

The Focus

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

February 2017

A Note From the Pastor

*“If anyone boasts, “I love God,”
and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it,
he is a liar. If he won’t love the person he can see,
how can he love the God he can’t see?
The command we have from Christ is blunt:
Loving God includes loving people.
You’ve got to love both.”
1 John 4:20-21*

The other day I needed to make a quick trip to the grocery store and chose to do so early in the morning. Early morning is often the time stores receive delivery of product and this was the case on this particular day. The delivery truck was parked in the fire lane immediately in front of the entrance. I observed a woman approach the driver who was unloading boxes. I thought her purpose was to complain about his blocking the main thoroughfare, but she didn't. Instead she walked by, acknowledged him with a cheery good morning and declared how grand it was that it wasn't raining so that the beautiful sunrise was visible. He stopped what he was doing, looked at the morning sky and agreed. That brief exchange probably changed the whole day for three people – or at least the morning – the woman, the driver and me.



A friend reminded me the other day that February is considered the “love month” because of Valentine’s Day, but Jesus calls us to love all of the time. That certainly isn’t easy, but then again Jesus always said that it isn’t easy to be his follower. In our current environment of partisanship, distrust, rage, revenge and bias, we have become a culture where vicious, callous and harsh behavior seems not only tolerated but even meets with approval. Is there love in our hearts, the kind of love Jesus commands, a love that loves others as we love ourselves?

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I think actions such as the one I observed at the grocery store are reminders that love actually is all around; we just have to look for it. We also have to be it. The old song from the 60's says "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." I think we can easily switch out the words and say, "Let there be love on earth and let it begin with me." If love really is stronger than hate, then let's try that on for size, not just for the people and pets we naturally love, but for the delivery man and the stranger that isn't just like us. That's what Jesus did. I think we might just be surprised at all of the love that is out there.

Yours in Christ's service,

Pastor Su

New Middle School Initiative

"The middle school years are one of the most misunderstood and underappreciated developmental periods of human life," according to Mark Oestreicher, a specialist in youth ministry. Many would agree that it is also one of the most challenging periods of human life. It is a time of questioning, clarification and exploration of self-identity. For some, hormones are starting to kick in and there is free-flowing back and forth movement between childhood and adolescence. It is a tough world to navigate – for both the child and those around them. Many parents begin to wonder who that alien is that has inhabited your child's body!



Middle schoolers are at a time in their lives when they desperately need someone to like them, hang out with them and love them. These formative years are an opportunity and responsibility for the church to show middle schoolers what it looks like to follow Jesus during these turbulent years and beyond.

For many years Forest Grove has offered a youth ministry program that includes seventh through twelfth graders. While middle schoolers are still welcome at youth fellowship, now a specific program is being offered that is designed to meet middle school needs. Led by Pastor Su, the group will meet monthly with its first meeting on Friday, March 10th, 6:00 – 7:30 PM. To kick us off, there will be lots of action-packed games and activities to help us get to know each other. Friends are not only welcome but encouraged!

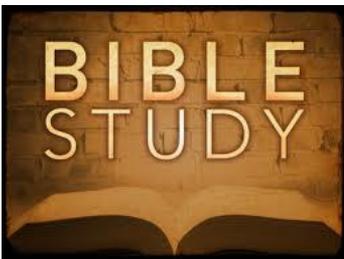
Adult Education Class on Faith Traditions

Our seminary intern, Kate McShane, will lead a class discussing four different faith traditions including Mormon, Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventist and Muslim. Classes will be held at 11:30 AM on four consecutive Sundays beginning on March 12. Each week a different tradition will be examined looking at their historical roots and the similarities and differences in their theology to Christianity.

Throughout history people of faith have looked with suspicion and even disdain on those whose beliefs differ from their own. Kate's presentation and discussion will help us to grow in our understanding of other beliefs and help us to disagree respectfully. The class will be held in Fellowship Hall to allow for accessibility.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

The group continues its study on the gospel of Luke. Luke's Gospel is uniquely inclusive, involving all people. The Good News is for the outcast and the establishment, for the religious and those searching. Luke speaks to women, to men, to the strong and healthy, to the weak and dispossessed. Its relevance today inspires faith, spirituality and action.



Taught by Pastor Su, the Wednesday Bible study meets each week from 10:00 – 11:30 at the Buckingham Springs clubhouse. Not only does this group engage with the biblical text, it has also become a supportive fellowship group as well. The membership has grown in numbers recently and includes those who are not members of the Forest Grove church. Like the Gospel of Luke, it is open to everyone and newcomers quickly feel at home. Biblical scholarship is not necessary and there are no “dumb questions.” We are learning and growing together!

Youth Group

2/5 - No Meeting (Super Bowl Sunday)

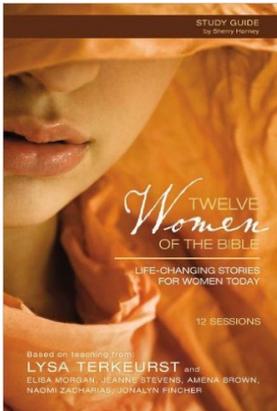
2/12 - Normal Youth Group

2/19 - No Meeting (Presidents Day Weekend)

2/26 - Help with Pancake Supper



Church Women - Join Us!



The morning group of Church WOMEN (Women of Mission, Education, and Nurture) has been participating in Pastor Su's weekly Bible study. We meet at 10am on Wednesdays at Buckingham Springs. Our extra-curricular activity has been to set a schedule to visit our homebound members. 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, February 21 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!

Heartfelt Thanks to Our Leaders Whose Terms Have Ended

After serving faithfully, we extend our deepest gratitude to those who are rotating off from active service as Ruling Elders and Deacons. Jason Dell'Orefice, Chris Preston and Laura Visco have served as Elders. Sarah Lucera, Gerry Stemplewicz, Sally Thiessen and Dick Wright have served as Deacons. All have given from their deep faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his mission to the world through the workings of his church. There have been many meetings, challenging decisions, inspiring insights, loving conversations and just plain work. Their contributions are immeasurable and their reward shall both be great in heaven and in the appreciation of the congregation. Well done, good and faithful servants. We know that you will continue to use the gifts God has given you for the welfare of the church. Thank you for your service!

*Thank
You*

Annual Meeting Highlights

The annual meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, January 29 following worship. The business conducted included the following:

- the church 2017 budget was presented totaling \$209,032
- the pastor's terms of call were approved
- new Deacons were elected – Dot Tinari, Marilyn Cook, Mike Guarracino, and Linda Bowers
- new Ruling Elders were elected – Mike Myers and Pat Pizza
- new member of the Nominating Committee – Missi Dell'Orefice
- Pastor Su shared with the congregation that the leadership has met to discuss a focus for the congregation moving forward. This includes addressing new membership. A task force has been formed to continue this discussion and establish a vision. The congregation will be kept updated and will be called upon for input.
- Pastor Su shared that the leadership is continuing the discussion about the future of the church house. The congregation will be updated and will be given the opportunity for input prior to voting on the building's future. Additional annual reports are available in Fellowship Hall.

Pancake Supper on February 26

“There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink and find enjoyment, for these are from the hand of God.” (Ecclesiastes 2:24)

Come enjoy a “Shrove Sunday” pancake feast on February 26th at 5:00 p.m. Pancakes, sausages and other good things will be prepared to satisfy the hungriest appetite. The cost for the meal is a donation.



The origin this feast comes from the idea of consuming everything in the household from which one planned to abstain during Lent. We serve pancakes to connect us to the customs of a time when flour, eggs, milk, butter and other food items were all on the Lenten abstinence list. These days we usually celebrate the evening before Ash Wednesday more as a foretaste of the feast to come at Easter, but for convenience we are celebrating on the Sunday before Lent begins.

Remember, Lent last for forty days which does not include Sundays. Why? Because, every Sunday is a little Easter!

So come and savor with us a special meal and help prepare for Lent as we also make a new banner for our sanctuary.

Ash Wednesday is March 1

For many years we have observed Ash Wednesday with our brothers and sisters of both Anchor Church and Thompson Memorial Presbyterian Church. We have rotated this celebration between our three churches and this year it will be held here at Forest Grove. The service will begin at 7:00 and will include the imposition of Ashes and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Ashes have been a symbol of grief and also repentance. It is a visible sign of sorrow and was accompanied by the wearing of sackcloth (rough cloth often made of goat hair). During Lent, we remember our willful alienation from God brought about by our disobedience – sin. The sign of the cross reminds us that through Christ, God forgives us and like a loving parent, welcomes us home. The ashes also remind us that “from dust we came and to dust we shall return,” but through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are granted eternal life in God's glorious kingdom.

So begin your season of Lent by remembering that the promises of God are given to you! Come, celebrate and give thanks!

Born in **FAITH**
Rooted in **GRACE**
Living into **HOPE**



Philadelphia Presbytery Commemorative Devotional

300 years ago the Presbytery of Philadelphia was born. Founded in 1717 it is the oldest Presbyterian corporate entity in the United States and home to some of the oldest Presbyterian churches in our nation. The Presbytery's story is deeply rooted in both American and Presbyterian history, illustrating faithfulness and courage throughout our 300-year heritage.

A special commemorative devotional book has been compiled written by members of the 130 congregations and worshipping communities within its bounds. These daily devotions are designed for use between Ash Wednesday (March 1) and Christmas. The book is selling for \$39.99. The goal is to raise \$300,000 in honor of 300 years of faithfulness to be used for missions within the presbytery. A sample copy is on display in Fellowship Hall. You may purchase your own copy by using this link

<http://presbyphl.org/300th-devotional-book-orders/> (if you're reading this online) or by calling the church office for more information. You can also fill out an order form and mail it in yourself, just ask Kim in the office for a copy of the order form.



PRESBYTERY of PHILADELPHIA
Together bearing witness in Philadelphia, Montgomery, Delaware & Bucks Counties

The Still Small Voice

“Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways...” This has always been one of my favorite hymns. In the past few months many of us have felt as though we have been through the earthquake, wind and fire that God spoke about, and many of us still feel the stress with each passing day. The hymn is based on a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier, a Quaker, who disapproved of singing in church. He believed that God is best worshipped in silent meditation. O still, small voice of God is the authentic voice of God rather than the earthquake,

wind and fire. We just have to *listen carefully* - just as “happiness can be found in the darkest of times, if only one remembers to turn on the light.”

~Carol Eckmeder



Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Three times a week hungry people make their way to the Doylestown food pantry. They are grateful that there is a place to go in this area where they



can receive much needed assistance. It is hard to believe that there are such people in this area of affluence, but there are poor among us – everywhere! As you enjoy your daily bread, remember those who have none. Sponsored by our Deacons, there is a small wooden cupboard in Fellowship Hall by the entrance into the sanctuary

where you can bring your much needed donations. It is called “Mother Hubbard's Cupboard” but we sure don't want it to be bare!!! Any food donations are greatly appreciated and are taken to the Food Pantry when the cupboard gets full. The goal is to go weekly. Suggestions for donations include: beans, rice, canned meat, peanut butter, vegetables (fresh or canned), cereal and soup. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!!!!

“Celebrate the Light” Auction

Saturday, March 25

Coming Soon! One week after we “spring forward” and start to enjoy longer and brighter days, you are invited to an evening of fun, fellowship, and mission. We’re going to hold an auction to raise funds for the summer mission trip. We hope this will be a special night and that you’ll put it on your calendar and invite your family and friends!

The doors will open at 6:30pm and the Silent Auction will start. There will be snacks and desserts to nibble on while you browse the items. The live auction will start at approximately 7pm.

We’ve already started receiving donations for the silent and live auction. As donations come in, we’ll be putting notes in the weekly bulletin of items that will be available. If you have an item or a talent or skill that you are willing to donate, please see a member of the Auction Committee.



Some things to consider donating: 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, jewelry, things that are *gently* used that you don’t use any longer...the possibilities are endless.

The Auction Committee: Carol Eckmeder, Martha Greenwood, Linda Bowers, Dee Tori, Marilyn Cook, Kim Wertz, Su Fall.

Donations received:

- Party Light candle holder with candles (new)
- Signed photograph of Debbie Reynolds
- Beautiful throw (new)
- An art coffee-table book
- Ceramic Fountain
- Gift Card to Outback Steakhouse (\$50 value)
- Marion Foster’s Award Winning Pound Cake
- Vintage Pins
- Carol Eckmeder’s Famous Cheesecake
- Decorative Garden Flag

February Schedules

Ushers

- 2/5 - Walter & Emilie Cullerton
- 2/12 - Becky Schroeder, Sharon Ruth
- 2/19 - Bill & Peg Mellinger
- 2/26 - Brad Sanders, Deric Wertz

Nursery

- 2/4 - Kim & Addie King
- 2/12 - Jolie Hyndman
- 2/19 - Louise Stemplewicz
- 2/26 - Sandy Forsyth

February Birthdays

- 2/2 - Pat Pizza
- 2/5 - Mitch Guarracino
- 2/7 - Natalie Pizza
- 2/9 - Deric Wertz
Jim Conner, Jr.
- 2/11 - Brielle Guarracino
- 2/19 - Maggie Rash
- 2/23 - Kaydy Ledyard
- 2/25 - Aaron Myers
- 2/27 - Rebecca Hampton
- 2/28 - Ruth Hood
Sandi Ghering
Leila Shvanda

Operating Fund 12/31/2016

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Collections & Income | \$ 175,467 |
| Large Fund Income | <u>19,463</u> |
| Total Income | 194,930 |
| Expenses | |
| Pastor Compensation | 88,931 |
| Staff | 57,915 |
| Office | 14,226 |
| Music & Worship | 1,544 |
| Christian Education | 1,871 |
| Property | 25,104 |
| Stewardship/Finance | 551 |
| Parish Life | 330 |
| Other | 5,620 |
| Total Expenses | 196,091 |
| Operating Surplus | (1,161) |
| (Deficit) | (1,161) |
| Fund Balance @ 12/31/15 | 34,080 |
| Fund Balance @ 12/31/16 | <u>32,919</u> |
| Benevolence Fund | |
| Balance @ 11/30/16 | 4,766 |
| Receipts | 100 |
| Disbursements | (152) |
| Balance @ 12/31/16 | \$4,714 |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|--|---|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| 5 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 10:15am- Sunday School | 6 | 7 7pm - Property Committee | 8 8:30 - Deacons Meeting 10am Bible Study @ Buckingham Springs | 9 | 10 | 11 Leadership Meeting |
| 12 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 10:15am- Sunday School 7pm - Youth Group | 13 | 14 11:45 - CE Meeting 7pm - Property Committee Meeting | 15 10am Bible Study @ Buckingham Springs | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 10:15am- Sunday School | 20 Presidents' Day | 21 1pm - Auction Committee Meeting 7pm - Session Meeting | 22 10am Bible Study @ Buckingham Springs | 23 7 - Bell Rehearsal | 24 | 25 |
| 26 9am- Jr./Sr. High Sunday School Confirmation Class 10am- Worship Service 10:15am- Sunday School 5pm - Pancake Supper | 27 10am - Mission Committee Meeting | 28 7pm - Session Meeting |  | | | |

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

Administrative Assistant: Kim Wertz

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org

www.ForestGroveChurch.org