**First Presbyterian Church**
**300 South Main Street, P. O. Box 1038**
**Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601-5038**
**Phone: 724.832.0150 fax: 724.832.0152**
**Email: fpcgreensburg@comcast.net**
**Website: www.firstpresbyteriangreensburg.com**

**SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE**
**Worship 10:00 a.m.**

**NON-PROFIT ORG.**
**US POSTAGE**
**PAID**
**GREENSBURG, PA**
**PERMIT NO. 428**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER ISSUE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2020**
**Email submissions to fpcgreensburg@comcast.net or mail to church office.**

***The Coulter Society asks that you please consider remembering our church in your will!***

==========

**CHURCH STAFF**
The Rev. Dr. Martin R. Ankrum, Pastor / Head of Staff
Dr. John B. Salveson, Minister of Music / Organist
Wendy McCann, Interim Sunday School Coordinator
Lu Ann Peters, Financial Secretary
Kimberly A. Stoner, Executive Secretary
Keith L. Huey, Sexton
Shannon Reid, FPC Preschool Teacher & Director
Blythe Graft, Allisa Zorn, FPC Preschool Teachers
Jill Linsz, Children's Music Assistant
Richard P. Fabery & Matthew Cohen, Assistant Sextons
Mr. Edgar B. Highberger, Minister of Music, Emeritus

**October 2020**

# FIRST NEWS:

**THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## A Sort of Homecoming

If you are of my generation or just a popular music aficionado, you may well recognize that I have borrowed the title for this piece from that great, still-touring, band of the eighties … U2. In fact, this was from the first album of theirs that I bought and it has always been a favorite. Though Bono sings about driving through sleet and driving snow in an attempt to return to his home and it is just October here, there is a feeling of homecoming that I am experiencing: we are returning to in-person worship starting the first Sunday of October!

I cannot adequately express how happy I am over the prospect of seeing you all again in the sanctuary! Of course, we will be taking necessary precautions such as the wearing of masks and social distancing. Still, it will be wonderful to see as many of you that are comfortable venturing out in worship once again. I have missed you greatly!

Of course, our technological means to deliver the worship services will continue. In fact, our new, four-camera system is up and running and has had its trial runs to great satisfaction. We have noticed that we have had upwards of 1,300 people viewing a single Sunday worship service! The average for most Sundays are more like 700, but still this particular outreach is proving itself to be very effective.

However, there is no real substitute for joining together in person to lift our voices in praise of God, to hear his word and to offer ourselves to his work in worship. The sanctuary is open and ready to receive your presence, for indeed God has been, will be and is present with us there and wherever we might be.

So, we too, in effect, can join with Bono singing the final lines, thinking of our own homecoming:

**Oh, don't sorrow, no, don't weep,**
**For tonight, at last, I am coming home … I am coming home …**

See you in worship very soon …
-Martin

## Our Church Family News

**Prayer List:** Amy, Autumn, Ann & Jack Bagley, Angelo Bianco, Jean Blice, David Bolton, Ernie Brown, Keirsten Brozack, James Buckley, Lisa Bulger, Edna Mary Cox, Kaitlyn Daniels, Chris Dieck, Kelly Schweikert Doman, Donna, Joanne & Dennis Doyle, Richard Enterline, Charles & Irene Evans, David Fath, Michael Felice, Cathy Folino, Cheri (Turin) Gail, Gabby, George, Gloria, Ellen Grubb, Betty Hammer, Edgar and Joanne Highberger, Frank Hodges, Janet Hudson, Kim Huey, Lee Jamison, Janet, Sofoora Javid, Nik K., Clay Kifer, Anna Kostrick, Ray Kuyat, Mary, George Maser, Carol Mateer, the McMillin family, Chuck McNerny, Cindy Mirigliano, Dorothy Moore, Ed Murphy, Jim Nash, Peg & Doug Newman, Nick, Jon & Barb Nivus, Bill Ofcansky, Denise Ohr, Rose Osterberg, Joe and Nancy Pallitta, Pat Panza, Chuck Phillips, Norbert & Kathleen Piekut, Carolyn Pike, John Pollins IV, Colton Reid, Judy Rugh, Ron Russell, Nico Salvio, Joan Scales, Gene & Liz Sember, Nancy Skrot, Marcie Special, J D Stoner, Jim Sumner, Janet Sutherland, Janet Tinkey & family, Lynda Turin, Tyler, Elsie Vanetta, Ron Vorel, Sally Warrnius, Bill Washburn, Tristan Watson, Nancy Jane Whipkey, Jay and Sue Woodward, and Marsha & Mike Zoruba.

**Birthdays:** Each month we observe the VIP's and fourscore or more birthdays: If you are 80 or older, and would like to be listed in the monthly newsletter, please contact the church. October birthdays are:

Vivian Schwing, 8 Garden Center Drive, Apt. 125, Gbg (09)
Nancy Pallitta, 114 Winslow Court, Gbg (10)
Richard Enterline, 509 Sciandro Drive, Gbg (16)
Rebecca DeMuth, 1116 McKenna Way, Gbg (22)
Eugene Sember, 1125 W. Pittsburgh Street, Scottdale (29)

**Contribution Envelopes –** If you don't receive contribution envelopes and would like a set or if you currently receive envelopes for yourself or a family member and do not wish to receive them please let me know. Lu Ann Peters, Financial Secretary.

**Memorial Contributions** since August 27, 2020 – Robin S. Jennings, Marilyn L. McSparrin, Rich Nesbit, Amy, Ed & Liz Opsidnick, Scott and Gretchen Brown, Alwine Community Civic Association, Fran Folino, Wilson and Julia Saul, Elly and Bob Katchur, Chris Falcon, Jim and Maggie Falcon, Margaret Best, Carolyn Falcon, John and Carol Henry, Art and Sheila Caramella, Ed and Joanne Highberger, Janine Pershing Wright, Nancy Nemeth, Family Additions Maternity Unit at Westmoreland Hospital, Loretta Meyer

**Stewardship Report**

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Disbursements through 8/31/20 | $401,660.58 |
| Total Receipts through 8/31/20 | $328,691.28 |
| Total Income over/under Expense | ($72,969.30) |

**If you would rather receive an electronic version of the First News, please let us know at fpcgreensburg@comcast.net and we'll add you to our email list and remove you from the paper copy list. Then you will receive the First News through your computer rather than the mail box, but you'll have to let us know!! A copy of the latest First News can also be found at our website: www.firstpresbyteriangreensburg.com**

# STAY CONNECTED

**WORSHIP: Sundays 10 a.m. AND Wednesdays 7 p.m.**
Sunday morning worship is NOW OPEN for in person worship !!!!
Wednesday evenings remain available only via technological means.
Join us for live simulcast service at: www.facebook.com/firstpresbyteriangreensburg.
Archived service at: www.firstpresbyteriangreensburg.com/oh-no-i-missed-worship.
Audio access to live services by using SKYPE conference calling:
(1) At the start of the service dial: **1-833-391-8638 or 1-650-215-5192**
(2) When prompted for the CONFERENCE ID# please enter **4266990353** and press the **# key three times. You should then be able to hear the service!**

**EDUCATION & DEVOTION:** Please check our web-site daily for new postings of Martin's Daily Devotion, Sunday school and youth materials as well as other items to connect us.

**PASTORAL CARE & MISSION:** If you need pastoral care or assistance of any kind, please reach out to the church office by phone at 724-832-0150 or via our email address: **fpcgreensburg@comcast.net**

**First Fridays: News & Updates:** If you haven't been receiving our First Fridays: News & updates, please call Kim at the church office (724-832-0150) to verify and/or update your correct email address.

## For Such a Time as This
## A Daily Devotional
### Rev. Dr. Martin R. Ankrum

**Join in the practice of daily devotion by visiting the website each day.**

**By ten o'clock in the morning each day, Monday through Saturday, Martin posts a new devotion for the day. Please join in the practice of daily devotion for such a time as this …**

## RETURN OF IN-PERSON, LIMITED CAPACITY WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS!

**Beginning Sunday, October 4 at 10 a.m.** in-person worship will resume in our sanctuary at FPC!!! We are delighted to announce that the Session approved the recommendation of the Worship Committee to return to in-person worship beginning that Sunday. Of course, there will be some restrictions concerning social distancing, the wearing of masks and unfortunately, the suspending of Coffee Hour. However, for the time being, you are invited back into the sanctuary on Sunday mornings to join us for worship. Simulcast and SKYPE conference calling will still be available for those who find it better to remain home.

## ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

**THRU THE BIBLE CLASS –** This monthly class will resume on Monday, October 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the DINING ROOM to discuss Ecclesiastes. See you then!!!

**LAST TUESDAY BOOK CLUB …**Join us on Tuesday, October 29 at 7 p.m. in the ASSEMBLY ROOM. We will meet to discuss ***The Plague*** by Albert Camus.

**THE MEN'S BREAKFAST & BIBLE STUDY** meets in the DINING ROOM each Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. for a time of fellowship and study. Currently, Paul's Letter to the Ephesians is our study focus.

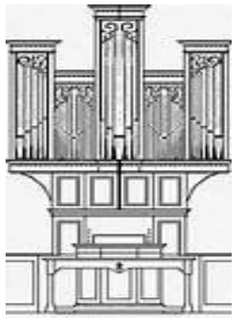
## Circle Meetings for Presbyterian Women

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**ABIGAIL CIRCLE MEETS WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14 @ 10:30 A.M. …** Our Bible study this year is "Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments". We meet now in the DINING ROOM. If you have any questions, please see Peg Carpenter, Circle Chairperson or call the church office.

**AN OPEN INVITATION** to members and friends of First Presbyterian Church to join the Monday Morning Sewing Circle that meets at 9:00 a.m. Monday mornings in the Fletcher Room. We will start meeting on September 14. You don't have to be an expert tailor to hem the cotton flannelette baby receiving blankets or to sew the "little dresses for Africa". If you are interested, please contact Sylvia Carlson at 724-755-2288 for information. Membership at this church is not a requirement. Anyone is welcome.

# NOTES FROM THE LOFT



I can't believe it. I completely missed it. I usually get really excited for these events, and I was so preoccupied with the stuff of life that I missed it. I realize the events are a little arbitrary, celebrating the path of the sun over lines on a globe. But I love those days. Each one means something, and the Autumnal equinox is my favorite! It means we've made it, we're back in the swing. The hot days of summer are giving way to crisp mornings and the lemonade is being replaced with hot apple cider. I look for the signs of autumn leaves and rejoiced as we sing the songs of harvest. It's my favorite time of year! Not too hot, not too cold.

How did I completely miss September 22 and the arrival of fall? Oh, wait, I remember – I was too preoccupied. What is God up too? What is this mess we are living in? When will we all be able to be together safely. I miss the choirs, I miss the concerts, and the plays, and gathering safely. I worry about the protests and the riots. Will people be safe? What can I do? Then there is the parade of natural disasters, hurricanes, unbelievable storms, and fires that have raged out of control.

It has become so easy to get wrapped up in everything that seems wrong, that it's easy to lose hope. It's easy to raise our voice of complaint wondering how all this could happen. That's fair, and that's human. But in the midst of my worry, I also forget the good things. I forget to rejoice that we have the gift of feeding people. I forget to rejoice in the beauty of nature. I forget to be thankful that, even though I don't understand, I have the gift of leaning on the one who knows more than I ever can.

In our time of trial a prayer from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* seems most appropriate:

> "Lord God, You have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils yet unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As we negotiate the coming days, even amidst the stress we experience, may you know that hand of God guiding you, and may we all know the comfort of the Holy Spirit, for we will meet again, and rejoice in the Christ who is everywhere present.

Peace be with you,
John Salveson, Minister of Music

## CHOIRS IN THE TIME OF COVID

As many of you know, singing has been labeled a "super spreader." Deciding how to safely continue that music ministry has taken much thought and has admittedly created doubt within me. During the spring, we began operating with a small ensemble in the loft. Though they took August off, with the affirmation of our worship committee, we have invited them to come back to serve as the ensemble for worship for the next few months. In consultation with the full choir, several agreed that calling back the full choir at this time would unnecessarily put too many at risk. Our small ensemble is also not perfect, however, they are people who have been at lower risk, who have committed to living as cautiously as possible, and are reminded frequently that they are not obligated to continue.

Our bell choir resumed in September. I will be working with them to divide the rehearsal to limit the number of people in the rehearsal at one time. Ringers already wear gloves, and we will ask them to mask during rehearsal.

Youth and Children's choirs will be pause for the time being. We continue to work with the education ministry to determine the best practices and as with all our choirs, will review current decisions frequently.

Many of you have expressed gratitude for the musicians who have been leading us during these months. Thank you for your kind words, and my immense gratitude to those who have helped lead us in our worship since mid-March.

-Dr. John B. Salveson, Minister of Music

**DEAR MARTIN & FPC CONGREGATION:**

It is with mixed emotions that we write you in regard to our upcoming move and departure as active members at FPC. We want to thank you and the congregation for affording us the opportunity to be members, thus contributing to our continued spiritual journey. Whether serving on a committee, assisting at Second Sunday Supper, singing with the choir or just sitting in the pew on Sunday morning, we have made new friends and acquaintances, as well rekindles old friendships and relationships, and for that we are forever grateful. And, Martin, we want to thank you personally for the many messages you have provided us during the services at FPC that have, on many occasions, stirred up some lively conversation during our Sunday morning breakfasts and have enabled us to continue to grow in our faith and evaluate our future as we continue on our faith journey doing God's work armed with His love and guidance.

Warmest Regards,
Rob & Ann Eicher,
1206 Ocean Parkway, Ocean Pines, MD 21811
theeichers60@gmail.com

When I first started working from home in March I was fine with sitting at the dining room table with my laptop computer and a small cardboard box of reference material brought from the office. After all, it was just a temporary set up. The two large dogs barking like idiots when the Fed-Ex gal came to the front door during a conference call was funny the first time. The subsequent times not so much. Now the grandkids are back in school so Carol is no longer babysitting at their house. I decided it was finally time to set up an actual home office in the spare bedroom.

This was our daughter's room 20 years ago, but has since become home to a collection of furniture that doesn't quite fit elsewhere, hobby books and magazines, seven years of past income tax returns, various items saved from vacations and business trips, and my church officer and other church paperwork. In addition to past meeting agendas and minutes from the Board of Deacons, Session and various committees I have also saved; Annual Reports from 2019 back to 2006; the 2020 and 2019 Church Directories; and the 2016, 2010, and 2006 Pictorial Directories. Some of these things are necessary as I am still an active member of the Deacons and Stewardship Committee. The directories are helpful in case I need a name or phone number. But there are other things saved simply because they stir my heart, things like the Centennial sanctuary re-dedication bulletin from October 2018 or a couple of thank-you notes from friends.

Another is a group of papers concerning the beautiful stained glass windows of our church, which now figure prominently on our Facebook page. Included is the descriptive pamphlet of the Passion Windows above the choir loft. These were restored in 2013 with monies from the Gertrude Price & Donald C. W. Birmingham Memorial Fund, one of the last large gifts from that generous endowment. They still look beautiful catching the morning light, even if the plan to light them from outside for evening services did not pan out.

I also kept some information from the adult mission trips to Gulfport, MS in 2008, '07, and '06 where our group helped repair damage from August 2005's Hurricane Katrina, one of the costliest and deadliest storms to hit the US. Of these, the first trip was the most memorable. So much work had to be done. We slept in sleeping bags under tents or on the sanctuary floor of the 1891 Handsboro Presbyterian Church. It was similar to a stay at Camp Pine Springs, only everyone was about 30-40 years too old. Sharing tools and talents we were able to do God's work helping others, both physically and spiritually.

As I sit in my newly organized home office, not able to go to work, and not able to go to church on Sunday, I'm reminded of a quote from the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, "Everything changes and nothing stands still." Wikiquote lists another saying of his, "Dogs, also, bark at what they do not know."

Steve Ross, Deacon

# Children and Youth Ministry

For the most up-to-date information, Visit Our Website and follow these tabs!

FPC GREENSBURG> GROW> CHILDREN

FPC GREENSBURG>GROW>YOUTH

Email Wendy McCann at tjmwam@netzero.com for more information.

**REGISTER TODAY!**
The attached registration form is your child's "permission slip" to participate in children's and youth classes and activities and their "emergency card" just in case. Please take a few moments to complete and return this important paperwork!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**
Elementary School: Join us online as we study the Spark Rotation theme of Noah's Ark.
Middle School: Join us online as we take a deeper look at the Ark of the Covenant in We Believe.
High School: Join us online to finish Simple Sundays "What Are God's Gifts" and start "What Makes People Equal?"

**PARENT AND VOLUNTEERS MEETING OCTOBER 19; 6:30PM**
Both Parents and Volunteers are invited to join Wendy McCann in the FPC dining room! Further information and calendars will be provided regarding Sunday school, youth group, music ministries, mission work, and other activities for children and youth throughout the fall season. Following the information session, those who wish to volunteer will stay for a brief training meeting and review of their clearances.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – CLEARANCES REQUIRED**
The work of the church continues, and your help is needed! As we look ahead and are planning a return to in-person Sunday school and other events, a key component is having volunteers with full clearances. God's work continues through the hands of our dedicated volunteers and we thank you! Help submitting clearance paperwork online or through the US Mail can be obtained by contacting Wendy McCann.

**VBS MISSION 2020 – PRESBYTERIAN GIVING CATALOG**
Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to purchase a fishing net and a family of chickens for those in need around the world. To make a donation of your own, visit www.presbyteriangifts.org.

# FPC YOUTH GROUP NEWS

## October 2020

**Nature Walk w/ Dr. Kellam**
**Sunday, October 4**
**2:30 – 5 p.m.**
**KEYSTONE STATE PARK**
**Meet at parking area for beach**
**1150 Keystone Park Rd. Derry, PA**

Join Jim on a nature walk along the lake and into the surrounding forestland to discover wildlife sign, learn about birds, and identify plants important to wildlife. Please wear footwear you don't mind getting muddy since some trails might be wet. Bring insect repellant just to be safe. We will be outside the whole time and will maintain COVID social distancing during the activity. Contact Jim at 724-691-7365 for questions.

**Games with Rick!!!**
**Sunday, October 18**
**12 noon – 4:00 p.m.**
**FPC YOUTH ROOM**

We've been running a D&D 5e campaign. The kids play characters and interact with the Eberron game world guided by me. The kids work together to solve problems and overcome obstacles in a fantasy world setting that blends magic and machine. They've defeated pirates, saved a town by rescuing a dragon, and become movie stars. If cooperative storytelling sounds like fun to you then this may be your scene.

If you have an idea for a youth group gathering please
let Martin know … revankrum@hotmail.com

# For Such a Time as This
# A Daily Devotional
# Monday, August 24, 2020

Too many folks tend to think that God, having discovered in Adam and Eve that humankind was liable to sin and wandering, proposed a variety of different solutions that fell short until finally striking upon the need to come himself to us in the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity.

This kind of thinking leaves God as reactive to humankind rather than being proactive in his concern and provision for his creation. The overwhelming witness of Scripture demonstrates that God is indeed responsive to the plight of sinful humanity, but in a manner that has been a part of his project all along. This has been God's plan from before the formation of the universe.

The technical theological term for this is supralapsarianism … before the creation of humankind, God already had a plan in which humankind would be united with him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Without getting too far into the weeds with theological jargon, suffice it to say that all this points us toward believing that God knew what God was doing in creation AND redemption and was not merely trying out pet-projects designed as solutions to the problem of separation that sin creates or created.

The 'application' of all this comes down to trusting that God knew and knows what God is doing in this marvelous project of creation and redemption. Some of it appears a bit mysterious to us, but we place our faith in God's work and marvel and the intricate way in which God has worked and still works to bring about his purposes in this world. Still, in our midst even today, we might question or be surprised by how God is working and with whom, it is still our faithful responsibility to seek to find ourselves participating in God's work rather than resisting it.

As well, we are called to remember that God is responsive to us, but not reactive. That is, there is nothing that we can do or fail to do that will put God into some kind of quandary as to how to respond to us. We can trust that God is absolutely in control and not what we do or do not do. There is an element of relief in this; it is not that God has every instance and experience of our individual human lives planned out (as some mistakenly believe as an aspect of predestination), but rather God has our ultimate fates securely in his gracious hand.
And that, as always, is Good News indeed!!!

# For Such a Time as This
# A Daily Devotional
# Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2020

**From Philippians 1:**
**Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.**

What makes for the Christian life? Are we called to withdraw from the common life so that we will not be tainted by the world? Are we called to do some things and to refrain from others so that we might present ourselves as holy and blameless in ourselves at the judgment seat of God? Are we called to forego certain aspects of technology or advancements in medicine because they did not exist at the time of Christ or the early Christian church?

The three statements or questions placed above represents ways in which Christians have historically answered the question about the content of the Christian life. All three are not sufficient answers by any means and are, on the whole, unrealistic … but most of all, they do not bear the full weight of the Biblical witness about the meaning and purpose of the Christian life.

The meaning and purpose of the Christian life is not found in the things that we do or in the things from which we refrain; it is not lodged in any attempts that we might forge to remain spotless and unstained from the world; it is not centered on any attempt to avoid the world or our duties as citizens of the world that God created. The center of the Christian life is not us at all, but rather Jesus Christ.

Paul calls the Philippians to live lives worthy of the calling that they have received -- the gospel of Jesus Christ. This calling that we have received in Jesus Christ gives us more than ample opportunity to be in the world … in fact this calling should propel us squarely into the world. In another letter, Paul assures his readers that their lives have been 'hid' in Jesus Christ. I take that to mean that our salvation is secure in Jesus Christ, but our lives are also clothed by the concerns of Christ, the grace and peace of Jesus Christ that God intends to be spread to all human life and to all created life.

What does it mean then for us to live lives worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ? With the imaginative help and assistance of the Holy Spirit, it will look as unique and different as there are Christians, for each of us, given individual gifts and talents, all have a unique life … but all can be a witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.