

# The Focus

December 2016

## A Note From the Pastor

**“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”**

- Micah 6:8

This is the last newsletter article I will write for 2016. What a year it has been! Three youth from our congregation joined some 5000 others from around the country for a faith-filled week at Purdue University during the Presbyterian Youth Triennium – and I got to go along! Others in our country experienced devastating floods and we put together and donated clean-up buckets to help ease their burden. A serious discussion about the future of the church manse/annex began and continues to progress by the session’s ongoing work of discernment. 896 pounds of food was donated to the Doylestown Food Pantry on World Food Day, but that was only a portion of the ongoing donations made through Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard and God’s Garden. We left the building and touched the lives of many through our hands, feet and hearts. The youngest Myers child, Julia, was baptized. The midweek Bible study moved its location and day allowing it to grow. We were reminded of the work with children in Italy through a visit from Rosaria Russo. God was worshiped; children were taught; gifts were shared, loving care and thoughtfulness was extended. It has been a busy year here at Forest Grove.

It has also been a busy year in the world outside our sanctuary. We’ve gone through an exhausting election, seen devastating floods, fires, hurricanes and tornados. Lives have been lost, violence continues and 20 million continue to be affected by human trafficking for sex and labor exploitation. Many are glad to see 2016 come to an end.

With the days of one year winding down, the church year winds up with the beginning of Advent. For four weeks we wait with great expectation for the coming of Jesus celebrated at Christmas and we mark this wait with the lighting of candles. Recently I read the blog of my friend David Stipp-Bethune who wrote about these holy candles. He spoke about an unexpected detour forced upon his family that led them to one of the

underground caverns in Virginia. While on their tour, the lights went out and a single candle was lit. All were awed by the power of that single flame shining in the darkness. As David said, that’s what Advent is all about.

With headline news pressed into our memories, many are anxious to turn the page of the calendar to leave this year behind. But even as we continue to navigate this year, Advent reminds us that we are to light our candles right in the midst of the mess. That’s where Jesus comes, in the mess of our lives. We don’t just light candles on wreathes, but we also light the candles within our hearts, candles that give off the light of Christ that can and does dispel the darkness. Even one candle can make a difference. YOUR candle makes a difference. Just go back to the first paragraph and remember where you fit into all that was described and also that which didn’t make it to print. Our faith tells us that we can’t give up on this year. We’ve got to light our candles in this advent of the new year because it will make all the difference both within our church and in our world.

Look at the difference of one in Jesus Christ. No, neither you nor I are the Messiah, but Jesus did say, “You are the light of the world.” Remember the words of the song, “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” Don’t just sing it – do it! Remember what the Lord requires of you. Be a good steward of your light, the light of Christ. It matters.

Yours in Christ’s service,



## Sunday School

It's the time of year when we all celebrate the birth of our Savior. The children will learn all about the tradition of Christmas. We will talk about what the symbols mean and they will enjoy making their own to put in their tree at home!



## Youth Group in December

December 4 @ 7pm - Regular Youth Group

December 11 @ 1pm - Gift wrapping at Wesley Enhanced Living in Doylestown

December 18 @ 7pm - Christmas Caroling

December 25 & January 1 - No youth group meeting

## Calling All 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Families

Middle School is a unique phase in a person's life that is often marked with growing pains as well as social and spiritual challenges. In an attempt to offer a fun and relevant experience that will address middle school interests and needs, parents of this age group are being asked to come together to discuss a new initiative here at Forest Grove designed for this age group. This will be led by Pastor Su who wants to hear parent's ideas, suggestions for logistics and gain support. The gathering will be held on January 8 at 5:30. Pizza will be served while we talk together. Children and youth are welcome but will eat and watch a movie separately.

## Wednesday Morning Bible Study at 10am

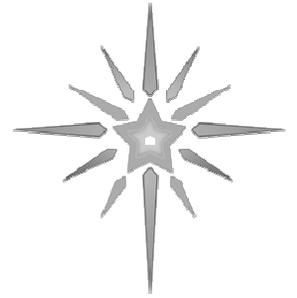
The Wednesday morning group has begun an Advent study looking at favorite Christmas hymns. Music has been a way of expressing our worship to God dating back to the very beginning. In fact, the oldest piece of scripture is Miriam's song when the Hebrews escaped slavery from the Egyptians by successfully crossing the sea and leaving their captors behind.

The music of this season touches our hearts in ways that little else can. The group will listen to and explore the history and meaning behind several of these pieces firmly planted within our souls. Meeting at the clubhouse in Buckingham Springs, each week is a "stand alone" lesson. This group is open to all – friends are welcome! We are on this faith journey together. Biblical expertise is not a requirement. An open and seeking heart for God, is.



## Decorate the Tree with Angels & Stars

Once again we are inviting members of the congregation to contribute ornaments to the church Christmas tree. Those who wish may bring their ornament on December 18. Decorating will take place during the worship service. This year we are asking for either angels or stars. The church tree will have a prominent place in our sanctuary just as the incarnation of our Savior has a prominent place in our lives. Ornaments are to be taken home on Epiphany Sunday, January 8.



## Preparation for Christmas Eve Worship - Help needed!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas with preparations underway for celebrating our Savior's birth. The early Christmas Eve family service needs some help with preparing props. These are simple items like hearts, travel bags, crowns and halos. We need fabric donations. Pieces should be at least one yard long and wide. Crafting of these items will take place at the church on Wednesday, December 14 at 1:00.

## Christmas Caroling on December 18



This year there will be two opportunities to go caroling to some of our member's homes who are not able to get out of the house very much. The opportunities are both on Sunday the 18th but at different times. The Youth Group will be caroling at 7:00 but others are welcome to join them. For those who don't want to be out late, 3:00 is the other option. The more participants we have, the more Christmas cheer we will be able to share. Musical expertise is not required, just a joyful and willing heart. Sign up for Caroling in Fellowship Hall.

## Church Women - Join Us!

The morning group of Church Women (acronym for Women of Mission, Education, and Nurture) has been participating in Pastor Su's weekly Bible study. Currently we are studying, discussing, and learning more about the book of Luke. We meet at 10am on Wednesday at Buckingham Springs, as listed in the above article. Our extra-curricular activity has been to set a schedule to visit our shut-ins. The focus is to spread some cheer among those who are no longer able to attend our meetings. In the end we have found that we have received as much cheer as we have spread!

The evening Bible Study meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the home of Marge Turner. Our next meeting is Tuesday, December 20 at 7:30. Our meeting starts with fellowship over dessert and coffee and we then move on to the study. It is a mix of video and discussion and is called Twelve Women of the Bible. Each chapter is self contained and anyone can join at any time. All women are invited!

## Christmas Eve Worship Services

Once again we will lift up our hearts in praise of God's greatest gift in the Nativity of Jesus Christ our Savior through two opportunities for worship. On Christmas Eve services will be held at 5:00 and 7:00 PM. The 5:00 service will be a family-friendly service that will include the retelling of Jesus' birth. Those attending the service will be asked to think of which character in the story they feel closest to and, if they like, to actually assume that character in a live nativity. Any age can participate. There are no lines to recite as a narrator will tell the story. There may only be a few or many animals, angels, and shepherds, or several Marys and Josephs. This unique telling of God's amazing act of love in Bethlehem will be memorable and meaningful. Childcare will be provided for the youngest children, but ALL are welcome in the service. It was probably noisy in Bethlehem, so it can also be in Forest Grove!

The 7:00 service will be a traditional service of carols, scripture and sermon. The bells and choir will inspire the hearts of those present with special music and the whole service will culminate with "Silent Night." Childcare will not be available at this service.



## Christmas Day and New Year's Day Services

Christmas is on a Sunday this year, as is New Year's Day so there will be worship at our usual 10:00 AM. Please note that there will not be Sunday School or Youth Group on either day.

Worship on these Sundays will be "come as you are" casual services. You are welcome to come in PJs, if you like. There will be lots of carol singing, storytelling and also prayers. Come and give thanks to God for God's gift of love, life and new beginnings.

## Alternative Christmas Market

Have you done your Christmas shopping yet? Don't quite know what to give that family member or friend who seems to have everything? Need a hostess gift or to just treat yourself? Want to give something that is truly meaningful? The Mission Committee just might be able to help through an Alternative Christmas Market. It is the opportunity for fair trade organizations to offer unique gifts for sale and to inform others about their mission. Included in the market will be items from "Fair Trade" including coffee, tea, chocolate and olive oil. This makes a perfect gift for that someone who has everything as well as to expand our witness to God's gracious and abundant work in the world. These are gifts that give twice!

## Thanks for “The Church Has Left the Building”

One month ago our congregation “left the building” extending the love of Jesus to the surrounding community, partnering with God in mission. Below are two specific thank you notes that we received as well as a list of all the projects that were completed.

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*“We would like to thank ‘The Angels’ who came from your church and did some outdoor work for us last Sunday. My husband has been very sick. (In fact, he was just discharged from the hospital yesterday.) We appreciate all that they did. Thank you for your kindness. Sincerely, Ralph & Karen Papandrea (Buckingham Springs)”*

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*“Just wanted to reach out and thank you again for a wonderful Sunday! What a terrific group and an amazing team building experience. Our team was delighted when they came back after the weekend and saw all the nice painting and groomed garden. I truly was inspired and very grateful for your service. Please visit us this holiday season we would love to see you you all! Thanks for making a difference and supporting our individuals with your kindness and and hard work.” Best Regards, Geri Lordi, Greensleeves Director*

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### Soups for Aid for Friends

Over 100 servings of soup were made to be distributed to frail elderly in Bucks County.

### Yard Work at Beacon in Philadelphia

We continue our relationship with this congregation by doing even a little bit of work to spruce things up. Our participation was light in this location, so we are hoping to plan for another work day later this winter.

### Blue Jean Shoes for Uganda

Dozens of patterns for pairs of shoes were cut out to be sent to Africa where they will be assembled and distributed to those with no shoes.

### Yard Work Clean Up

Several yards in Buckingham Springs were cleaned up for winter. Residents who received this service are unable to do the work themselves and were very appreciative.

### Eating Utensils and Napkins

500 set ups of knives, forks, spoons and napkins were prepared. These were donated to Allies Residential Services for their “Day Treatment” program for disabled adults.

### Painting and Garden Clean Up at Allies

This non-profit organization provides services for disabled adults. One such service includes a “Day Treatment” program where individuals spend the day doing projects and receiving care. The work on this site included painting the room where this service is provided. Some of that painting created chalkboard space which will be filled with inspirational messages.

Thanks to all who participated in this extraordinary day. God’s call to be a blessing by going out into the world and share the Good News of the gospel was heard here at Forest Grove. Indeed, WE were blessed!!! We can’t wait to do it again next year. Meanwhile, we continue to look for other opportunities to serve God by serving God’s people.

## “Celebrate the Light” Auction - Saturday, March 25

Although winter has not quite taken hold yet, we know that spring will be right around the corner. One week after we “spring forward” and start to enjoy longer and brighter days, you are invited to join us for an evening of fun, fellowship, and mission. We’re going to hold an auction to raise funds for the summer mission trip. Preliminary plans include a silent auction as well as a live auction. We hope this will be a special night and that you’ll put it on your calendar now so that you can be here to participate.

In anticipation of the auction, we’re asking for items to auction off! You can be as practical or as creative as you’d like. Some things to consider: a week or weekend at a vacation home, a boat ride, some kind of work or labor (like gardening or grass mowing), carpentry work, a musical offering, movie tickets, gift cards for restaurants, a home cooked meal, a special dessert...the possibilities are endless. Be creative and if you have an idea, please share it with any member of the auction committee: Carol Eckmeder, Martha Greenwood, Linda Bowers, Dee Tori, Marilyn Cook, Kim Wertz, Su Fall.



## The Still Small Voice

A still small voice, magnified and amplified in the talking, shouting, and laughter as over 200 volunteers packed 500 boxes of food destined for three area food banks. Saturday prior to Thanksgiving, Charlie Dell'Orefice and I participated in the Philly Basket Brigade hosted by the Woodside Presbyterian Church. And a brigade it was. First 500 boxes were assembled and decorated then lines were formed passing food cartons from the delivery truck to folks at tables waiting to pack. One line was for heavy stuff and another for lighter. I was in the light line and never would have believed how much a carton of marshmallows weighed. Charlie was amazed that with so many helping, the process was so organized, proceeded smoothly and quickly- only four hours from start to finish.



God's still small voice for sure, not only in those packing, but in all the behind the scenes effort by the Philly Basket Brigade organization and a local family owned food chain providing goods at cost and donating some as well. Also the voice was heard by the many folks who donated money to purchase food and supplies; \$35 a box was required and the goal of 500 boxes was achieved. I plan to post at church a few photos so that others in the congregation can "hear" His voice in action. ~Pat Pizza

## Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Please remember that we have friends and neighbors in Bucks County who rely on the Doylestown Food Pantry year-round. When you're out shopping, why not place a few non-perishable items in your cart and bring them to church? the food bank is always in need of items, especially: *Canned Meats, Tuna/Canned Fish, Spaghetti Sauce w/Meat, Chunky Soups/Stews, Spaghettios, Raviolis, Gravy, Baby Food, Rice, Boxed/Canned Potatoes, Stewed Tomatoes, Baked Beans, Black Beans, Applesauce, Fruit Cups, Healthy Snacks, Sugar, Coffee, Salad Dressing, Mayo, Ketchup, Cooking Oil, Peanut Butter, Grape Jelly, Cereal, Oatmeal, Shelf Stable Milk* Let's try to fill Mother Hubbard's Cupboard to overflowing every Sunday!



# Have you considered Online Giving?

Looking for one less thing to think about when it's time to get ready for church? Online Giving can help! Our church offers this service and your contribution is debited automatically from your checking or savings account at whatever interval you'd like. Electronic giving offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

[Home](#) [Worship](#) [Events](#) [About Us](#) [Ministry](#) [Contact Us](#) [Online Giving](#)

Getting started is easy! Go to our church website ([www.ForestGroveChurch.org](http://www.ForestGroveChurch.org)). Click "Online Giving" near the top right of the screen. The page that opens will give you a full description of how online giving works. When you're ready, click the "Give Online Now" box and you'll be directed to the webpage where you'll enter your donation, frequency, and then your bank account details. You'll need the information that appears on your checks to complete the sign up process. We are not accepting credit or debit cards.

If you have any questions at all, please call Kim in the church office (215-794-8575) and she can walk you through the steps. We hope that you'll find this an easy and convenient way to fulfill your commitment to the church.

## December Schedules

### Ushers

- 12/4 - Tony & Laura Visco
- 12/11 - Mike & Mitchell Guarracino
- 12/18 - Sally & John Thiessen

### Nursery

- 12/4 - Merrily Henley
- 12/11 - Kim Shvanda
- 12/18 - Kim King

- Elder of the Month: Bill Hyndman
- Deacon of the Month: Gerry Stemplewicz
- Greeter of the Month: Maggie Rash

## December Birthdays

- |      |                |       |                |
|------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 12/3 | Maci Shvanda   | 12/17 | Pinky Hampton  |
| 12/3 | Julia Myers    | 12/18 | Logan Hyndman  |
| 12/4 | Esther Welch   | 12/24 | Rachel McMahon |
|      | Kim King       | 12/29 | Harry Fegley   |
| 12/5 | Sue Hampton    | 12/30 | Nathan Holton  |
| 12/7 | Betty Dutterer |       |                |
|      | Kay Grob       |       |                |

### Operating Fund 10/31/2016

Collections & Income	\$ 144,211
Large Fund Income	16,219
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>160,430</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Pastor Compensation	77,163
Staff	48,274
Office	11,967
Music & Worship	973
Christian Education	1,314
Property	21,091
Stewardship/Finance	218
Parish Life	330
Other	5,120
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>163,450</b>
<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(3,020)</b>
Fund Balance @ 12/31/15	34,080
Fund Balance @ 10/31/16	31,060
<b>Benevolence Fund</b>	
Balance @ 6/31/16	4,800
Receipts/Disbursement	(34)
Balance @ 8/31/16	\$4,766



# Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road  
 PO Box 462  
 Forest Grove, PA 18922

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

10am Worship Service

### Church Office Hours

9am-2pm (Monday-Thursday)  
 Phone 215-794-8575

Pastor: Reverend Susan L. Fall

Email: [pastorsu@forestgrovechurch.org](mailto:pastorsu@forestgrovechurch.org)

Administrative Assistant: Kim Wertz

Email: [office@forestgrovechurch.org](mailto:office@forestgrovechurch.org)

[www.ForestGroveChurch.org](http://www.ForestGroveChurch.org)

<b>4</b> 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 7pm Youth Group	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:30am - Deacons 10am Bible Study @ Buckingham Springs 7:15pm- Bell Rehearsal	<b>8</b> 9:30am Worship & Music	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 10:15am- Sunday School 1pm Youth Group Gift Wrapping	<b>12</b> 9:30am - Mission Committee Meeting	<b>13</b> 7pm - Property Committee	<b>14</b> 10am Bible Study @ Buckingham Springs 7:15pm- Bell Rehearsal	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 10:15am- Sunday School 3pm & 7pm - Christmas Caroling	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7pm - Stewardship Committee Meeting	<b>21</b> 7:15pm- Bell Rehearsal	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> 5pm Family Service 7pm Candlelight Service
<b>25 Christmas Day</b> 10am- Worship Service	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>1 New Year's Day</b> 10am- Worship Service			<b>December</b>			