

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

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From the Pastor

John 4

³⁵ Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

We recently had a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Sue Smith as she approaches retirement. (For those who could not make it to the reception after worship on October 22nd, I'm including what I said below.) Right now as I write this, Maggie and Sue are in the office together as Maggie learns more about the position of Office Manager. We started planning this transition back in June of this year, and I'm really happy that our plans are culminating just as we'd hoped. I have no doubt that Maggie will make an excellent Office Manager.

I'm going to miss Sue, and I know many of us will. As I said on Sunday, I don't think we even know how much we'll miss her. As I reflect on this transition, I think about how, despite how wonderful Sue was and how central to the church functioning these past 17 years, ideally, we will keep on without her with no problems. That is, she spent her time sowing, and we will continue to reap, while she moves on to other things.

This is part of what it means to live an ancient faith. We might spend our whole lives sowing, and not reap the benefits of our own work. In the same way, whenever we gather for worship, we are reaping where we did not sow, in a huge historical building from before Phoenixville was the name of our town, built and sustained by hundreds of people whose names we will never know.

"One sows and another reaps." Thus has it always been. Thank you, Sue, for all you have sown.

Sincerely,

Pastor Doug

For Sue Smith

Sue would sometimes joke that she's the official survivor at FPC, because after 17 years hers is the only torch still burning.

Similarly, FPC has survived in large part because of Sue. Think back over the last 17 years, over all that's happened, the many pastors you've had come through, the many sessions and committee leaders, the many staff members who have come and gone.

One way I describe Sue is as the hub of the wheel. We all move forward because of her. A spoke can go, the tire can go flat, but we keep rolling in large part because of Sue. She was the right combination of tough when she needed to be tough, blunt when bluntness was needed, discretion when that was called for, funny in good times and not so good times, and just a rock solid consistent presence in the office. 2. *continued....*

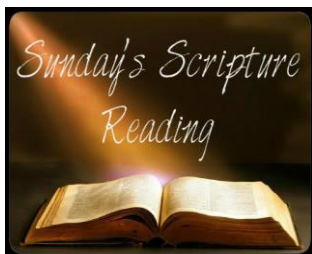
I would not have made it through my first four or so years without her. We've spent significant quality time venting to one another or going over plans, or me asking her to remind me of someone's name or someone's connection to someone else. Who is this again? The name rings a faint bell. Aren't they related? Oh, right, now I remember. When did this happen last?

We have very carefully planned and prepared for Sue's retirement, and I'm really excited that Maggie has said yes. At the same time, Sue is irreplaceable. Maggie will be her own kind of hub, and we'll keep rolling.

But on behalf of the congregation, the Session, myself, Sue, thank you. You are amazing, and I don't think we even know yet how much you will be missed.

From the Pastor's Desk

Hello FPC family. I would like to share a request. I am always working with the staff, Deacons, etc. to make sure that anyone who wishes to be contacted is contacted, whether by me or someone else. I want to make sure that all of you feel connected to the church, and I know that connection doesn't happen in theory - it's personal. What would be helpful, in addition to letting us know if you think someone is feeling left out or disconnected, is also to let us know if you have a way you prefer to be contacted. What we do right now is casually track people's preferences as we learn them: Oh, that person really responds well to emails, but that person prefers a text, and that person wants to speak in person, and that person tends to use Facebook messenger, etc.



Upcoming Scripture Readings

November 5th: Joshua 3:7-17; Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37

November 12th: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

November 19th: Judges 4:1-7; Judges 5:1-3, 24-31

November 26th: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Matthew 25:31-46



Men's Group Book Discussion

Join the Men's Group on the 3rd Sunday of each month after church for lunch and discussion. Feel free to join the group any 3rd Sunday whether you are reading the books or not.

Finance Committee – Financial Results

Treasurer Report for September

Income

- Pledged giving was 57% under budget
- Unpledged giving was 50% over budget
- Other income was significantly higher than budgeted due to in-kind services contributed by a member.
- Total budgeted income for the month was under budget by \$ 3,551; 25% under budget.
- Government sponsored Employee Retention Credit (ERC) monies were received in the amount of \$ 65,900. This is non-budgeted income.
- YTD Income through September matches the budget in large part due to GiveButter receipts and Interest & Dividends.

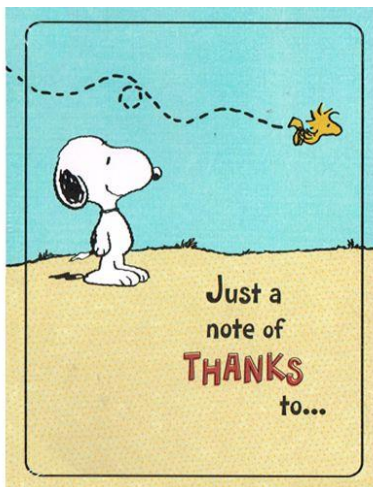
Expenses

- Expenses for the month were under budget. However, some September expenses have not been entered and paid. Those expenses will be recognized in the October reporting.
- YTD expenses are \$ 3,250 under budget which is overstated due to the timing issue of unpaid invoices mentioned above.

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.





...to You from Sue Smith

BLESSED. I have been truly blessed these past 17 years as the church office manager. I have so many great memories and have made many friends along the way. I've witnessed miracles, sadness and great joy all from my desk.

I still can't believe that I'll be retiring. I've been working since I was 15 years old. I've seen people die before they got the chance to retire, people forced to retire or gotten ill and

could no longer work. By retiring now, it's on my terms. It's time for me to play!

THANK YOU all so very much for your love and support over the years. The retirement reception after worship was the cherry on top. Your generosity with the monetary gift was overwhelming. Until we meet again..... 4.

Church Growth Committee

Prison Ministry:

Book Through Bars:

We still enjoy our monthly trips to BTB. Our next trip will be on **Saturday, November 18th**. If you would like to join us, sign up at the link below or call Maggie O'Malley 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, which 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 for more information.

Holiday Card Event:

Church Growth will host a holiday card writing event on November 12th after service in Fellowship Hall. We invite you to join us as we write holiday cards to those incarcerated at SCI Phoenix and Muncy. Light refreshments will be provided as well as holiday prompts if you feel like you're writing the same thing over and over.

We are asking for donations of holiday cards. Cards must have a white envelope with no decorations. If you have extra Christmas cards, we will take them. If you are purchasing cards to donate, we ask that you keep them holiday neutral as not everyone celebrates Christmas.

Queer Circle:

Queer Circle will be meeting on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 pm to discuss a book – *The Book of Queer Prophets: 24 Writers on Sexuality and Religion*. 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, November 27th 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 November, the theme is "Gratitude in Grief". Watch for reminders and examples in the BEAT and on our Facebook page. Here are the prompts for each week ahead of time:

- Nov 5: How do you appreciate a loved one who has passed?
- Nov 12: How are you thankful for knowing your limits and trusting in God?
- Nov 19: How are you thankful for the courage to love?
- Nov 26: How are you thankful for past versions of yourself?

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

Thanks to 28 helpers who made the September 30th Garage Sale possible. Their many hands, and hours given, contributed to the success of the Garage Sale. People to People welcomed people waiting at our door before 8 AM to find their treasures. Fellowship Hall was full of clothes, household items, linens, toys, shoes, and more that were shared with our community and smiling people ready to assist them. Over \$2,100 was realized for our mission to feed and clothe our neighbors. Thank you to those who donated items, sort regularly, helped set up tables, arranged items, helped at the sale, and clean-up.

Spanish Health Ministry

A special thank you to Spanish Health Ministry for partnering with us for a special Sunday School and luncheon. We will provide a bigger update and photos in our December article.

Learn more about Spanish Health Ministry here: <https://spanishhealthministry.org/>

Missions: Global Focus

Betsey Moe (Guatemala):

Here is an excerpt from Betsey Moe's latest update entitled "Intercultural 'Steadfast Love'":

A recent conversation I had with a friend I've known for 45 years made me remember this truth: a friendship, if given time and nurture, becomes exponentially richer year by year.

The same is true here in Guatemala when long-term intercultural relationships are nurtured. Of course, many people come to Guatemala through CEDEPCA's Intercultural Encounters program just once. They may be deeply challenged and changed by what they hear and see, and they carry back a piece of what they have learned into their lives as citizens, parents, teachers, church members.

But some people – and some churches – come back again and again and end up forming long-term relationships with individuals, churches, or organizations here in Guatemala. I think of the Hebrew word, "hesed" that occurs so often in the Old Testament, the word that means "steadfast love" and characterizes how God acts toward God's people. "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Exodus 34:6). Showing steadfast love to one another is our primary way of reflecting the steadfast love of God back into the world.

To read the full story, visit the following link or visit the "Global Missions" page on the FPC website. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x18KurfYH5PkwbvU5SFEvGcj8ip8YunW/view?usp=drive_link



Raise Right Gift Cards

Just in time for a little Christmas shopping and gifting, we will be placing orders for gift cards on the following **Wednesdays (November 8... November 29...December 6...December 13)**. You may choose from over **750** retailers. Retailer lists are available in the narthex and the church office. 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 be glad to complete the order forms for you. Orders and checks must be received by the day before the orders are placed (**November 7, November 28, December 5 & December 12**). Please make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church DR". **Thank you** for continuing to support this program as a percentage of each order goes to benefit the church. **The Stewardship Committee**



Prayer Chain & Prayer Requests

Amy Myers, our Prayer Chain Coordinator, will be moving to Pittsburg. (*sigh)

Amy has been a fabulous coordinator for years and she will be missed.

So now we are looking for a volunteer to take over the position. If you are interested or have any questions, please talk with Amy or Maggie. In the mean time you can email Amy at fpcprayerchain1@gmail.com and members will be lifting you up in prayer. You may also call Maggie O'Malley at [\(610\) 933-8816](tel:6109338816) and she will forward your requests.

2024 Pledge Campaign – Thanks be to God

Stewardship begins with gratitude to God for everything we have received from Him. We express our thanksgiving and gratitude by giving back to God a portion of His gifts.

As we begin the **Pledge Campaign** for the year **2024**, the Stewardship Committee asks that you prayerfully consider your financial commitment to our church.

Your generous and faithful offerings help to support the many ministries of First Presbyterian Church. Your pledge helps the Finance Committee as they plan for the coming year.

Please place your completed pledge card in the offering plate on **Dedication Sunday, November 19**. You may also return it by mail in the pre-addressed envelope that you received with the card.

Thank you for sharing your many gifts, and for your continued financial support.

The Stewardship Committee

Sunday School

The regular Sunday School classes continue to meet each week during the worship service, from approximately 10:45 to 11:45 am. Each week, a note is sent to parents with ideas for following up on the themes and ideas discussed in Sunday School. This provides one way to maintain and strengthen church-home connections for children. In addition to on-going activities in Sunday School itself, we are planning a variety of intergenerational events through next spring. As these opportunities are finalized, we will spread the word.



For our **Hayride** on October 8, we had 25 participants and a beautiful autumn day. In addition to the hayride, children and parents were also able to explore a corn maze and to check out all of the plants and fall / Halloween décor at Colonial Gardens. Thanks to all who came out to enjoy the afternoon together. And thanks to Jill Kleppinger for organizing the whole thing!

Family Bingo Night took place on Friday, October 13. It was a fun time of fellowship, friendly competition, prizes, costumes, and good food. Sarah Pilotti (Dr. Sarah, Ghostbuster) and Pam Hagler (Vanna Avocado) served as our hosts, callers, game leaders, and all-around inspiration for the evening. Thanks to Sue Smith for all of her organizational expertise and behind-the-scenes direction. And thanks to Parish Life for providing the snacks! We are already looking forward to the next Family Bingo Night. Stay tuned.



Our 2023-2024 Confirmation Class – for young disciples from Grade 5 and up – has met twice so far and will continue to meet monthly through the school year. The classes are meeting after worship for two-hour sessions that will include lunch. On those days when Confirmation Class is held, members of the class will attend and participate in the worship service rather than Sunday School.



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, to our fine group of teachers ... thanks! And for everyone: Whenever you get 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.

* ... and this includes dads!



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.



Worship and Music Notes

Time to get your calendars out to mark some important dates. Sunday, November 5 is the end of daylight-saving time (set clocks back one hour).

It is also All Saints' Sunday. If you have someone who died during the past year and you would like their name remembered in the bulletin, let the church secretary know by the Wednesday before.

There will be a community Thanksgiving Eve service at 7 PM at the First United Methodist Church 865 Main Street. It will be a great time to join with our Methodist friends again and give thanks for all we have.

Now a couple of hints about Advent/Christmas activities. We will be decorating the church on Saturday, December 2 from 9:30 a.m. – Noon. There will be decorations for all ages to be part of the event.

SPECIAL note: We haven't had our big tree up for a number of years and we would like to put it up this year. However, it takes several strong people to put it up. Before we carry all the parts of the tree down from the third floor, we need to know that we will have the people needed to put it up. If you can help on December 2, please let the church secretary know by Tuesday, November 28.

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. As a result, some adjustments have been made to our usual worship times. We will have a special service at our usual 10:30 AM time. This service will include celebrating the fourth Sunday of Advent, and also a celebration of Christmas Eve. Maybe even a pageant. There will not be a 5 PM service. There will be the traditional candlelight and Communion service at 9 PM.

See you in church



Deacons' Dialogue



In Celebration of Saints

On November 1st, Christians observe All Saints Day. Your Board of Deacons would like to share the following prayer and scripture in honor of this day.

Prayer:

You created our brother/sister [name], and you gave [him/her] to us to know and to love in our life here on earth. Give us courage, give us peace as we miss [him/her]. Remind us, convince us that not even death is strong enough to separate us from your love and care.

Psalm 50:5-8 KJV: Gather my saints together unto me; Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: For God is judge himself. Selah. Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

Submitted on behalf of the Deacons by,
Ellen Williams

PARISH LIFE

Save the Date



Parish Life will host our annual Caroling & Cocoa gathering on Sunday, December 10th. Please plan to join us for singing, hot cocoa and entertainment by Rebecca Barkley! Further details to be announced.



**Your Parish Life Committee wishes all of our congregants
and your families a joyous Thanksgiving!**

MeetiNg

Parish Life will meet for pizza and planning in the parlor on Tuesday, November 14th at 5:30. New members warmly welcomed!

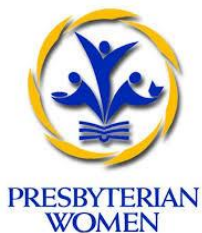
We look forward to sharing these special times with you!

The Parish Life Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Location and time announced in Perspective each month!

From the Clerk of Session

- ❖ Average Sunday morning attendance:
 - In September we had an average of 67 worshipping in person and an average of 14 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 3 *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
 - Death: Blanche Chang entered the church triumphant on October 19, 2023. Service information is pending.
 - Current membership is 172.
- ❖ Communion was celebrated on October 1st when approximately 55 people were served. Next Communion will be on November 5th, which also is when Daylight Saving Time ends so don't forget to change your clock to get that hour back.
- ❖ Session Meeting Information:
 - From July Session meeting the following motion was presented by the Finance Committee; **Wait until the capital campaign runs its course in May 2024 before we spend \$1 of the Harrop estate. 100% of the campaign should be used to replenish the Harrop estate.**
 - **At that time, we should take stock of where we are with the cash flow before approving use of the Harrop estate. Since we are running at a significant deficit, all future church spending, regardless of the funding source, should be scrutinized using a "just because it was originally budgeted, is it truly required" mentality.** Motion passed with the following vote: 9 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain.
 - Minutes of the September 26, 2023 Session Meeting will be reviewed at the October 24, 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 meeting on the third Sunday each month. We meet in the parlor following worship to watch a video led by the study author, then have discussion following the Horizon Study Guide. Please pack your lunch and join us as we continue *Sacred Encounters - The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts*.

Please see Jewell Baker for more information.



Keep Doors Locked During Church Events

As a response to safety and security concerns, the Session has decided that external doors will remain locked during church events. If arriving late, people will need to be let into the building as needed once an event has begun.

November 2023

First Presbyterian Church of Phoenixville

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<i>All Saints' Day</i> 1	2	3	4
			7:30p Bell Choir	9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir	9:00a WIC	9:30a Zumba
Offering: K Carrabine 5 8:30a Bible Study <i>All Saints' Sunday Communion</i> 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:30n Deacons Meeting <i>Daylight Saving Time Ends</i>	6 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 2:00p MAC 6:00p Zumba class	7 6:00a VOTING all day in Fellowship Hall till 8:00p Mom's House meeting in the parlor all day	8 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Bell Choir	9 9:00a Public Health Mgt 9:00a Set up for Winter Coat Give-Away 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir 7:00p Compassionate Friends	10 Set up for Winter Coat Give-Away (fellowship hall)	<i>Veteran's Day</i> 11 8:00a – 11:00am Free Winter Coat Give Away (fellowship hall) 3:00p – 7:00p Fellowship Hall Rented
Offering: K Grocki 12 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Holiday Card Writing event 7:00p Pub Theology @ The Foodery on Bridge Rev. Hagler vacation	13 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Finance	14 5:30p Parish Life pizza in the parlor 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Personnel	15 12:30p Church Growth 7:30p Bell Choir	16 9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir	17 9:00a WIC	18 9:30a Zumba 10:30a Books thru Bars
Offering: R Warwick 19 8:30a Bible Study <i>Pledge Dedication</i> 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 12:00n Men's Group 12:00n Women's Circle	20 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class	21 6:30p Zumba class 7:30p Property	22 7:00p Thanksgiving Eve service @ the 1st United Methodist Church (Main St)	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i> 23 Office closed.	24 Office closed.	25
Offering: J Baker 26 8:30a Bible Study 10:30a Worship 10:45a Sunday School 7:00p Antiracism Book Club via Zoom	27 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Queer Circle Book Study	28 6:30p Zumba class 7:00p Session Budget meeting	29 7:30p Bell Choir	30 9:00a People to People Clothing ministry 10:00a People to People Food ministry 7:00p Choir		