

The Good News

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church

September ~ 2016

LIFE TOGETHER

“Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.

What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity. First, the Christian is the man who no longer seeks his own salvation, his deliverance, his justification in himself, but in Jesus Christ alone. He knows that God's Word in Jesus Christ pronounces him guilty, even when he does not feel his guilt, and God's Word pronounces him righteous, even when he does not feel that he is righteous at all. The Christian no longer lives of himself by his own claims and of his own justification, but by God's claims and God's justification. He lives wholly by God's Word pronounced upon him whether that Word declares him guilty or innocent.

The death and the life of the Christian is not determined by his own resources; rather he finds both only in the Word that comes to him from the outside, in God's Word to him. The Christian lives wholly by the truth of God's Word in Jesus Christ. If somebody asks him, Where is your salvation, your righteousness? he can never point to himself. He points to the Word of God in Jesus Christ which assures him salvation and righteousness. A Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. Among people there is strife. "He is our peace," says Paul of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:14). Without Christ there is discord between God and man and between man and man. Christ became the Mediator and made peace with God and among men. Without Christ we should not know God, we could not call upon him, nor come to him. But without Christ we also could not know our brother, nor could we come to him. The way is blocked by our own ego. Christ opened the way to God and to our brother. Now Christians can live with one another in peace; they can love and serve one another; they can become one. But they can continue to do so only by way of Jesus Christ are we one, only through him are we bound together. To eternity he remains the one Mediator.

When God was merciful to us, we learned to be merciful with our brethren. When we received forgiveness instead of judgment, we, too, were made ready to forgive our brethren. What God did to us, we then owed to others. The more we received, the more we were able to give; and the more meager our brotherly love, the less were we living by

God's mercy and love. Thus God himself taught us to meet one another as God has met us in Christ. "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God (Romans 15:7)"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from Life Together

A "tradition" I have taken on over the years is annually reading Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life Together. Bonhoeffer was a pastor who stood up for Christ and the truth of the Gospel in Nazi Germany. It cost him his life. He is worth reading not only because he was a martyr, but his words are both convicting and profound. I read and reread Life Together, because it cuts through all of the baggage that we have yoked the church with. Bonhoeffer continually points back to the truth of the gospel which pierces through traditions, political ideologies, and misconceptions that blow in the winds of culture. Why are we together? We are together because of what Christ has done in both the world and personally in our lives. We are flawed and broken but we have Christ. We may differ in race, language, politics, temperament, and a thousand other things but we have Jesus, and therein are united. We can be separated by thousands of miles or even death, but Jesus holds us together for eternity. There is nothing else that matters in the church. We tend to get distracted and splintered over many things that take our eyes off of Jesus. Jesus is why we worship on Sunday. Jesus is why we pray together. Jesus is why we have life, and hope, and peace. Jesus is our forgiveness! Jesus is our joy!

Many things can happen in a church. New members join. Beloved friends may leave. Currently we are in a transition as we begin to look to fill the void left by Ellen Gross's departure as accompanist. Whatever events may take place in the life of the church, Jesus remains constant. Jesus is our why. My prayer for you is that you might see Jesus anew in your life. I want you to taste and know Jesus in your fellowship in church. I want you to feel Jesus' love as you go about your day, that you might be reminded in all that we do, in all our Life Together, to live is Christ.

NEWS FROM THE PERSONNEL TEAM

The Personnel Team is sad to report that Ellen Gross, our organist/musician/accompanist for the past five years, submitted her resignation effective July 31, 2016. Session accepted her resignation with regret and many thanks for a job well done. As everyone who has attended worship in the past five years knows very well, Ellen is an exceptionally talented musician, and will be difficult to replace. The Worship and Music team, with assistance from Personnel as needed, has begun searching to find a new organist/accompanist.

The Personnel Team recently finished updating the job descriptions for each staff member at FHPC. The first step in the process was to review with each staff person the most recent job description on file for their position. The team also solicited input from the elder in charge of the ministry team most closely associated with each position. Once the new job descriptions were developed, they were approved by session and shared with the staff. The job description will be the basis for all performance reviews going forward.

As a matter of federal and state law, not to mention common courtesy and respect for the individual, personnel matters should always be treated confidentially. The Personnel Team seeks to follow that standard in all of our work, and we ask our congregation to understand and respect that standard as well.

If you have a question or concern for the Personnel Team, the Elder Chair of the team is Jim Shuster, and the congregation-at-large members are Patty Kemerer and Drew Wilson. Rev. Ben Black, as head of staff, is also a member of the team.

DISCIPLESHIP NEWS

"God uses all the circumstances of life to shape the trajectory of our growth in grace, including the doctrines that we adopt and the churches that we attend. He is sovereign over each and every detail that will shape the trajectory of each individual growth curve. We will not all reach the same level of maturity in Christ, nor will we all believe identical things in this life, but every one of us will live and grow under his loving care and sovereign rule.... In his great wisdom God has chosen to glorify himself through saving a church made up of believers of all ages, at all stages of maturity and immaturity, living before him with faith that may be strong or weak, according to what he has given to each one."

Barbara Duguid-"Extravagant Grace-God's Glory Displayed In Our Weakness"

The above quote might lead one to ask the question. If in the end our growth is ultimately under God's sovereign rule, why should we worry about discipleship? The answer is quite simple, Jesus in Matthew 28 tells us that we are to make disciples:

"¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

In light of the Great Commission as a body of believers we should be constantly seeking to encourage and lift each other up in our trust and understanding of the gospel. That is why the discipleship team has been busy planning curriculums and events for the upcoming year. We are excited about several new opportunities for discipleship that are being developed for this year. Here are the highlights:

Upcoming Events Beginning September 2016

God's Word For All Ages

Sunday School 9:15: We will offer three levels of biblical studies

Fellowship And Study

Grounded in the Faith (Level 3): Sundays after church beginning **September 4th**

Wednesday Night Life Groups: Offering biblical study and fellowship throughout the year. Meets at 7:00 PM in the Church Parlor. Begins **Wednesday September 21st**

Special Events

- ❖ Men's Breakfast: Calling all men.....Join us on **Saturday September 10th** at 9:00AM for Men's Breakfast. We encourage you to invite your friends and family members as we grow in our faith through worship, a testimonial and fellowship. \$5.00 recommended donation at the door. Fill out RSVP and place in basket or sign up in narthex.
- ❖ The Art Of Marriage: Through speakers, interviews, stories and humorous vignettes, you will understand the beauty and challenges all marriages face. This event is designed to heighten even the best of marriages and is a great reminder that you are God's gift to each other. Whether you are considering marriage, newly married or have been married for many year, this six-session video event will renew your passion and love for one another. **(Registration opens end of August)**

**Friday October 21st 7:00 - 9:30 pm and
Saturday October 22nd 8:30 am - 4:00 pm**

FHPC Discipleship Committee

MISSION AND **OUTREACH** TEAM NEWS

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV)

Mission Support

The Mission and **OUTREACH** Team continues to provide monetary support to a variety of mission organizations; we have a direct connection to many of the missionaries in the field. A total of \$8,700 has been sent in the first half of 2016 to the following national and international organizations:

Compassion International
CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ) (Trepod)
Caribbean Youth Network (Weightman Family)
One Mission Society (Amie Howarth)
Light to the Nations (Charon Family)
Walking on the Word Ministries (Wilson Family)
GCC Mission Trip to Dominican Republic (S. Edinger)
Malawi Pill Bottle Ministry
Malawi International Partnership (Thyolo Church)

Disbursements in the second half of the year will focus on local mission agencies.

Upcoming Events

Food for the Homeless

The second Saturday of each month a group of caring folks gather at about 5:00 PM to assemble bag lunches to distribute to the homeless in downtown Pittsburgh. We coordinate this **OUTREACH** with Howard International Ministries, a local ministry that aims to share the message of salvation in Christ along with a meal to those who are in need of both. You can participate by shopping for food items, making the lunches, going downtown to hand out the lunches, or all three.

Pittsburgh Project One Day Plunge

On October 15, 2016 we will again participate in the One Day Plunge. This is an opportunity to spread the gospel through the work we will do to help improve the living conditions of some of the less fortunate members of the Pittsburgh community. Willing hands and a compassionate heart are all that is needed to take part in this **OUTREACH** ministry. You can sign up beginning in September.

Operation Christmas Child

Immediately following the One Day Plunge it will be time to fill shoe boxes to send to children around the world to celebrate Christmas and spread the good news of the birth of our Savior. Samaritan's Purse sponsors this **OUTREACH** and we continue to participate. Look for more details as the time approaches.

Finally

You probably notice that the word **OUTREACH** is emphasized in this report. That is because the Mission and **OUTREACH** Team is placing a renewed emphasis on projects we personally participate in. We hope that our **OUTREACH** efforts will be personal, **bold**, rewarding and above all effective in spreading the news about Christ and His love for others. We will continue to support those who have been sent with a mission with our prayers and monetary gifts. Consider how you can join in our Mission and **OUTREACH**.

In His service,

Jim Garard for The Mission and **OUTREACH** Team

Jamie Gazarov, Sharon Pasternak and Darla Yesko

WORSHIP & MUSIC NEWS

**“Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
Tell of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!
(Psalm 105: 2-3)**

This summer, we had several concerts, guest artists and special music. In June, Karen Arrington gave a benefit concert in memory of her nephew. We also hosted the Matsiko World Orphan Choir. The choir is made up of children from Lyberia, India and Peru. The children were such a blessing, not only through their music but their love for others. We also had special music each Sunday from those in our congregation and guest artists.

In August, Donna Shuster and I will be attending a music conference at Volkwein’s Music. During the conference, we sing through numerous songs. This allows us to select music for the fall; the choir, praise team and children’s choir.

On Saturday, September 24, harpist Marissa Knaub will be giving a concert at our church. She will be sharing many selections from her new cd. We are looking forward to having her return.

In the fall, not only will the choir return, but the children’s choir. They will sing several times in the fall in addition to the Christmas Cantata that will be on December 18. Also, we are looking for anyone who would like to join the choir for the cantata. We will begin rehearsals in early November. During Advent, we will also have Bob and Roberta Erickson return on November 27 to play the bells and Marissa Knaub will return on December 11.

In conclusion, we would like to say “thank you” to Ellen Gross for serving as our Accompanist for the past five years. She added so much to the music program. Ellen’s last Sunday was on July 31. We wish her many blessings.

In Christ,

Jennie



WORSHIP NEWS

The Gospel proclaimed,

Praise lifted,

Prayers offered,

Scripture read,

Confession made,

Forgiveness received,

Thanks given.

All of these are vital parts of worship at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church.

Special Services and Memorable Occasions Include the Following:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| February 10, 2016 | Ash Wednesday Service |
| March 20, 2016 | Palm Sunday Service |
| March 27, 2016 | Easter Sunday Service |
| May 1, 2016 | Scottish Reformation Service |
| June 12, 2016 | Afternoon concert "God's Army," in memory of the nephew of Karen Arrington |
| June 22, 2016 | Evening concert by Matsiko World Orphans' choir. |

Pulpit Supply:

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|----------------|---|
| April 10, 2016 | Guest Pastor, Reverend Stewart Lawrence |
|----------------|---|

Looking Ahead:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| October 30, 2016 | Necrology Service, 10:30 a.m. |
| November 23, 2016 | Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Service at St. Maurice Church, 7:30 p.m. |

DEACON'S CORNER

Ministry of Compassion

The Deacons' primary emphasis is the care and support of the congregation and others in our midst that are in need of assistance. We visit our homebound members, assist in their care when possible and take them communion on a quarterly basis. Many close friendships have grown from these visits.

We also extend help to the community via a Help Line call system. We field calls for assistance and offer a listening ear, prayer and modest gift cards as well as a listing of community resources that may benefit the caller. If you know of someone in need, please contact any one of the deacons.

On Call Deacons

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| August 2016 | Barb Byers |
| September 2016 | Sarah Black |
| October 2016 | Sue Lescinsky |

This is a vital ministry both in the life of FHPC and our community. We welcome you to join us. If you would like to assist in any way, let us know; we would love to have you on board!!

Holiday Baskets for Woodland Hills Families

The Deacons provided 16 food baskets to families in the Woodland Hills School District in need of meals during the season of Lent. Each family received more than enough food for a week, along with a bible, goodies and activities for children. Thanks to our congregation and a fundraiser for Woodland Hills, the baskets were filled with delicious and healthy items. In addition, an anonymous donor supplied the money to purchase all the perishable items.

Lenten Services

The Deacons organized and provided a light supper and time for fellowship before the worship services on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Looking Ahead

The Deacons will welcome new members to their orientation in September. In October, we will hold an election of officers. Over the summer, we have maintained contact with the Woodland Hills School District to discern specific family needs. Soon we will begin plans for the Thanksgiving baskets.

Sanctuary Flowers – *Sign up book at the rear of the sanctuary*

Dedicating flowers for Sunday Worship is a wonderful way to remember, honor or celebrate a loved one or special occasion. Flower arrangements only cost \$25.00 per Sunday. The register book and payment envelopes are located on the table at the rear of the Sanctuary.

FHPC Deacons:

Sarah Black, Barb Byers, Sue Lescinsky, Emilia Menezes David Perkins, Cindy Sherer and Darla Yesko

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

We welcome these new members to our Congregation!

Walter Mansfeld, Jacqueline Mansfeld, Elaine Patalski and Jonathan Brown

Save the Date

Stewardship Sunday will be on October 23, 2016. We will have an opportunity to turn in our pledge cards for 2017 during our worship service. After the service we will meet in Room 20 to share a meal with our church family. It's a wonderful time to get to know each other and to share our blessings!

Submitted by Jane DiMenno

Stewardship Team: Jane DiMenno and Betty Powell

Financial Report - As of July 31, 2016

| General Fund Contributions | | Year-to-Date Income | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Year-to-Date: | \$111,612.04 | Income: | \$118,586.75 |
| Annual Budget: | \$212,086.25 | Expenses: | \$125,989.31 |
| Need to fulfill budget: | \$100,474.21 | Net Position: | \$(7,402.56) |

DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION FOR "THE GOOD NEWS"



If you have announcements, stories, pictures of events, thank you notes, births, sympathies or any other information for The Good News, please feel free to send it to Kathy in the church office for consideration for the next newsletter, 1840 Ardmore Blvd., Pittsburgh PA 15221 or email to foresthillspc@gmail.com.

Where We're Headed

The following is an outline of Pastor Ben's sermon plans through December 2016. This is provided to you with the hope that you would read these passages at home and follow along with us! If you ever miss a Sunday you can hear the sermon online at www.fhpcpa.org/sermons.html

| Date | Scripture Passage | Sermon Title | Notes |
|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| August | | | |
| 8/21 | Acts 6:1-15 | Obedience to the Faith | |
| 8/28 | Acts 7:1-53 | Hearing Stephen | |
| September | | | |
| 9/4 | Acts 7:54-8:1 | Stephen's Legacy | |
| 9/11 | Pastor Ben is on Vacation | | Rev. Ken G. Smith Preaching |
| 9/18 | Pastor Ben is on Vacation | | Rev. Jerry O'Neal Preaching |
| 9/25 | Acts 8:1-8 | Joy in Persecution | |
| October | | | |
| 10/2 | | | |
| 10/9 | Acts 8:9-25 | Your Money's No Good | |
| 10/16 | Acts 8:26-40 | Good News about Jesus | |
| 10/23 | | | Stewardship Sunday |
| 10/30 | <i>Pastor Ben is on Study Leave, Necrology</i> | | Rev. Carolyn Jones Preaching |
| November | | | |
| 11/6 | <i>Pastor Ben is on Study Leave</i> | | Rev. Don Dawson Preaching |
| 11/13 | Pastor Ben is on Vacation | | Rev. Harbaugh Preaching |
| 11/20 | | | |
| 11/23 | Thanksgiving Eve Ecumenical Worship Service @ St. Maurice 7:30 | | |
| 11/27 | | Hope | 1 st Sunday of Advent |
| December | | | |
| 12/4 | | Love | 2 nd Sunday of Advent |
| 12/11 | | Joy | 3 rd Sunday of Advent |
| 12/18 | Cantata | | 4 th Sunday of Advent |
| 12/24 | | The Return of the King | Christmas Eve |
| 12/25 | | Lessons and Carols | Christmas Day! |