

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume XLVIII No. 7 September 2023

Phone: 610-933-8816

Fax: 610-933-8060

www.fpc-phoenixville.org

email: secretaryfpc145@gmail.com



First Presbyterian Church
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania
1846 – 2023

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
Finance Committee.....	3
Scrip Cards.....	3
Clerk of Session report.....	4
Women's Circle.....	4
Sunday School.....	5
Parish Life.....	5
Church Growth.....	6
Mission Action Committee.....	7
Worship & Music.....	8
Deacons.....	9
September calendar.....	10

From the Pastor

Colossians 2:5-7

⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your orderly conduct and the firmness of your faith in Christ.⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Greetings from the past! I am writing this Perspective ahead of time in July because my goal for August is to be truly *off*. (Then in 2024 I am going to take some more time over the summer.) Turns out, I have a lot of time off that I haven't used in the last few years. I'm going to use that time to rest up, reflect on the last nine years, and reconnect with my family, especially after my aunt passed away a couple of weeks ago.

Thinking back, I've only had about a year and a half that was something I'd call normal. My first four years were as designated pastor, a temporary position, and there were surveys and meetings and votes where my immediate future was continually being debated and decided. All as agreed, but still different from a standard pastoral position. Once it was decided that I would be the long-term pastor in 2018, again by congregational vote, we had about a year and a half before COVID hit and we watched the world shut down. You know - you went through it too.

Then as we were returning to worship together, navigating masking and social distancing while worshiping in person, we noticed a lot of water damage to the pipe organ...and then the roof started to collapse. Each of these were six-figure problems on their own - one where we got a lot of help from insurance and the other where we got almost no help at all. We were saved by an un-looked-for but profoundly welcome gift from Grace Harrop, and even with that gift, as you know, we are currently undertaking a capital campaign to make sure we can continue our ministry in coming years.

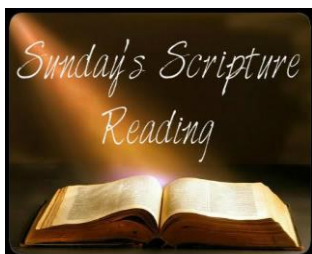
So we moved downstairs for many months, and continued in worship and ministry and mission. We welcomed new members despite all of these challenges, and grieved our losses. I have been consistently amazed at the resilience of this congregation. I for one am proud to still be standing together after all that's happened. We've even been able to find ways to have a good time during the ride! Not always, of course, but often.

By the time everyone else is reading this, I'll have come through a month of sabbatical, and I don't know how I'll feel or what will be on my mind. For the last 13 years, I've never had more than one or maybe two weekends with Pam and Poppy a year, and having four weekends off in a row is incredible. I wouldn't anticipate anything dramatic, though. I'm looking forward to it, but a month is just a month. I'll probably be back before I know it.

The day before yesterday, someone shared wise words with me: You want to be away long enough for people to miss you, but not long enough for them to realize that they can get by fine without you. I hope that a month is about the right length of time - and writing from here in the past, I'll see you in September.

Peace.

Pastor Doug



Upcoming Scripture Readings

Sept. 3rd: Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

Sept. 10th: Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

Sept. 17th: Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

Sept. 24th: Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16

Finance Committee Report – July 2023

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

Income

- Pledges are \$ 19,788 under what was budgeted. A 16% shortfall.
- Non pledge giving is \$ 1,400 under what was budgeted.
- Loose offering, interest and dividends and Givebutter parking app receipts have done better than expected.
- Total income for all categories is \$ 5,250 less than anticipated. A shortfall of 3.5%

Expenses

- Session committees have kept an eye on spending. Through mid-year, expenses are favorable to the budget by \$ 3,575

Profit and Loss

- Through mid-year we have a net loss (income less expense) of \$ 49,700. That figure is \$ 1,700 more than we had anticipated.
- Session has approved spending endowment “corpus funds” to pay the bills in light of the shortfall described above.
- Of note, the church has applied and believes will be successful in receiving a one-time tax credit from the IRS for keeping staff on the payroll during COVID in 2020 and 2021, which will help to offset some of the deficit anticipated by the current level of income.

The above represent the church operations status against the planned budget. If you have any questions, please see any member of the Finance Committee.

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 13** and **Wednesday, September 27**.

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

We will complete the order forms for you. Please pick up a **list of retailers**, located in the narthex and the office.

Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (**September 12** and **September 26**). Please make checks payable to “First Presbyterian Church DR”.

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



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

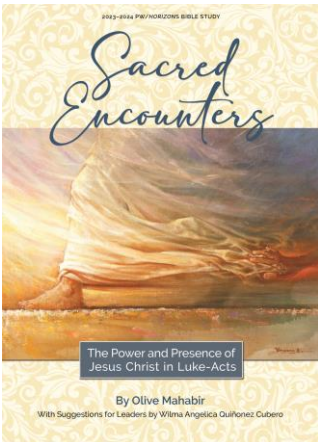
Amy Myers, our Prayer Chain Coordinator, will be happy to forward your prayer requests to the members of the prayer chain. You can email Amy at fpcprayerchain1@gmail.com and members will be lifting you up in prayer. You may also call Sue Smith at [\(610\) 933-8816](tel:(610)933-8816) and she will forward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

From the Clerk of Session

- ❖ Average Sunday morning attendance:
 - In July we had an average of 58 worshipping in person and an average of 18 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 4 *chatting*.
 - It's so nice to be worshipping 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: 0
 - Baptism: 0
 - Membership:
 - Current membership is 174.
 - No changes
- ❖ Rev. Jane DeFord officiated during August 6th communion when approximately 50 people were served. Communion will be celebrated again on September 3rd.
- ❖ Session Meeting Information:
 - The following motion from the May 23 meeting was approved at the July 25th meeting. Finance Motion: Finance committee requests permission to spend "corpus monies" not to exceed \$55,000 to "pay the bills" through 2023.
 - This is the current forecast to cover expenses through the balance of the year, against the backdrop of a) giving levels need to meet budget for the balance of the year, (currently 30% below plan) b) capital campaign results are unknown, and c) the possibility of a significant downturn in the market (debt ceiling etc.) which may further negatively affect overall finances.
 - The plan is to reduce the Harrop estate, not the other existing "corpus" accounts. This combined motion passed unanimously.
 - Minutes of the July 25, 2023 Session Meeting will be reviewed at the September 26, 2023 Stated Session Meeting and will be in the following Perspective.



Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session



Presbyterian Women Circle

All women are invited to attend Circle on the third Sunday each month. We meet following worship to view a video led by the study author, then have discussion following the Horizon Study Guide. Please pack your lunch and join us on September 17th as we begin *Sacred Encounters - The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts*.

Please see Jewell Baker for more information.



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.

Sunday School

A “special” Sunday School session was held on Sunday, August 20. Those who were present took a tour of the church building and visited their Sunday School rooms for the 2023-2024 school year.



Our regular Sunday School year will begin on September 17.

Once again, we will have three age-level groups, as follows:

Group 1: Age 3 through Grade 1

Group 2: Grades 2 through 4

Group 3: Grades 5 and up

In addition to Sunday School, we are planning some other opportunities for parents and children to gather together. First, a **fall hayride** at Colonial Gardens is in the planning stages. If you are interested but haven't yet indicated your date preference(s), you can do so by going to <https://app.rally.co/invite/CulHQtfK7x0>. Second, a **Family Bingo Night** is planned for Friday, October 13. More details about both of these events will be forthcoming. Stay tuned!

We are looking forward to returning to our regular Sunday School schedule on September 17.

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.

PARISH LIFE

SEPTEMBER SALAD SPECTACULAR!

Parish Life invites you to “Salad-brate” September with a Pot-Luck style lunch. Join us in Fellowship Hall after church on September 24th.

Bring your salad and we'll supply yummy rolls, beverage & dessert.

Please look for a Sign-Up Genius in your email soon to select your salad and reserve your seat(s) in Fellowship Hall.



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.



Church Growth Committee

Prison Ministry:

Book Through Bars:

We still enjoy our monthly trips to BTB. Our next trip will be on **Saturday, September 16th**. If you would like to join us, sign up at the link below or call Sue Smith in the church office (610-933-8816), and we will arrange the carpool

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050F4AADA722A1FB6-books2>,

Please indicate if you are willing to share with driving. Volunteers will meet in the church parking lot at 10:30 am and return by 2:30 pm.

Thank you for continuing to donate calendars. Please start collecting for the 2024 year; we will deliver them with your well-wishes. We were the first organization to donate calendars and they were received with excitement and gratitude.

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](https://www.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.

For more information about Books Through Bars, you can always reach out to Bob or Chris Wittrock for more information.

Barnes Foundation:

The Barnes had an exhibit that ran from July 14 – August 21 titled [Through My I: Art from SCI: Phoenix](#).

Through My I: Art from SCI: Phoenix presents original paintings created by artists at State Correctional Institute: Phoenix, southeast Pennsylvania's maximum-security prison for men. The works on view both portray the visual reality of incarceration and imagine a world beyond prison fences and concertina wire. These works are also a statement to the outside world, where the voices and visions of those incarcerated are rarely heard or seen.

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 this discussion will bring in folks interested in learning more about gender, sexual orientation, Christian faith, and related issues.

Our next gathering for discussion will be **Monday, September 25th at 7:00 pm**, and we will be meeting over Zoom to accommodate a wide variety of people. Talk to Pastor Doug, Sarah Shulman, or Jacqui Busch 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 Villages" Watch for reminders and examples in the BEAT and on our Facebook page. Here are the prompts for each week ahead of time:

September 3: Who is in your village?

September 10: How are you thankful for first responders?

September 17: How are you a helper?

September 24: How are you thankful for kindness?

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!



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

People to People

Our Garage Sale will be on Saturday, September 30th in Fellowship Hall from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm.

There will be housewares, toys, clothing for everyone, linens, glassware, books, household items, knick-knacks, jewelry, and much more at very reasonable prices. Come and find a unique treasure, too!

Help is needed:

Wed. Sept 27, 1 PM: set up tables

Thurs. Sept 28, 9 AM-12PM: set out and display items

Fri. Sept 29, 9 AM-12PM: finish setting out items

Sat. Sept 30, 8 AM – 1PM: help customers and re-organize items

Sat. Sept 30, 12:30 – 2: help pack leftovers, clean up

Please get in touch with Sandy Heidel (csheidel@verizon.net) if you can help. Thank you so much for supporting our church's clothing and feeding ministry.

Mission Focus: Global Missions

Drake Williams / South Africa



Drake Williams presented a lecture at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa where he has had a research post for the past six years. He presented on Christian memory, Jesus, and the taking of the Lord's Supper.

Following the day at the University of the Free State, I had the opportunity to spend significant time with Leso, a student and a pastor at one of the growing and enthusiastic churches in Bloemfontein, South Africa. He attended the lecture that I gave at the University, and he wanted to continue fellowship time. So, he invited me and my brother's family to a South African braai. This is an essential part of South African culture and is intended for celebration and discussion. At the braai, we dialogued at length about the Bible and also about Christian ministry.

Several days later, I traveled north and east to the city of Pretoria. I had the opportunity to participate there at the International Society of Biblical Literature Conference. This meeting takes place once per year. It was only the second time that it had been held in Africa.

Following the Conference, Kobus and I organized a two day symposium. We had invited 10 scholars to discuss the question of identity and boundaries in the New Testament. So for several days, we read papers and gave critiques. Please pray that this book would be of help.

Nadia Ayoub / Greece

Nadia Ayoub has published her Fall 2023 letter titled “You Are My Friends” which answers the question that tested a grandmother’s faith. The Ukrainian grandmother Irena asked in a dispirited tone if there was any way that her two granddaughters attend camp for some days? A full copy can be found on our website: <https://fpc-phoenixville.org/global-missions/>. We will also place the letter on our bulletin board outside of Fellowship Hall.

CEDEPCA

When FPC went to Guatemala, we went through CDEPCA. CEDEPCA USA, a U.S tax-deductible 501(c)(3) non-profit, strives to connect individuals and faith communities in the United States to the mission of CEDEPCA in Central America, through education, networking, fundraising and accompaniment. Here is an update on what CEDEPCA is up to.

The Disaster Ministry of Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA) has focused on prevention of disasters and attention when disasters do occur, with risk management and with psychosocial care. We also know that disasters do not strike equally, but often hit hardest in the areas most vulnerable because of poverty. This month’s newsletter explains how CEDEPCA’s Disaster Ministry has been able to work with the PC(USA) program Self Development of People to support projects that decrease poverty and vulnerability in Guatemala.

In Guatemala, the World Bank’s Multidimensional Poverty Measure (MPM) measures that 61.6% of the population is in multidimensional poverty. This measure considers a family in poverty if several of the following are true: income is less than \$2.15 per person per day; at least one elementary or middle school aged child is not enrolled in school; no adult has completed elementary school; or the family has lack of access to basic infrastructure, drinking water, sanitation, or electricity. CEDEPCA, through its Disaster Ministry program, has committed to help reduce these various aspects of poverty.

To work toward these goals, in 2022-2023 CEDEPCA worked with funds from the Presbyterian Church (USA) Self Development of People program to finance four local initiatives in various communities in Guatemala in order to improve conditions of life in vulnerable and poor areas.

Sixty-five people participated in small business ventures to improve the economic and psychosocial well-being of their families, and we estimate that 325 people benefited indirectly.

Worship and Music Notes

Please take note of the following opportunities (sorry about the spelling) available beginning in September.

Choir, where you can sing to your heart’s content on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Chat with Diane about adding your instrument to our worship service.

Praise Team, Sarah would like to talk with you about joining. Handbells, Barb would enjoy taking with you

about joining. So much for the music options, now to the worship choices.

Catch up with Jewell if you would like to be an usher. It’s only one Sunday a month. Let Sue in the office know if you are interested in being the lay reader for a Sunday or more. This schedule is very flexible. Interested in helping with the sound and broadcasting our services? Let Doug Walker know.

As you can see there are several options for you to choose from. I hope at least one of these strikes your fancy. See you in church.



Deacon Ministry



Deacons' Dialogue



The Old Rugged Cross

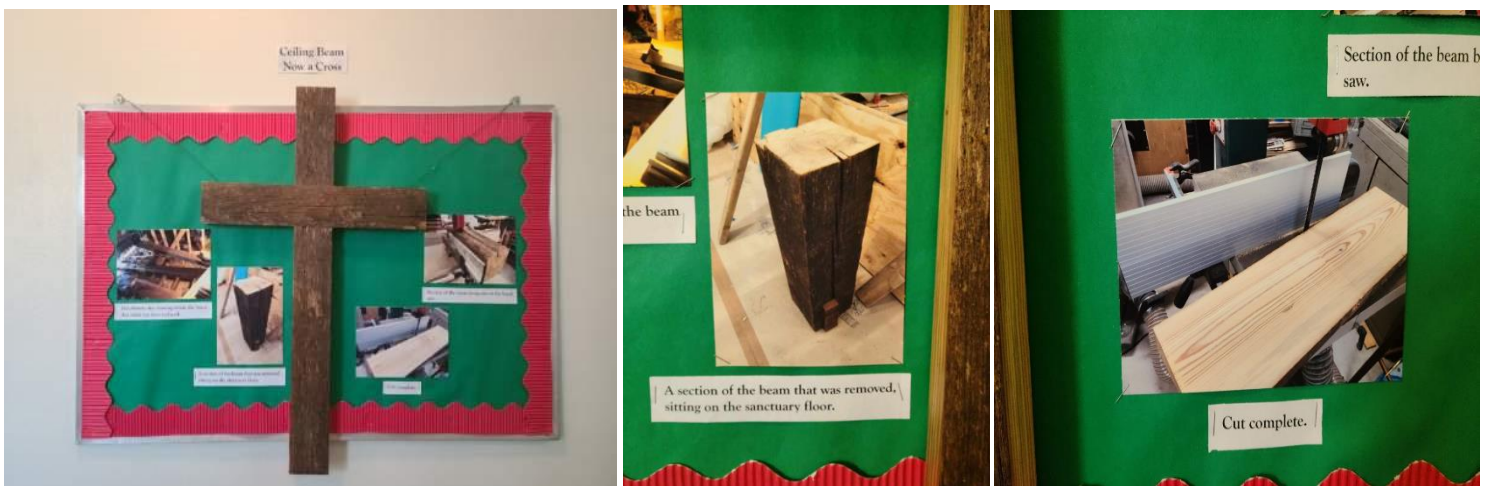
The next time you attend service, take a walk to the second floor to see a piece of FPC's history displayed on the bulletin board in the hallway.

When we experienced a very difficult time in our history, the reconstruction in the ceiling of our sanctuary, Paul Parrish had an idea to preserve a piece of that time. Paul, a retired shop teacher who has always enjoyed making things, took it upon himself to create a cross out of one of the beams in the ceiling that needed to be replaced.

While constructing the cross, Paul thought about sanding and refining the structure. However, his thoughts went to The Old Rugged Cross, and he decided to leave it be in all its rustic beauty. As you will see when you visit, the process was indeed labor, and quite obviously, one of love.

Thank you, Paul, for this amazing piece of our history that we can take into our future.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,
Ellen Williams



September 2023

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					9:00a WIC 5-8pm Parking Lot	9:30a Zumba
Offering: J Osterhoudt Communion 10:30a Worship <i>Diane Legnini vacation</i>	<i>Labor Day</i> Church office closed.	6:30p Zumba <i>John Allen vacation</i>	7:30p Handbell Rehearsal <i>John Allen vacation</i>	9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal <i>John Allen vacation</i>		
Offering: G Cockerill 10:30a Worship 12:00n Worship & Music 12:00n Deacons 7:00p Pub Theology @ The Foodery	9:00a Clothing Ministry 12:30p Staff meeting 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Finance	6:00p Parish Life @ Luciano's restaurant 6:30p Zumba	7:30p Handbell rehearsal	9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal 7:00p Compassionate Friends	9:00a WIC	9:30a Zumba 10:30a Books thru Bars
Offering: J McLaughlin 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Women's Circle 12:00n Men's Group	9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	6:30p Zumba 7:00p Personnel 7:30p Property	12:30p Church Growth 7:30p Handbell rehearsal Perspective articles due for October	9:00a WIC 9:00a Clothing Ministry 10:00a Food Ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal		
Offering: K Brown 8:30a Bible Study via Zoom 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Congregational Pot-Luck lunch Salad-brate 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	9:00a Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Queer Circle Book Study	6:30p Zumba 7:00p Session	7:30p Handbell rehearsal <i>Set up Flea Market</i>	10:00a Food ministry 7:00p Choir rehearsal <i>Set up Flea Market</i>		8am-1pm People to People Flea Market