

Perspective

A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church
of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Volume LIII No. 6 | August 2024
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First Presbyterian Church
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania
1846 – 2024

The *Perspective* is published 10 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: Maggie O'Malley Contributors: Church Family

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FROM THE PASTOR

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

John 6:1-21

¹After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

As those of you who were with us (or watched the video after) saw, I got stuck in my own plans last Sunday - I had pictures of dogs printed out for the children's sermon when Deacon Dawkins was right there in the Narthex. Somehow, the part of my brain that saw Jen and Dawkins were here and the part of my brain giving the children's sermon did not connect. What a missed opportunity, when our church has an official therapy dog! Have you ever had that experience of being stuck in your own plans and missing an opportunity as a result? Even if, in retrospect, it was an incredibly obvious one.

I think I was partly distracted because during that same children's sermon, I was struck by an idea for a completely different sermon based on the readings from that Sunday in the lectionary (above). I had to take a moment to put the idea aside so that it didn't distract me, and I was tempted to try something terrifying and preach an entirely different sermon from the one I had planned. That's definitely not something I feel confident doing, and I put the idea aside quickly after it arose... maybe someday.

Of course each lectionary reading lends itself to more than one sermon - it's very rare to find a text in the Bible that just says one thing, and about which only one thing can be said. This will not be a full sermon, but I wanted to lay out my thoughts for the Perspective this month.

We usually live in a world of limits. Our money, our time, our energy, our attention are all limited. We have to make decisions constantly about where and when and how we expend ourselves. Sometimes we don't have much of a choice: we have to go to work, for example, and often do what someone else wants for a third of the day. We have to care for children, and maybe parents, and for ourselves and our pets and our homes and vehicles. The majority of what we have is already spoken for before the week even begins.

When we talk about God, we often talk about abundance: water from the stone, manna in the wilderness, and a seat at the banquet table for everyone. This is Communion language and Kin-dom of Heaven language, and rightly so. But it contrasts, I think, with our everyday experiences of limits and the hard choices we have to make with our limited selves.

Limits can become the heart of greed. The idea that there is not enough for everyone is sibling to the idea that I must get mine at your expense.

Where greed is concerned, the limitations are things we create. In a world where we grow enough food to feed 12 Billion people, hundreds of millions go hungry. In a housing market with over 20 homes for every homeless person, there are still people sleeping outside and in homeless shelters every single night. In an economy with more than enough for everyone to have housing and food and healthcare, we have 735 Billionaires in the US and 38 Million people living in poverty. But the idea that there is not enough for everyone, perhaps growing out of our natural experiences of our limitations, can often take a dark turn.

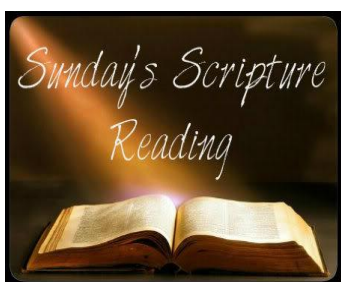
In our reading from Ephesians, and in the story of the feeding of the 5,000 from the Gospels, we have stories of abundance. Skimming through Ephesians, we have *riches, power more than once, rooted and grounded in love, breadth and length and height and depth, love that surpasses knowledge, the fullness of God, and abundantly*. Rich language of God's blessings pouring out, such that they cannot even be understood, much less contained.

In our story from John, we have a familiar one, where two fish and five loaves are transformed into a Passover feast for 5,000 people who had followed Jesus up into the hills in droves. They followed him because of the healing and life he offered, for free, wherever he went. Often, when Jesus was surrounded and presumably worn out, he would retreat into the country, or into the hills, or across a lake, to get away from the crowds for a while. Almost always, they would find him anyway. This taste of abundance was irresistible.

It struck me that what God gives us doesn't run out. The bread and fish didn't run out for the 5,000 who gathered to hear Jesus' words and feel his healing touch. The riches we are offered, reflected in the text from Ephesians: that we are rooted and grounded in love; that we experience and share a love that surpasses knowledge; that we have a power within us that is immeasurable; none of these gifts from God are limited. Our everyday experience of limitation doesn't apply to our life with God.

Perhaps this experience of limitlessness, which we can experience in God here and there, in moments and glimpses, can change the way we approach the rest of our lives. In the same way that greed grows from the idea that there is not enough for everyone (which is not true), generosity comes out of a sense of abundance. I think that the more time we spend in fellowship, the more time we spend building up the kin-dom of God together, and the more time we spend with God in prayer and meditation, the more of this abundance we experience, and the more generous we become. I think that the experience of God changes us, so that we see abundance in our lives, and we might even find that we are less limited than we thought.

Sincerely,
Pastor Doug



UPCOMING SCRIPTURE READINGS

- August 4th:** Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:24-35
- August 11th:** Ephesians 4:25-5:2; John 6:35, 41-51
- August 18th:** 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; Ephesians 5:15-20
- August 25th:** 1 Kings 8:(1, 6, 10-11), 22-30, 41-43; Psalm 84

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Away	Guest Preacher
August 18 th	Rebecca Karalfa Drover

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE NOTES

Scrip Gift Cards

Orders for gift cards must be received by the following **Mondays, August 12th & 26th**. 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. Retailer lists are available in the narthex and the church office. We will complete the order forms for you. Please make checks payable to **"First Presbyterian Church DR"**. As always, a percentage of each card benefits our church. **Thank you** for continuing to support this program!

Capital Campaign

Thank you members and friends of FPC for your generous donations to the Capital Campaign. The goal of this campaign was to help replenish Grace Harrop's gift that was used for unexpected roof repairs. More than \$82,000 was received! What a blessing! YOU are a blessing! God is good! While the official campaign has ended, additional donations or monies to fulfill pledges will continue to be accepted. *In love, the Stewardship Committee*

FROM THE CLERK OF SESSION

- ❖ Average Sunday morning attendance:
 - June we had an average of 56 worshipping in person and an average of 13 households viewing the 10:30am YouTube premiere with 5 *chatting*.
- ❖ The Life of the church
 - No changes
 - Current membership is 170.
- ❖ Communion was celebrated:
 - Communion was celebrated Sunday, June 16th Pentecost when approximately 45 people were served.
 - Next communion will be Sunday, August 4th.
- ❖ Session Meeting Information
 - From the May 26th Stated Session Meeting:
 - **Our (CE) request of Session is that we be allowed to engage in this fund-raising effort and to extend awareness of Heifer International to the church as a whole, by communicating our efforts (e.g., via the Bulletin, BEAT, and Minute for Mission) and also by inviting the congregation to make monetary contributions to the cause.** Motion approved unanimously.

Jewell Baker, Clerk of Session

WORSHIP AND MUSIC NOTES

Music

Organist/Pianist

Summertime music has been a bit different with our Music Director taking time off. Thank you to Cathy Walker and friends for providing great accompaniment. Ken Brown will add his organ playing skills during the August services. Diane will return on Sunday, September 1st.

Praise Team

In addition, our Summer Shake-Up Praise Team has brought to light some new talent. May their contributions continue beyond August, if not every Sunday, then perhaps for special occasions.

Worship

August 4th will be a Communion Sunday. Pastor Doug will be away on Sunday, August 18th. Our guest preacher will be Rebecca Karalfa Drover.

See you in church!

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Our Sunday School classes for the 2024-2025 school year will begin on Sunday, September 15. We are anxious to get things rolling again and we will be providing more information closer to that date. The following week, September 22, will be the *Blessing of the Animals* worship service and we plan to include some involvement by children (e.g., music and readings), So, in addition to kicking things off on September 15, we'll be preparing children for their participation in the *Blessing of the Animals*.

We are always looking for new teachers for our Sunday School program. Prior teaching experience is not necessary! Each week, we provide detailed lesson outlines and teachers always work in pairs, so there's lots of support. And with a good-sized group of volunteers, it is possible to schedule each teacher for just once (maybe twice) a month. This means that you can volunteer to teach without missing out on too many worship services. If your schedule necessitates a more limited commitment, we can work with that, too! To express your interest or to discuss further, contact Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com. And as we've said before, **this includes dads - and dad figures!**

Though regular Sunday School classes were not held over the summer, a number of special events took place to keep us all connected and engaged as a church family. These included:

- o Board Game Night on Friday, May 31
- o The VBS Drama Workshop from June 24 to June 27
- o A Family Outing and Picnic at Charlestown Township Park on July 21



We look forward to planning more intergenerational activities through the upcoming school year, so stay tuned for details!

A key factor contributing to the success of our Sunday School program is our talented and energetic crew of Sunday School teachers. So, whenever you get a chance, **thank a teacher!** Better yet, **become a teacher!**

If you have any questions about Sunday School, contact Jeff McLaughlin at fpcchildrenandyouth@gmail.com.

Jeff McLaughlin, Children & Youth Coordinator

PARISH LIFE



Hot Diggity Dog!
Parish Life invites you to
Weinerfest

Sunday, August 25th
following the worship service in Fellowship Hall.
We'll supply the wieners (**beef and vegan**) & buns.
Keep an eye out for an email asking for side-dish sign-ups.

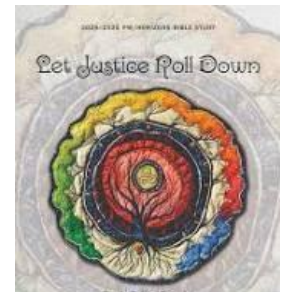
PRAYER CHAIN & PRAYER REQUESTS

Please send any prayer needs to Sandy Schrack at fpcprayerchain2@gmail.com. Your request will be distributed to FPC's prayer angels. Their silent efforts will be put to work to lift you up. The same email address can be used for anyone wishing to join the prayer team.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S CIRCLE

In September we will begin the 2024-2025 study *Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*. All women are invited to attend Circle meeting on the third Sunday each month beginning in September. 2024-2025 Study guides will be ordered in July so please see Jewell Baker if you would like one.



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. Matters could be voiced at an upcoming meeting. The next one is set for Tuesday, August 13th at 7:00 PM.

THE 2024 CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY IS HERE!
[Click this link](#) or use the QR Code to complete it online.
Hard copies will be available in the narthex.





THE DEACONS’ DIALOGUE

The Book of Order of the PC USA defines the role of Deacon as “one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress.”

At FPC, we’re organized as a Board of Deacons to serve and care for our members and the greater community, focusing on caring for members in need, whatever that need may be. We’re here for you, especially in times of hardship, so please always feel free to reach out to your Deacon (or any Deacon!), whether for a visit, a meal, special assistance, or a prayer. If you would like to be a Deacon helper by providing a meal or occasional ride, please get in touch with your Deacon (or any Deacon!) or email DeaconsFPC145@gmail.com.

BOARD OF DEACONS

<u>Class of 2024</u>	<u>Class of 2025</u>	<u>Class of 2026</u>
Kristin Craven	Paulette Mark	Rebecca Barkley
Gail Landazuri	Lucinda Parrish	Jen Johnson
Mona Sabia	Lynne Williams	Amy Mincavage
OPEN	OPEN	Gail Schnaedter

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT – MID YEAR 2024

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

Income

- Pledges are \$ 48,000 under what was anticipated. A 47% shortfall
- Non-Pledge income is favorable by \$ 8,900. 95% better than anticipated
- Miscellaneous income, that includes loose offering, interest and dividends, donated goods and services and flower income all were favorable to the budget. Also, we had Better Days Ahead began renting part of the lower level near Fellowship Hall beginning in February. That income had not been budgeted
- Overall, total income was \$ 24,700 less than anticipated, a 17% shortfall

Expenses

- Session committees have done a good job keeping expenses in check. Year to date, total expenses are \$ 5,100 less than budgeted

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT – MID YEAR 2024 (cont'd)

Profit and Loss

- Through mid-year we have an operating loss of \$ 47,000. That compares to an anticipated loss of \$ 27,400. The loss is 71% greater than anticipated. If we do not close the income shortfall, our actual loss for the year will be greater than anticipated.

The above summary does not include Capital Campaign funds that when received are transferred to the Grace Harrop estate funds at Haverford Trust. Funds were transferred from the estate last year to pay for the sanctuary repairs and a new roof. If you have any questions, please direct them to anyone on the Finance Committee.

CHURCH GROWTH COMMITTEE

Meetings are held on the second Friday of the month, with the Grant Writing subcommittee meeting at 10:00 a.m. and the Church Growth committee meeting at 11:00 a.m. They are via Zoom and in the Church Office. For questions about the Church Growth Committee, contact Kristin at kristin.c.craven@gmail.com.

Anti-Racism Book Club:

Book Club:

The next meeting of the Anti-Racism Book Club is *Sunday, August 25th at 7:00 pm* via Zoom.

Grant Writing:

PCUSA Mental Health Grant

In late June, we were notified that we are the recipient of a PCUSA Mental Health Grant for \$1,500. With this grant, we are going to start a partnership with Cornerstone Clubhouse to foster understanding and support of adults with serious mental illness by listening to their lived experiences and creating lasting relationships. The Church Growth Committee will be planning activities with Cornerstone Clubhouse and will share these events with the congregation once they're finalized.

A special thanks to Jacqui Busch who spearheaded this grant application.

Wonder of Worship Quick Win Grant

On July 25th, we were notified that we received the Wonder of Worship (WOW) Quick Win Grant project funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc. through Columbia Theological Seminary for \$1,000. The grant selectors were impressed by the diversity of ways we are approaching children in worship. With this funding, we plan on creating a family center in the Narthex and purchasing children's Bibles, musical instruments, and drama materials. More information to come, but we are excited to receive this grant!

A special thanks to Gail Landazuri and Jeff McLaughlin, who spearheaded this grant application.



Gratitude Journal:

In continuing our gratitude journaling, we will be providing monthly prompts in kindness. For August, we ask, *how do you show kindness to workers?*

CHURCH GROWTH COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Prison Ministry:

Pen Pals:

We received a few responses from our holiday cards. You can view them here:

<https://bit.ly/FPCPrisonMinistry>.

After receiving them, we would like to start a pen pal group. If you are interested in being a pen pal to a person (or more) incarcerated in Pennsylvania, have any questions, or would like more information on being a pen pal, don't hesitate to contact Kristin Craven at communityfpc145@gmail.com. We are looking for 12 more pen pals!

Book Through Bars:

The next visit to Books Through Bars will be on Saturday, August 17th. If you are interested in attending, contact Terri Camilari or email communityfpc145@gmail.com.

To learn more about Books Through Bars, visit <https://www.booksthroughbars.org/>. If you have any questions about FPC's involvement, please contact Terri Camilari or email communityfpc145@gmail.com.

Donate books:

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 directly to Books Through Bars 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. And by ordering from Bookshop.org, you will be supporting small booksellers.

Queer Circle:

The next meeting of *Queer Circle will be on Monday, August 26th at 7:00 pm*. We hope this discussion will bring in folks interested in learning more about gender, sexual orientation, Christian faith, and related issues. They will be selecting the next selection to read. Talk to Pastor Doug, Sarah, or Jacqui for more information.

Book of Belhar:

The Church Growth Committee plans to add a banner in Fellowship Hall on the Book of Balhar. We will host a lunch and learn in September for anyone interested in learning more about the Book of Belhar. Those interested in designing and creating the banner will meet again in October, November, and December. The goal is to introduce the banner to the congregation in late December or early January.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 15th, after service for a lunch and learn. We will provide light refreshments. Feel free to bring your lunch.



MISSION, ACTION, CONCERNS (MAC) COMMITTEE

Do you support a nonprofit that could use extra hands? MAC is looking for volunteer and service opportunities we can offer to the congregation. If you have any opportunities that you think the congregation could assist with, email us at MissionsFPC145@gmail.com.

If you are looking to expand your involvement in church, consider MAC. Meetings are held via Zoom on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am. If you want to join MAC, email Kristin at MissionsFPC145@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Local Missions:

You can see all updates from our Local Mission Organizations (and all organizations we support) at this link: <https://bit.ly/FPCMissionaries>.

Good Works

Thank you to Sandy Heidel, Eileen Naughton, Wendy Pennypacker, and Bob Russell, who helped make and deliver meals to work crews around Phoenixville.

National Missions:

You can see all updates from our National Missions (and all organizations we support) at this link: <https://bit.ly/FPCMissionaries>.

Global Missions:

You can see all updates from our Missionaries (and all organizations we support) at this link: <https://bit.ly/FPCMissionaries>.

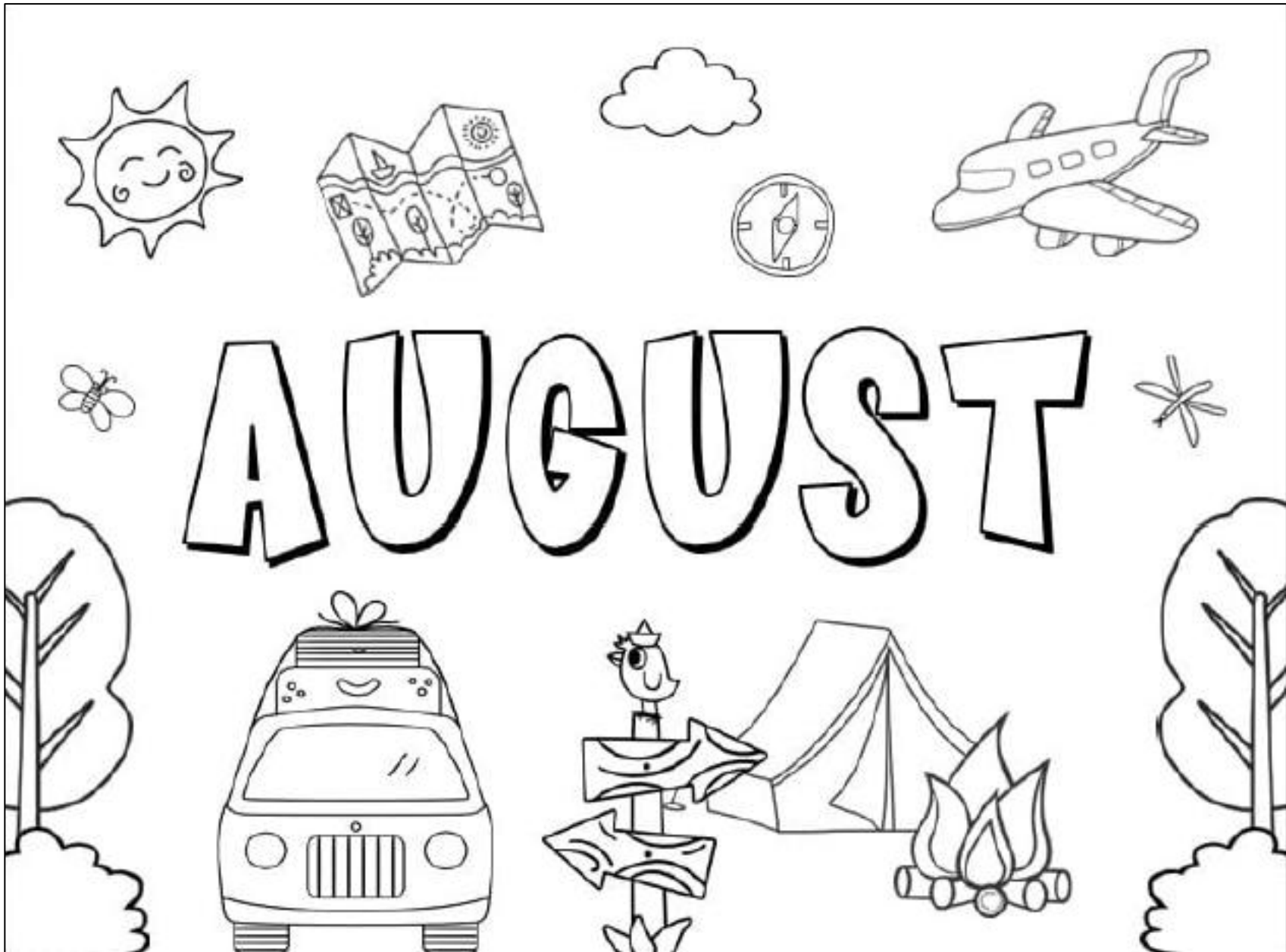
Eric & Betsy Moe, serving in Guatemala

Here is an excerpt from their recent letter, Return with Love:

Your financial support not only made it possible for us to be here, it also made us feel seen and our work valued. We were able to accompany our partner CEDEPCA through the entire pandemic, bringing creativity and energy to “Virtual Journeys” – a brand-new form of intercultural ministry, and then restarting the in-person Intercultural Encounters in Guatemala, reaching new church and university groups.

[Read more here.](#)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 10:00a People to People Food Ministry	2 9:00a WIC	3 9:30a Zumba 10:45a-12:15p P2P Auction Pick-Up
4 10:30a Communion Worship 11:45a Lemonade in the Shade	5 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	6 6:30p Zumba	7 10:30a Music Ministry 6-8p BDA Office Hours 7:00p Praise Team	8 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 10:00a People to People Food Ministry 7:00p Compassionate Friends	9 10:00a Grant Writing 11:00a Church Growth	10
11 10:30a Worship 11:45a Lemonade in the Shade 12:00p Worship & Music 12:00p MAC Luncheon 7:00p Pub Theology	12 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	13 6:30p Zumba 7:00p Personnel Meeting	14 10:00a MAC Meeting 10:30a Music Ministry 6-8p BDA Office Hours 7:00p Praise Team 7:00p Finance Meeting	15 9:00a WIC 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 10:00a People to People Food Ministry	16 9:00a WIC	17 9:30a Zumba 10:30a Books Through Bars
18 10:30a Worship- Guest Preacher: Rebecca Karalfa Drover 11:45a Lemonade in the Shade 12:00p Deacons' Mtg 7:00p Queer Circle	19 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	20 6:30p Zumba 7:30p Property Meeting	21 10:30a Music Ministry 6-8p BDA Office Hours 7:00p Praise Team	22 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 10:00a People to People Food Ministry	23	24
25 10:30a Worship Youth in Worship 11:45a Weinerfest Luncheon 7:00p Antiracism Book Club	26 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 6:30p Zumba	27 4-5p BDA Event 6:30p Zumba	28 10:30a Music Ministry 6-8p BDA Office Hours 7:00p Praise Team	29 9:00a People to People Clothing Ministry 10:00a People to People Food Ministry	30	31



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