

STEEPLE TO PEOPLE

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

140 EAST ORANGE STREET LANCASTER PA 17602 717.394.6854 WWW.FPCLIVE.ORG

Send Receive

by Tim Mekeel

When we send off or invest members of our church body into ministry, we do that with purpose. And we await with expectation the news of how that investment is bearing fruit, eager to receive back word on what happened. We hope that you enjoy these stories of sending and receiving and are encouraged by these signs of God's activity in our midst.



Marilyn Shinaman

Just because a pastor's age, address or job status changes, doesn't mean their calling does.

Or, as Marilyn Shinaman put it, "Once a pastor, always a pastor."

Marilyn, an ordained PC (USA) pastor, was officially retired when she and her husband Dave moved from Williamsburg, Va., to Willow Valley's Manor Campus 10 years ago and began attending First Presbyterian Church.

But when Randy Riggs, then FPC's lead pastor, learned of Marilyn's background as a pastor and chaplain, he soon asked her what she might be comfortable doing at Willow Valley.

Marilyn volunteered to lead four ecumenical communion services a month in the health care wing for Willow Valley's Manor Campus. She also visits the health care patients. In addition, she leads a monthly Presbyterian Women's Circle at Willow Valley.

"I have never really completely retired," said Marilyn, 82. "It's like if you're a teacher, you're always a teacher. You extend yourself toward others."

Marilyn estimates that up to 80 people a month attend the half-hour worship services, which include hymns, accompanied by volunteer pianists, a sermon and communion. Up to 14 people attend the Presbyterian Women's Circle sessions.

By reaching out to other residents, Marilyn fits right in. "I really feel blessed. This is such a

wonderful community of people," she said. "They really are there for one another. They support one another. They visit one another."

It's no surprise that Marilyn would get involved in serving others. Pastoring and educating have been pillars of her life no matter where she's lived.

Marilyn and Dave, her husband of 63 years, hail from the Finger Lakes region of central New York state.

After earning a bachelor's degree in education, Marilyn taught fifth grade in central New York for three years, then was a substitute teacher.

But their attendance at Skaneateles Presbyterian Church in central New York led Marilyn toward a new vocation. The church asked her to be its Christian Educator. That sent her back to college for an associate degree in religion. Not only did that prepare Marilyn for the job at Skaneateles Presbyterian, it led to 10 years of service on the General Assembly's Christian Education Certification Council that developed a Christian Educator Certification program.

That wasn't the only nudge that Marilyn received from her home church.

With special encouragement from the congregation's members, Marilyn at age 46 began going to Colgate-Rochester Divinity School seminary two days a week, which allowed her to keep her full-time job as a Christian Educator at Skaneateles Presbyterian. The church gave her flexible hours, her family backed her decision and a church friend who had moved to Rochester gave her a convenient place to sleep if necessary – the friend's house was next to the campus.

“God's hand was on me. God kept opening the doors,” said Marilyn.

Four years later, Marilyn graduated and spent a year as an interim pastor at a central New York church before another series of events relocated her and Dave to Virginia.

Marilyn had noticed that Williamsburg Presbyterian Church was advertising for a Christian Educator, and she was going to be in the area for a Certification Council meeting. So Marilyn sent them a note.

Williamsburg Presbyterian called, met with her and offered her the job of Associate Pastor and Educator on the spot. Marilyn accepted, with Dave agreeing to leave his job as controller of medical diagnostic device maker Welch Allyn in Skaneateles Falls (just north of Skaneateles).

Marilyn stayed 11 years before retiring at age 62. It proved to be a brief hiatus.

Soon she was offered a job as a part-time chaplain at Williamsburg Landing Retirement Community, a place that she had frequently visited to call on members of Williamsburg Presbyterian.

After 10 years of working at the retirement community, the Shinamans again were contemplating retirement. This time, they had their eyes on southcentral Pennsylvania, which would put them halfway between central New York state (where their three children live) and Williamsburg.

Recommendations of friends led the Shinamans to move to Willow Valley and to connect with two Willow Valley residents, the late Conrad and Carolyn Bare.

The Bares invited the Shinamans to come with them to their church, First Presbyterian. The Shinamans liked what they saw and decided to put down roots. Dave became a member; Marilyn, as an ordained pastor, became a member of the Donegal Presbytery rather than the church.

Flower Ministry

Thanks to everyone who has chosen to dedicate the Sanctuary Flowers in memory, or in honor, of a loved one. Several dedication openings remain for the year 2019.

To reserve a Dedication Sunday, please contact Gaye Cox, gaye@gbcox.com or at (717) 575-4497.

The cost per dedication is \$50. Checks should be made to FPC, with Flower Dedication on the memo line. You can also pay online at www.fpclive.org (“Give Now”) or by using the FPC Mobile App.

We remain in need of small, clear vases, maximum 6” tall. Arrangements are made in these containers to be taken to hospital patients and at-home members. Thank you.

Our Ministry team is seeking additional floral designers. Even with little experience, you would receive guidance and help in designing.

For questions and additional information, please contact Gail Alexander, ggalex21@comcast.net or (717) 575-1107.

Memorial Garden

Volunteers, especially MEN, are needed to help maintain the garden. All volunteers assist on a rotating basis.

For questions and additional information, please email Doug Darmstaetter, pinnaclemd@gmail.com or Norma Halstead, halstead1931@gmail.com.

I'd Like to Get to Know You



By Joan Kern *The "I'd Like to Get to Know You" series highlights and appreciates the innovative, creative and entrepreneurial spark that is present in our community. Each interview spotlights a member of our church who has started something.*

Dave Reist



David Reist has been an entrepreneur from the get-go.

He no sooner graduated from college than he started his own business, Hill Top Aquatic Gardens. He continued to work at the Hampton Inn, as he had through college, until the business got up and running.

Then 12 years ago, God called him to open a restaurant in Manheim. The Brick House, 60 N. Main St., is both a business and a ministry, he said.

"The ministry arm is serving the people," he said. "God said, 'Love your neighbors as yourself.'"

Reist describes Manheim as a "very Biblical, Christian town, but with some struggles – a lot of drugs, a lot of low income."

Looking back, he believes he was called to Manheim to provide space for people to meet and to talk about their struggles.

"We're that community hub where people can open up."

As an example, he referred to a man who lost his wife and comes to the restaurant every day.

"And what better way to get together than with a great cup of coffee and amazing food?" asked Reist, who is the restaurant's chef. "Jesus talks about community, about bringing people together where they can let their guard down."

The Brick House is open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thursday to Saturday. For more information, call 717-665-5588. The aquatic business is now part of Reist Property Maintenance.

Reist recounts how the restaurant became a ministry.

"I got this message from God that I was supposed to call the ministers in Manheim together to pray for the community. Manheim had lost some kids in a car accident, and I found some heroin needles in the backyard of the restaurant.

"I said I couldn't."

Then one day, God got him isolated in his car going to Reading, listening to the Rev. Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Ministries, in Georgia, on the radio.

"His church has an incredibly healthy environment," Reist said.

"What breaks your heart?" Stanley asked. "That means you are being called to start something or make a change. That's what God is calling you to do."

"Okay, Lord, you win. I'm done," Reist said.

Reist wrote to Manheim's pastors, inviting them for coffee at the restaurant.

"A wonderful group of pastors showed up," he said. "None of them knew why they were there. I told them we need to pray over the city. The city is in trouble. We prayed.

"This is like we're 12 men sitting in the Upper Room," one of the pastors said. "And I thought, 'Wow!'"

The group meets monthly. One day, one of the pastors asked Reist what was next. They held a prayer walk.

And three years later, things are looking up. A troubled bar closed. A shady bar closed. One of

Manheim's big buildings is being restored.

"There's a total sense of a change of direction," Reist said. "I attribute it to the power of community.

"An entrepreneur has many hats. When the boss is Christ, you make sure you do his work first. It comes with a lot of sacrifice, but in the end you're doing what you're supposed to do, changing community one cup of coffee at a time."

Reist grew up in First Presbyterian, attending since he was a child with his parents, Diana and the late Roger

Reist, a local attorney; his brother, Gregory; and his sister, Barbara Dillon.

A 1987 graduate of Manheim Township High School and 1992 graduate of Millersville University, he resides in Lititz with his wife, Danielle; son, Benjamin, 9; and daughter, Carly, 7.

He previously served as an Elder on the session and the pastor nominating committee.

"God's plan is always better than ours," he said.

HVAC Update

By Kenton Glick

In the pre-dawn darkness of December 15, a giant crane in FPC's parking lot revved up its engine to begin the next phase of installing our new HVAC system. "I was in awe over the size of the machine, and how the operator maneuvered it," FPC Facilities Manager Scott Albright marvels. "It was a pretty interesting process." With the units securely placed on the roof, J&G Heating & Air Conditioning stepped into the installation phase.

Last month's newsletter discussed the important upgrades to the existing failing boiler system that can no longer properly heat large portions of the building.

Scott says that most interior units are being installed, and wires, linesets, and ducts are being run. He hopes for this phase of the project to be online by the end of January. Then after about two weeks of use, engineers will return and conduct a series of tests; if the system checks out, they will issue the warranty.

Scott notes that the second floor corridor will need to have a new drop ceiling put in to cover the new units and ductwork there. During the weekend the installers will be cleaning up their work spaces so places like Sunday School rooms can continue operating with no interruption.

However, Shirk Hall is a different story. For

approximately a month or more, the area will be a construction zone and therefore not usable for Cherry Street services. Staff asks that everyone be especially patient during this time. It will be well worth the temporary disruption to fix this critical issue that will set the FPC building on a firmer foundation for decades to come.

Kenton Glick also wrote the HVAC upgrade article 'Turning a Problem Into An Opportunity' in the December issue of STP.





Dr. Henry C. Stouffer, Jr.:

On 80 years of Membership at FPC

By Joan Kern

Dr. Henry C. Stouffer Jr. is the longest-tenured member of First Presbyterian Church.

Stouffer, 93, will mark his 80th year as a member in 2019. And he has left his mark.

The retired dentist currently serves on the church history committee, although a recent injury prevents him from attending meetings.

Previously, he taught senior high Sunday school and chaired a fund-raising committee and the Donegal Presbytery Men's Council.

In his teens, he sang in the choir under the direction of Helge Pearson. About that time, he and his Sunday school classmates were photographed for an article in Life Magazine that marked a church anniversary.

Also in the photo were his good friends, Henry Strock and Orman Hampton. Henry was the youngest of the Rev. Henry C. Strock's four children – Kay, Fred, Sarah Lou and Henry. The family lived in the manse next to the church.

“It was a big old building.”

As a teen, Stouffer played the piano but gave it up when he became a dentist. “Moonlight Sonata,” “Au Clair de Lune” and “Rhapsody in Blue” were his favorites.

Stouffer was born in Lancaster, the only child of Henry C. Sr., an executive at the former Armstrong Cork Co., and Margaret Stouffer.

He graduated in 1942 from Manheim Township High School, where he played on the varsity tennis team. Later in life, he played golf at Media Heights Golf Club.

From 1942-1944, he attended Franklin & Marshall College on an accelerated program, due to World War II.

He served in a special training unit with the U.S. Army

for a year, then went to dental school at Temple University from 1945-1948.

In 1951, he joined the U.S. Air Force and served as a dentist in a hospital at Randolph Field Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

Back in Lancaster in 1953, he reopened his practice at 134 E. Walnut St., where he was a solo practitioner for 40 years. He also served 25 years as a dentist for the Lampeter-Strasburg School District.

“Back in those days, dentists weren't allowed to advertise. So to get known, I joined the Lancaster Optimist Club. And I'm still a member.”

Stouffer was the husband of the late Virginia Brenner Stouffer, who died of Alzheimer's and dementia in 2015. He cared for his wife during her illness and later spoke about what he learned as a caregiver at the Long Community at Highland, where he resides, and at Brethren Village.

He and his wife had two children, a son, David, of Blue Bell; and a daughter, Lynne Ehrman, of Medina, Ohio; and three grandsons.

Before moving to the Long Community six years ago, the Stouffers resided in Northbrook Hills, “just a half mile down the road, on the former Ewell Farm.”

Stouffer is happy to say that despite his advanced age, he is still good at remembering names.

“I'm good at names, spelling and numbers.”

He has two avocations – duplicate bridge and rare coins.

He won bridge tournaments in Canada, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Bermuda and one year won the Pennsylvania State Open Pairs Championship with Jim Eshleman. He attained the rank of Silver Life Master.

He and his son opened a rare coin business a year before he retired.

He and his wife did a lot of traveling, he said, and he still does a lot of reading.

"I'm sort of a history nut," he said.

In 2002, he was commissioned to write a two-page piece on the history of the church for the Lancaster County Heritage Partnership.

In recent years, Stouffer developed a great friendship with the Revs. Geoff Kohler and Dan Snyder, and until his recent injury, he attended church regularly, along with "Books of the Bible" classes with the pastors.

It was one of those classes that spurred Stouffer to begin what he calls "the most interesting fact" of his story.

"At the age of 91, I began doing something I'd never done before in my life – writing poetry.

"One night after a class, I came home and sat down and all of a sudden, words came to me for a poem. I couldn't write it down fast enough."

The poem is "Peace," one of 15 or 20 of his poems, some of which have been published in "Steeple to People," the journal of the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatics and various publications at the Long Community.

Peace

Be it of heart or be it of mind
The search for the Lord's Will
Can never be only one of a kind
Many directions each day we take
Many decisions each day we make
How can we know which is right
Shield us from darkness and pursue God's True Light
Then don't forget the power of prayer
For we all are His children, under His care
We must not think of it only in times of war
God's peace is in reach, always not far
Seeking for peace? You might ask
A description is no easy task
When sitting in silence as I am right now
With Bible in hand, that might be how.

~Henry Stauffer, Jr.



On Sunday, January 13, a celebration was held in honor of Rev. Geoff Kohler and his wife Beckie. The congregation extended warm thanks to the Kohler's for their six years of service to this congregation and wished them well as they embark upon their next season of ministry.

STAFF UPDATES

There is a redevelopment in progress with our church staff.



Laura Sambrick has accepted our invitation to increase from part-time to full-time work. Her job has been expanded to include equipping the congregation to care for all generations. While Laura is non-ordained staff, this expansion will assist Pastor Dan in his new role as Transitional Lead Pastor. She will also be of assistance in our worship services.



Guy Kling has accepted our invitation to work full time as Church Sexton. Guy was doing excellent work keeping our building beautiful and safe as a part-time employee. This increase in his hours will free up Scott Albright to handle more administrative work related to daily operations.

As previously announced, Deb Guhl resigned from her job as Financial Secretary on November 30th after 21 years at First Presbyterian Church. We are grateful to Deb for her faithful work over the years. She will be missed by our staff and many friends at FPC. (All questions regarding pledges, annual giving or reimbursements should be emailed to the office at finances@fpclive.org)

NEW CHURCH OFFICE AVAILABILITY HOURS

The Hours of Availability in the church office have changed to give the staff a few hours each day of uninterrupted time to collaborate and focus on projects. This change is important to us as our smaller team is working to make the most of the time we have each week. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

You may call the office and leave a voicemail message anytime outside these Hours of Availability. The church building will be open at the usual times throughout the day and evening, but staff will be unavailable for impromptu meetings and visits outside these available hours. Anyone wishing to meet with staff will always be able to schedule those meetings with staff at their convenience a day or so prior.

- **Mondays - 12:00pm to 3:00pm**
(Weekly Morning Staff Meeting Mon. mornings)
- **Tuesdays - 10:00am to 3:00pm**
- **Wednesdays - 10:00am to 3:00pm**
- **Thursdays - 10:00am to 3:00pm**
- **Fridays - 10:00am to 3:00pm**

Church Office: 717.394.6854

Office: info@fpclive.org

Finance Office: finances@fpclive.org

Care Ministry Spotlight



by Laura Sambrick
Director of Pastoral Care

Blue Christmas

The Caring Ministries of the church were especially busy in December. Blue Christmas was held on Sunday, December 2. This event reaches out to people who need sanctuary from the holiday pressures and a permission-giving environment in which to acknowledge the pain and begin to find treasures in loss. Thanks to all those who served in this event including the Stephen Ministers, Deacons and Prayer Ministry.

Poinsettia Delivery

The deacons once again gifted the staff and many of our at-home members with a beautiful poinsettia. This gift is so appreciated by our members who often don't have anyone to help them decorate for Christmas. It's truly a gift of love that they look forward to.

Youth Visitation

On Saturday, December 1 several of our youth and their families went Christmas caroling at Homestead Village. They were led by Pastor Dan and his wife Chris. These same youth visited Homestead Village over the summer as part of their local mission service week. It is wonderful to see them continue the good work they started.

Volunteer OPPORTUNITIES at FPC

If you are interested, you can call the church office (717.394.6854) or email: volunteer@fpclive.org. We will contact you with more information about the areas you are interested in.

These options are currently available:

Answering the phone and greeting guests on weekdays (shifts available from 2 to 5 hours in length, Monday through Friday)

Visiting an at home member once a month at your convenience

Sunday morning front door & Lobby greeters - welcome those arriving, and stay to be on hand in the Lobby and common areas during the worship service itself

Looking for those in the congregation with experience in a specific skilled profession (electrician, painter, construction, contractor, tradesman, etc). Our Facilities Manager would like to call upon this group for occasional advice and/or volunteer support for one-off projects.



Children's Ministry

by Katie Sina Kindig
Director of Children's Ministry



There is much to rejoice about for the FPC kids! December kicked off with an incredibly successful Advent Fun Day. We had over 15 families, thirty kids and lots of crafts were made, games played and yummy ice cream and cocoa from Splits and Giggles to be had! Shout of thanks to Danielle Reist who helped lead the event, the team of volunteers and especially the FPC Middle school girls who contributed their time and creativity. We are hopeful to make this a yearly event, and will make sure to provide even more frosting for the gingerbread houses next year!

Throughout the Advent season, you may have witnessed our FPC kids present and participatory during worship services. Olivia Jenkins, Annika Richards, Norah Schrecengost, and Ben Reist read Advent Scripture readings. Jackson, JR and Jemma Mathers helped in the 11 o'clock traditional service.

In nursery the FPC kids heard tell of the Nativity through bible felt story board, and created awesome crafts. In worship arts they helped Miss Ashley make all of the Pageant costumes by hand, practice the music and script for the Christmas Eve Pageant.

In Sunday school the kids participated in relays, craft making, nativity dramatic play, and continue to pray for and with each other as they studied the season of Advent. We are so blessed to have the Children's ministry leaders that we do and I continue to be so very grateful for them.

In 2019 we move into the New Testament in all Sunday school programming. We continue to pray for our FPC kids and leaders as they enter this new year. Blessings to you!

Highlight

An Interview with Norah Schrecengost

Norah age 9, played Natalie, a little girl who has a transforming dream in this years original Christmas pageant written by Geoff Kohler.

K Norah, you played the part of Natalie the lead girl in the pageant, can you tell us what is she like?

N We are similar In that we are both kind, we celebrate Christmas and we both have siblings.

(Norah has a younger brother, Sam Schrecengost age 7, who played one of Natalie's friends as well as a two humped camel at the nativity)

K How are you different?

N Well Natalie is a little greedy. In the beginning of the play she's handing out Christmas cookies, she gives herself a cookie every time she gives a family member one. Also, she doesn't necessarily believe that Christmas and Jesus are real.

K Does Natalie learn anything in the play?

N She learned that God made a way for Jesus to be with her, that Christmas really happened, and that God and Jesus are real!

K How did you prepare for the pageant?

N It was hard to memorize at first. It was a lot of lines, but I kept going over it with my dad and I learned it all!

K What was your favorite part of the pageant?

N The beginning scene with the cookies, I had it all memorized! That part was so fun, it was really cool to hear the audience laughing.

K Would you want to be in a future Christmas Pageant?

N Yes! I'm so excited for next year!

The pageant was at the 5 pm service in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve, and very well attended. It was directed by Ashley D'Onofrio.



Jeanne Osborne
Elder to Adult Education



Coming Up . . .

Sunday Morning Adult Education

Trending in the Chapel *Explore how faith intersects with of-the-moment topics*
10am in the Chapel

Coming in February . . .

Dr. Lee Barrett, the Mary B. And Henry P. Stager Chair in Theology, and Professor of Systematic Theology at Lancaster Theological Seminary, will lead us in a three-part series focused on the British writer, C.S. Lewis.

C. S. Lewis is widely known as the author of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and other tales of fantasy, seemingly intended for children. But he was also a profound and popular lay theologian whose essays and radio broadcasts reached an audience of millions throughout the world. Arguably, he was the most influential Protestant writer of the twentieth century. His vision of the Christian faith has an appeal that transcends the divisions of liberals and conservatives, evangelicals and main-liners, and even Catholics and Protestants. In this series we will explore the sources of his enduring attraction.

FEB 3 - The Holiness of God: The Fascinating and Terrifying Mystery [Dr. Lee Barrett]

FEB 10 - Loving Your Friends and Loving Everyone [Dr. Lee Barrett]

FEB 17 - Faith and Science [Dr. Lee Barrett]

FEB 24 - Happy Hour

Feasting on the Word *Bible-based lecture/discussion preceded by hymns*

Starts at 9:30am with hymn-sing

Class begins at 9:45am—G. Mann Rm.,
adjacent to Café First (ground level)

FEB 3 - Press on In Christ [Philippians 3:1-16]

FEB 10 - Our Loving God [Psalm 48:1-3, 9-14]

FEB 17 - Our Mighty God [Psalm 66]

FEB 24 - Our Rescuing God [Psalm 91:1-16]

The LCCC Winter Shelter for Women

The Lancaster County Council of Churches Winter Shelter for Women is open and operating at a new location this year.

The shelter is now housed at St. Mary's Catholic Church on the corner of South Prince and Vine Street.

This is an amazing volunteer experience to help spread the love of Christ and provide a safe and warm place for homeless women and their children throughout the winter months. The shelter operates every evening of the week from Dec. 1 until March 31, and is open at 7pm until 7am. It is staffed by volunteers from various congregations throughout Lancaster County. Volunteers help with greeting guests each night and getting them settled into the shelter. Some volunteers spend the night at the shelter so women can sleep knowing they are safe. In the morning volunteers help guests get organized to leave the shelter for the day. There are no meals or showers available at the shelter. It's close location to Water Street Ministries allows guests to seek those services there.

First Presbyterian **will not** be organizing a solid week of volunteers this year to help at the shelter.

However, the shelter still needs volunteers to help each night. Please consider volunteering at the shelter again this year. Signing up with a friend or a small group of friends would help out considerably. For further information please contact Rebecca Saner at rsaner@lcchurches.org.

To sign up, use the link available in the FPC App or FPC website (www.fpclive.org)

If you have questions contact Beth Manners: email- charlesmanners@comcast.net or call 717-299-1126. You can also contact Rebecca Saner, Winter Shelter Director at LCCC, 717-490-0548.

Another way to help is to **donate items directly to the Lancaster County Council of Churches and designate them as being for the Winter Shelter.** Needs include:

new/packaged women's underwear; new/packaged children's underwear; Cup of Noodles; granola bars; and children socks (new only); hot cocoa mix; decaf and regular coffee; teas; cheese and peanut butter crackers; etc.

"I was hungry and you fed me. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink."

MISSION

ONLINE GIVING

You can give to
Weekly Blue Challenges
Anytime Online at:
www.fpclive.org
or by using the
FPC App

An Invitation to Cameroon

The Ginn-Pipeline would like to invite you to a special trip to Cameroon March 18-31, 2019. The purpose of the trip is to visit and encourage Ryan and Krista Ginn who serve as hostel parents at the Rainforest International School. While in Cameroon the team will participate in "Refuge139" to provide meaningful childcare for missionaries attending their annual Conference Training. We will also have some time for site-seeing and shopping. Cost for the trip is approximate \$3,000. Registration for this closes at the end of January 2019. If you are interested please contact: Bev Harrar (beverly_harrar@sil.org), who is planning to attend.

MISSION

MISSION

UPCOMING BLUE CHALLENGE MISSION GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

JAN 27

Water Street Mission

The journey out of homelessness begins with a hot meal and a safe place to sleep. But experiencing homelessness is traumatic. That's why Water Street Mission works to provide a safe and healing environment where the gospel of Christ is able to take hold of hearts and set them on a path of restoration. In that process, they offer personalized programs and coaching for men and women who are ready to commit to transformation. They work with individuals to assist them with their goals—helping them move past their season of homelessness. www.wsm.org

FEB 3

Souper Bowl of Caring

Souper Bowl of Caring empowers youth and unites communities around the time of the Big Game to help those in need. This mission is dedicated to tackling all of the issues that exist in our communities, including poverty, hunger and homelessness.

FEB 10

FPC Youth Mission

This fund helps to create opportunities for youth at FPC to take part in local and international mission projects.

FEB 17 & 24

The Mix Arbor Place

The Mix at Arbor Place is a non-denominational faith-based, 501c3 not-for-profit organization located in Southeast Lancaster City. The Mix at Arbor Place is dedicated to meeting the spiritual, social/emotional, academic, and physical needs of Lancaster's inner-city youth. For more information about the many amazing programs at Arbor Place, visit their website: www.arborplace.org.

Pastor to People

Because We Believe . . .

by Pastor Dan Snyder



Belief is a powerful force in our choices and actions. Consider the countless people who buy lottery tickets each day even though the facts point to a reality that there is a very slim chance they will win. Yet they believe in something that leads them to buy a ticket anyway.

And belief can be a power for overcoming tremendous challenges.

Josh Waitzkin is a championship chess player and subject of the film *Chasing Bobby Fisher*. Reflecting upon losing his first chess match he said, “The moment we believe that success is determined by an ingrained level of ability, we will be brittle in the face of adversity.” This thinking led him to continue winning and later achieving greatness in other fields outside of his expertise in chess.

The resilience and persistence of the Church for over two millennia comes from the power of our beliefs. As we move forward into another season of transition at FPC Lancaster, I want to recall with you some of these core beliefs captured by the rhetorical questions of St. Paul in his letter to the church in Rome (Romans 8:31-39).

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” Because we believe in a *for-us* God, the Church of Jesus Christ is unstoppable. We are people of great hope that God is on our side in the face of adversity. Our confidence is that things will never get worse than Good Friday. On that day Our Savior conquered death and all death’s friends. And while we must beware of triumphalism, the belief that God is for us gives us the ability to adapt to whatever might come our way in 2019.

“He who did not spare his own Son . . . how shall he not graciously give us all things?” Because we believe in a *generous* God, the Church of Jesus Christ is undepletable. We are confident that God will provide all we need in 2019 from divine abundance.

Our souls are satisfied by every Word that proceeds from God’s mouth. We must beware of stopping short by providing only social needs. A generous God equips us to pour out the fruit of a growing life to our neighbors.

“Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.” Because we believe that God loves to *forgive*, the Church of Jesus Christ is unmistakable. *Forgiven* is our core identity, the foundation of our humble posture. Nothing we do is irreversible nor will it permanently determine fate. Instead of making us haughty, the belief that God forgives gives us the power to begin each day confident in God’s delight. Then we can go out into the world as humble listeners.

“Who is it to condemn? Christ Jesus . . . is interceding for us.” Because we believe that we are in Christ’s *Presence*, seated with him at his right hand as he prays for us now, the Church of Jesus Christ is unforgettable. No matter how small or insignificant we may feel, this knowing-relationship reminds us that we matter and have an important purpose. This is not an image of a snooping God who watches for when we mess up. Thus, we act with Christ’s agency and responsibility for our souls, our work, our mission, our worship.

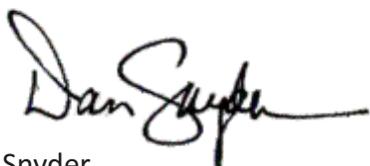
“What can separate us from the love of Christ?” Because we believe that God *is love*, the Church of Jesus Christ is inseparable. We are confident that there is no need to fight each other, that battles over greatness have ended. Christ’s love gives us love for our neighbors. And while we must beware of overvaluing tolerance and acquiescence, we can be with and for each other helping each other become our best for the world.

Some people believe they are not good at math or not athletic. Conversely, others believe they are naturals. Both of these beliefs keep these people

Continued

Because We Believe, Continued

from growing and adapting. But we are not chained to our current capabilities. New levels can be reached by changing the way we think about ourselves. St. Paul equips the Roman church for the challenges they will face by pointing them back to beliefs upon which they were founded. We will need these same beliefs to adapt to our own challenges in the months ahead and I see and sense them throughout our community.



Dan Snyder

Transitional Lead Pastor

**FPC's Annual
Congregational
Meeting will be held
on Sunday, March 3.
Details coming soon!**

**Worship Space Shifts
in Feb. & Mar.**

Beginning Feb. 3, the 8:30am worship service will gather in the Chapel and the 9:00am Cherry Street service will be held in the Sanctuary. Upon the completion of the HVAC renovation project (mid-March), both worship services will return to their usual spaces.

Thanks to all for graciously accommodating these shifts!

Update from the FPC Gratitude Committee:

Thank you to all who made generous estimates of support for the Christ-centered work and mission of the church. If you have not made an estimate, please do so by emailing finances@fpclive.org, calling the church office, or providing your estimate via the church website or mobile app.”





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