lord, and Father, but his point is not to lay out a clear Trinitarian theology, and in the early church there was not the detailed Trinitiarian theology that one can find today.

2. continued...

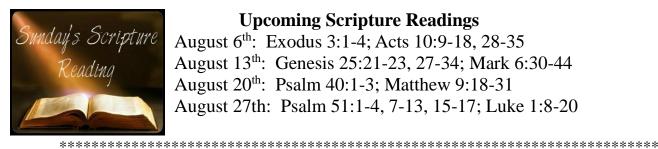
I'll give a basic version: all three persons of the Trinity are equal, and part of one another, but not interchangeable. The ancient church came up with the term *perichoresis* to describe the Trinity, meaning the members of the Trinity dance together in a circle. All three members of the Trinity are eternal - none of them were created by the others, but all three are present eternally. Similarly, none of them stand alone, but all are understood in relationship to the others. So on a fundamental level, God is a community.

God the Father/Mother, the Creator, is the God from the majority of the Hebrew scriptures, the God whom Jesus is talking about in the Gospels, and the understanding of God that we share with Jews and Muslims in general terms. God the Son, Jesus, the Redeemer, is the God Jesus is revealing when he makes the "I am" statements in the Gospel of John, the Logos through which the cosmos was created, and the historical person Jesus of Nazareth who was born, taught, healed, exorcized, died, and was raised from the dead. God the Holy Spirit, the Sustainer, is present in the Hebrew scriptures as Shekinah, the presence of God, and is the Advocate or Counselor Jesus promises, descended on Jesus like a dove when he was baptized, who appeared as tongues of flame at Pentecost, and speaks through the prophets.

Pastor Doug

August Mini-Sabbatical

During the month of August, Pastor Doug will be on mini-sabbatical. The Rev. Jane DeFord, whom many of you have met (and heard preach) will be our guest preacher for those four Sundays. She is also happy to serve as the contact person for any pastoral emergencies (you can contact her through Sue Smith 610-933-8816, secretaryfpc145@gmail.com). Pastor Doug will return on September 1st and will be again leading worship on Sunday, September 3rd.



Upcoming Scripture Readings

August 6th: Exodus 3:1-4; Acts 10:9-18, 28-35

August 13th: Genesis 25:21-23, 27-34; Mark 6:30-44

August 20th: Psalm 40:1-3; Matthew 9:18-31

August 27th: Psalm 51:1-4, 7-13, 15-17; Luke 1:8-20



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

Amy Myers, our Prayer Chain Coordinator, will be happy to forward your prayer requests to the members of the prayer chain. You can email Amy at fpcprayerchain1@gmail.com and members will be lifting you up in prayer. You may also call Sue Smith at (610) 933-8816 and she will forward your requests on to Amy.

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 (<u>jeanoster@comcast.net</u>) 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. 3.



From the Clerk of Session

- ❖ Average Sunday morning attendance:
 - In May we had an average of 80 worshiping in person and an average of 17 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 3 *chatting*.
 - In June we had 57 worshiping in person and an average of 14 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 4 *chatting* on Sunday morning.
 - It's so nice to be worshiping in the sanctuary again and we hope to see more attending in person. Masks are no longer required, but are available. If you are not comfortable indoors, please join us on YouTube and join in the chat, if you are able.
- The Life of the church
 - Birth:
 - Mac James Sexton was born on July 11, 2023, son of Sandy and Kevin Sexton, grandson of Jeanie and Lew Osterhoudt.
 - o Riley Randall Ellis was born on July 15, 2023, son of Amy and Tyler Ellis, grandson of Jeanie and Lew Osterhoudt.
 - Baptism
 - o June 4, 2023 Solveig Greta Anderson (DOB 9/8/2022) infant daughter of Brigitte Anderson.
 - Membership:
 - o Brigitte Anderson became a member on June 4, 2023.
 - o Cindy Mariani requested move from active member to friend status as she is moving closer to her daughter Dana in North Carolina.
 - Current membership is 174.
 - No other changes
- ❖ Communion will be celebrated on August 6th and again on September 3rd.
- Session Meeting Information:
 - Minutes of the May 23, 2023 Session Meeting will be reviewed at the July 25, 2023 Stated Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session

Worship and Music Notes

Well it is August, those lazy, hazy days of summer.

On the first Sunday of August we will celebrate Communion.

The second Sunday we will have the opportunity to join or hear our Pick Up Choir (it is the last time for the season).

In September we will find things getting started again, after the summer

relaxation. You have several opportunities to become involved in the work of the church.

You have, among other opportunities, the option to join the choir, join the Praise Team, join the handbells, become an usher, volunteer to be a lector for a church service, or let Diane know of your ability to play an instrument. So many different opportunities and you have a whole month to choose.

See you in church.



Mission, Action, Concern Committee (MAC)

For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." (Acts 13:47)

Missions: Local Focus

Save the date! Our next Garage Sale will be on Saturday, September 30th in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you notes received. See the bulletin board at the entrance of Fellowship Hall for some of these correspondences.

- Bridge of Hope for the variety of ways we have blessed them in the past year
- Bridge of Hope for our \$65 donation from Alternative Cards and \$700 donation

Mission Focus: Global Missions

Dan Vissani / Zambia

MAC has a wonderful lunch with Dan Vissani on Friday, July 14th. We enjoyed hearing his experiences in Zambia and wanted to share a little with you:



Dan works in Zambia, teaching locals about agriculture and improving farming methods for more sustainable crops. His organization, Foundations for Farming, has started supporting honey production by investing half of the start-up cost for people.

He shared about his kids and the differences between American and Zambian education. We were surprised to learn that most kids in Zambia board during the week, even at an early age. Older students participate in "survival" lessons, camping out in the woods for a week with a set list of supplies and a live chicken.

For more information about Dan and the work he does, visit https://www.newinternational.org/give/campaign/dan-mary-vissani

Cathy Chang & Juan Lopez / Philippines

Here is a brief snippet of their update titled <u>Coming Home to Myself</u>. A full copy can be found on the MAC bulletin board, at the entrance of Fellowship Hall.

Last April, during an exploratory visit with Al-Amana Centre in Muscat, Oman, I felt like I was back in Egypt. Two Finnish Lutheran young women volunteers, Ina and Aino, greeted me during breakfast. During our chat, I warmed up to the "spirit" of that guesthouse, enlivened by the hospitality of these two new friends. "I have a very soft place in my heart – I feel like I'm coming home to myself," I shared with them. Later that morning during a brief tour, I learned that our Cyprus host from 2003, Lew Scudder had written an authoritative history about Reformed mission in the Gulf region. Another coincidence happened when I met Pastor Tom, another guest who, only a few days before, arrived from Michigan – and pastored in Midland where our family used to live.

5. continued....

What brought me to Oman, in the first place? Half-way through the Peacemaking travel study seminar in the Philippines, Presbyterian World Mission colleagues from the Middle East, Elmarie Parker and Luciano Kovacs invited me for exploratory visits about migrants and inter-religious peacebuilding, in Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait, with partners from the Bible Society in the Gulf (bsgulf.org) and the Al-Amana Centre (alamanacentre.org/). BSG provides Bibles and Christian resource materials for the different Christian communities in seven different countries. BSG also facilitates many Bible Engagement programs that help interact with the Message of Scripture, including Trauma Healing training. Al-Amana Centre specializes in inter-religious peacebuilding that invites people to transformative dialogue about their diverse religious traditions.

Thank you notes:

Thank you notes received. See the bulletin board at the entrance of Fellowship Hall for some of these correspondences.

- Church World Service for our December 2022 participation in the Church World Service Blanket program
- Spanish Health Ministry, Inc for our May 23, 2023 donation of \$1,000
- International Mission Board donation receipt for our \$900 donation to support Utatlan Scholarships

Church Growth Committee

Prison Ministry:

Book Through Bars:

Join us for one of the upcoming visits on the third Saturday of the month as we assist in packing books for prisoners and organizing their library. This month will be on Saturday, *Saturday*, *August 19th*. Sign up here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050F4AADA722A1FB6-books2

Please look at the books we need right now at BTB, and be sure to look at the type of books they DO NOT need. https://www.booksthroughbars.org/donate-books

Alternatively, you can purchase books from the Wishlist using this link to Bookshop.org and have them shipped to Books Through Bars 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. And by ordering from Bookshop.org, you will be supporting small booksellers.

Queer Circle:

Queer Circle will be meeting on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 pm to discuss a book - *Outlove: A Queer Christian Survival Story*. We hope that this discussion will bring in folks who are interested in learning more about gender, sexual orientation, Christian faith, and related issues.

Our next gathering for discussion will be *Monday*, *August 28th at 7:00 pm*, and we will be meeting over Zoom to accommodate a wide variety of people. Talk to Pastor Doug, Sarah, or Jacqui for more information.

Gratitude Journal:

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. In June, the theme is "Gratitude for Simple Things" Watch for reminders and examples in the BEAT and on our Facebook page. Here are the prompts for each week ahead of time:

August 6: What is an experience you get to share with someone else that you are thankful for?

August 13: How are you thankful for gatherings?

August 20: How are you thankful for animals?

August 27: How are you thankful for your chores?

Minute for Gratitude. If you would like to share your reflection (1-2 minutes) after a specific prompt or something you are grateful for, please let us know, and we can let you share!

Sunday School

Though weekly Sunday School sessions are not held during the summer months, a number of activities have been taking place for the children of the church (see below). And as we anticipate the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, it may be an appropriate time for <u>you</u> to join our group of Sunday School teachers. As you know, Sunday School takes place during the worship service. With a large enough group of teachers, none of us needs to miss worship more than once (or maybe twice) a month. If you are interested in more information about teaching in Sunday School, contact Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com.



On Sunday afternoon, July 23, we joined together for an FPC family outing at Charlestown Township Park. The gathering provided an opportunity for good food, fun, and fellowship ... and a chance to keep in touch during these summer months. Thanks to all who were able to join us!



A "special" Sunday School session was held on June 25, during which children wrote letters to Congress, advocating for support of the 2023 Farm Bill, which includes funding for SNAP and other programs that help poor and hungry families and individuals. We also have tentative plans to visit Representative Chrissy Houlahan's local (West Chester) office to deliver letters in person and also speak with her further about the Farm Bill and other issues related to hunger and poverty.

Two additional Sunday School sessions were also planned for the summer. One was held on July 30 and another is coming up on August 20. Again, these meetings provide a way for our FPC children to stay connected over the summer.

Speaking of staying connected, consider continuing to read the Bible at home with your children. For example, the reading of parables (stories that Jesus told) provides an excellent opportunity to imagine and interpret the same way the followers of Jesus did. Allow your child to respond naturally to the story or ask some open-ended questions, such as "So, what did you think of that story?" Your own "I wonder …" statements can also help to stimulate discussion. Here are a few parables that are good for discussions with children:

- o The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- o Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (Luke 15:1-10)
- Wise and Foolish Builders ((Matthew 7:24-27)
- o Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44-46)
- The Lamp on a Stand (Matthew 5:14-15)
- o The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
- o The Persistent Widow (Luke 18:2-8)



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

New Church Nursery Staff Member

The Christian Education Committee is happy to have Karen Selden join our nursery staff. Karen resides in Phoenixville. She currently works as an aide with Special Education students at the Phoenixville Middle School. Karen moved to Phoenixville from Pittsburgh. There she worked as a researcher for Early Head Start and also was employed in a Pittsburgh preschool. Please stop by the nursery and help us in welcoming Karen to our church family.

Finance Committee Report – Mid Year 2023

First, we want to thank members and friends for their continued financial report of FPC Phoenixville. As we have reported previously, we have a fairly sizeable budget deficit forecasted for this year. Through June, here is the year-to-date information.

Income

- Pledges are \$ 22,200 under what was anticipated. A 26% shortfall.
- Non pledge giving is \$ 2,100 under what was anticipated.
- Loose offering, interest and dividends and Givebutter parking .app receipts have done better than expected.
- Total income for all categories is \$ 10,000 less than anticipated. A shortfall of 7%

Expenses

• Session committees have kept an eye on spending. Through mid-year, expenses are under budget by \$ 3,600

Profit and Loss

• Through mid-year we have a net loss (income less expense) of \$ 45,400. That figure is \$ 6,300 more than we had anticipated.

The above status represents the church operations against the planned budget, independent of endowment monies used to pay for the sanctuary structural repair and the new roof, which we hope to recoup through the current Capital Campaign. If you have any questions, please ask any member of the Finance Committee.



Raise Right Gift Cards

It's time to think about some **back-to-school** shopping! Think about shopping with **gift cards** to your favorite stores. Your purchase of gift cards will financially benefit the church.

In August we will be placing orders on Wednesday, August

In August we will be placing orders on Wednesday, August 9 and Wednesday, August 23.

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 (August 8 & August 22). Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR".

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

The Stewardship Committee



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.



Deacons' Dialogue



Your Board of Deacons provides a myriad of services. Some you may know about, some you may not. Please review the following, and feel free to reach out to us at deaconsfpc@gmail.com with any needs, suggestions, or whatever else may be on your mind!

Deacon Services for our congregation - this is the 'short list'.

Meals and Wheels!

- We provide meals for members whose life would be made easier by having a home cooked meal due to events such as medical issues or family emergencies - or joys - such as a new little one to care for!
- Rides to assist with daily life, and spiritual life, such as doctor's appointments and church visits.
- CALLING ALL CARS! Are you able to assist with rides? We need help with this function! If you're interested, please visit this link to sign up: https://bit.ly/FPCMealsWheels.

Visits to those who would like a little extra companionship.

Care Group outreach - we try to keep our groups up to date on church events/news. We also reach out just to let you know we're thinking of you!

Sanctuary Flowers - most Sundays we have flowers from the service that are not spoken for. Please approach any of us if you have a suggestion for someone who might need a bit of cheering up.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,

Ellen Williams

PARISH LIFE

2023 Ice Cream Social a Sweet Success!





Members and friends beat the summer heat on July 9th at our annual *Ice Cream Social*. Sprinkles of happiness abounded, and kids of all ages enjoyed make your own sundaes. We enjoy hosting these gatherings, and look forward to the next one – stay tuned!



The Parish Life Committee meets the second Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting will be dinner at Chadwick's in Audubon at 5:30 on 8/8. Please join us, contact Jewell Baker and we will reserve you a seat.

Capital Campaign Update

Three months ago we kicked off a Capital Campaign with the purpose of funding repairs to the sanctuary and roof. These repairs were necessary for us to safely return to worship together in the sanctuary.

We appreciate all who have already donated and pledged. To date, approximately 20% of our goal of \$160,000 has been pledged. Every contribution helps secure the financial security and the future of First Presbyterian Church.

If you have not yet pledged to this campaign, we ask that you prayerfully consider doing so in the coming weeks and months. You may find additional pledge cards and envelopes in the narthex and the church office.

We thank you for your support and commitment to our church. The Stewardship Committee



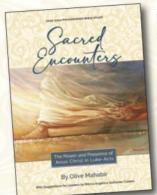
Women's Circle

Circle will resume on the 3rd Sunday of September with the 2023-24 PW/Horizons Bible Study *Sacred Encounters*. Please contact Jewell to order a study guide.

Introducing the 2023-2024 PW/Horizons Bible study

The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts
by Olive Mahabir

With Suggestions for Leaders by Wilma Angélica Quiñonez Cubero



Within the pages of this study, Olive Mahabir invites you to consider Jesus and Jesus' disciples who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people.

The Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, or Luke-Acts "one story in two parts," demonstrate the unfolding of God's redemptive purposes in human history and present a distinctive perspective on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Written by Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul, the message to the early Christian community (and to us) is radical, inclusive, and hope-filled.

Further, this message invites the church to deeper, compassionate engagement with the world. "What are the potential implications for the church if we treat our interactions as sacred encounters that demonstrate the transformative love of Christ Jesus?" (from the introduction)

About the Authors



Olive Mahabir is a fourth-generation Presbyterian and the first in her family to be an ordained minister. She was born on the island of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. In ministry for more than 20 years she has pastored churches in Michigan, Atlanta, and Jonesboro, Georgia. She's a graduate of St. Andrew's Theological College in

Trinidad, the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, and Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.



Wilma Angélica Quiñonez Cubero is ordained as minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA). She is from Puerto Rico and has served Iglesia Presbiteriana en Country Club since 2009. A specialist in ministry with people who are functionally diverse, Wilma is also an associate professor at the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto

Rico. She served the larger church as a member of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

August 2023 First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		6:30p Zumba	2	9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food Ministry	9:00a WIC 5:00p Parking Lot donation collection	9:30a Zumba
		J McLaughlin vacation Rev Hagler sabbatical	J McLaughlin vaca. Rev Hagler sabbatical	J McLaughlin vacation Rev Hagler sabbatical	J McLaughlin vacation Rev Hagler sabbatical	J McLaughlin vaca. Rev Hagler sabbatical
Offering: K Brown 6 10:30a Worship Rev. DeFord -Communion 12:00n Deacons meeting	9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	5:30p Parish Life @ Chadwicks 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Personnel	9	9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food Ministry 7:00p Compassionate Friends meeting	11	12 Rev Hagler
Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	sabbatical
Offering: K Carrabine 13 9:45a Pick Up Choir 10:30a Worship Rev. Jane DeFord	9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Finance	6:30p Zumba 7:30p Property	16 10:00a AARP Board meeting 12:30p Church Growth	9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food Ministry	9:00a WIC	9:30a Zumba 10:30a Books thru Bars
	1			D 77 1 11 11 1		Rev Hagler
Rev Hagler sabbatical Offering: K Grocki 20 10:30a Worship Rev. Jane DeFord 10:45a Sunday School	9:00a Clothing Ministry	Rev Hagler sabbatical 22	Rev Hagler sabbatical 23	24 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food Ministry	Rev Hagler sabbatical 25	sabbatical 26
Perspective articles due for September Diane Legnini Vacation	6:30p Zumba	6:30p Zumba No Session	Dec Harden addard	D. Harlan adda danl	Down Harden and had and	Rev Hagler sabbatical
Offering: R Warwick 27	Rev Hagler sabbatical 28 9:00a Clothing	Rev Hagler sabbatical 29	Rev Hagler sabbatical 30	9:00a Clothing Ministry	Rev Hagler sabbatical	sabbaticai
10:30a Worship Rev. Jane DeFord Diane Legnini-vacation	Ministry 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Queer Circle Book Study	6:30p Zumba		10:00a Food Ministry		
Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical	Rev Hagler sabbatical		