



The Friendly News

The First Presbyterian Church of Woodbury Heights

May 2017



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends:

While Dottie and I were driving to Williamsburg, Va., after Easter, we found a radio station, located in Fredericksburg, Va., that played contemporary Christian music.

Our spirits were uplifted through the second half of our journey.

We listened to the same station part of the way home. And one song really grabbed the attention of our minds – and souls.

I'm not sure of the name of the song or the artist, but the lyrics spoke of how, though we are often under pressure, God uses that pressure to create diamonds from our ashes.

Well, that idea has a basis in science. Since diamonds are composed of carbon, enough pressure on ashes (which are also carbon) can produce them.

Spiritually, that is just as true.

We struggle with the pressure we find upon ourselves. The pressures of fear and frustration, of doubt and uncertainty, of broken relationships and broken dreams, of responsibilities that loom large over us all and leave us feeling as if we are in the ashes.

And how often do we find ourselves sitting in the ashes, not knowing what to do?

That's exactly what Job was doing when his friends came to see him (see Job 2:8.)

But what Job forgot (and what we sometimes forget) is that, yes, God can create diamonds from our ashes, and that the pressure we feel is that which transforms us into something we never thought we would be, or could be.

What ashes are you sitting in? What pressures are you feeling? Are you just sitting there? Or are you looking for the diamonds?

They will be there, if we have the faith to look for them.

Which leads to a thought: You all know that our church finances are not what they should be. If you don't know, then you have not read the financial reports in the bulletin or the several letters sent about it.

Quite honestly, our Session sometimes sees ashes as we grapple with the pressures this puts on all of us to be the church God wants us to be. Maybe you see ashes, too.

I've seen some ashes myself, but I have decided that I will no longer sit in the ashes like Job.

I refuse to give in; I may feel the pressures (don't think I won't!), but I will constantly remind myself that those pressures are creating diamonds.

Let us join together and respond to the pressure with absolute trust, absolute faith, absolute confidence, and the absolute assurance that God can and will create those diamonds from our ashes.

Let us all do our part to support the work we are doing together to turn our ashes into diamonds. If just one of us chooses to sit in the ashes, we will never together find the diamonds God has waiting for us!

In Christ, John

May birthdays

2 – Brian Smith
 5 – Leighanne Eachus
 5 – Noah Zorio
 7 – Brian McDonnell
 8 – Quint Lerch
 8 – Debbie Becker
 9 – Barbara Daugherty
 9 – Ethan Davis
 9 – Sue Golding
 11 – David E. Geserick
 12 – James Norcross
 14 – Arin Sheehan
 14 – Sydney Sheehan
 15 – Richard Daugherty
 15 – Jennifer Swanson
 15 – Ryan Blaum
 17 – Kristina Lott
 20 – Elisha Elliott
 20 – Craig Mangano
 21 – Paul Gramm
 23 – Jamie Cary
 23 – Madison Kratzer
 23 – Patricia McDonnell
 23 – Nancy Lex
 24 – John Pitchford
 27 – Matthew Kratzer
 28 – Bonnie Dawson
 31 – Patrick Schoen Sr.



May anniversaries:

11 – Gerald and Wendy Morrell Baker
 17 – Diane and Paul Belcher
 18 – Carl and Laura Seidemann
 19 – Pete and Carol Siciliano
 20 – Carol and Thurman McDaniel
 24 – Matthew and Ammie Davis
 29 – Jesse and Nancy Butler

Janet Koehler thanks members of our church for caring support

Thank you to all in my church family for your prayers, visits, flowers, treats, cards and calls.

Your caring support has been a great help in my getting better.

I pray I will soon be back, ready and able to, once again, be an active member of the church.

News and notes from the pastor

Our sympathy is extended to **Dave, Lori,** and **Ben Taylor** and their family on the recent death of Dave's sister, **Diane**; and to **Bill** and **Amie Packer**, on the recent death of his father, **Bill**.

Get well prayers are sent out to **Esther Culbert** and **Margaret Schneeman**, who were both in the hospital recently, and to **Jim Golding, Kim DiNoia, Bob Peterson, Lois Gebeline, Catherine Shannon, Dick Shaw, Carol Siciliano, Nancy Lex, Joe McDonnell** (Pat's husband); **John McDevitt** (Elisha Elliott's brother-in-law); **Joe Rafferty** (Kay and Walt Pierson's grandson-in-law); **Dottie Reynolds** (Ammie Davis' mother); **Rick Love** (Joy and Dick's son), and **Rick Day** (Brad Shedwick's father-in-law), all with ongoing health issues.

A BIG welcome to our newest members – the four young men who professed their faith on Palm Sunday: **Jimmy Clyde, Ethan Davis, Austin Golding,** and **Nicholas Zorio**.

A BIG thank you to **Brad Gilmore** and all who brought us an amazing pageant of the passion of Jesus! It will live in our souls for quite a long time.

A BIG thank you to all who helped with our two church work days! Everything looks great!

Another BIG thank you to **Joyce Woodrow** and her whole chicken barbecue staff for such a successful event!



Congratulations to our newest church members: **Ethan Davis, Austin Golding, Jimmy Clyde** and **Nicholas Zorio** (front). *Photo by Joyce Woodrow*



MAY 2017

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

-- John 15:13

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---------------------------|---|--|---|--------|--|
| | 1 | 2 Esther Circle, Barbara Daugherty's home, 7 p.m. | 3 Sunshine luncheon, church lounge, noon | 4 Bell practice, 6:45 p.m. Choir practice, 7:45 p.m. | 5 | 6 |
| 7 Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m. CROP walk, 2 p.m. | 8 PrimeTimers, noon | 9 | 10 Mother- Daughter dinner, Fellowship Hall, 6 p.m. | 11 Bell practice, 6:45 p.m. Choir practice, 7:45 p.m. | 12 | 13 Men's group, Piston Diner, 8:30 a.m. |
| 14 Youth Sunday Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m. | 15 | 16 | 17 Mission, 6:30, Session 7 p.m., both at annex | 18 Blood drive, 2 to 7 p.m. | 19 | 20 |
| 21 Sunday School closing program, 9:45 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m. | 22 | 23 Deacons meet, annex, 7 p.m. | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Worship, 11 a.m. | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |



JUNE 2017

“And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”

-- Luke 15:20

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|----------|--------|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 Worship, 11 a.m., Pentecost, communion | 5 | 6 Esther Circle, annual year- end dinner | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 Men's group, Piston Diner, 8:30 a.m. |
| 11 Worship, 11 a.m. | 12 PrimeTimers meet, noon | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 Worship, 10 a.m. | 19 | 20 | 21 Mission meets, 6:30 p.m. Session meets, 7 p.m., annex | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Worship, 10 a.m. | 26 | 27 Deacons meet, 6:30 p.m. annex | 28 | 29 | 30 | |
| | | | | | | |



Church members can attend ceremony set for program graduates May 6 in Mullica Hill

Church members are invited to a graduation service at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, May 6, to celebrate and rejoice with the families who have graduated from Family Promise into their own homes.

The service will be at the Trinity United Methodist Church, 284 Cedar Road, Mullica Hill.

Those who wish to attend should RSVP to Victoria Peters at (856) 243-5971 or email her at vpeters@familypromisegc.org.

Family Promise news update: Here are some highlights from Victoria Peters' latest report on what's happening with Family Promise:

At present, three families are being helped by Family Promise, including two at the day center in Glassboro and one at the Transitional Home in Mickleton.

Since January 2017, seven families have graduated from the program into their own homes!

Seven new congregations have been approved and added to the network to be host or support churches, including some in Cumberland County, for a total of 16 host churches and 11 support churches.

Among the organizations, clubs, troops, churches, individuals and businesses who donate their time, services and items to help the families of Family Promise are: the Odd Fellows Group, for ShopRite gift cards; South Jersey Dream Center, for pillows; Miles Auto, for free service on the van; Fulton Bank, for conducting a financial literacy program; Rowan University, for conducting interview skills and resume/cover letter skills; and Troop 62485, for donations of winter items and toiletries.

Highlights of the April Session meeting:

By Rev. John Shedwick

Your Session met on Wednesday, April 12. After devotions were presented by Kara Outten, the minutes of the previous Session meetings were approved.

The pastor requested study leave on Thursday, May 18, which was granted.

The Mission Committee gave an update on the CROP Walk, which will be held at Chestnut Branch Park, 401 North Main St., Mantua at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 7.

The financial reports were discussed, reviewed and approved.

Building & Property: The commission reported that the back steps leading to the kitchen will be repainted; that additional volunteers for outside work will be secured; and discussed who will be responsible for opening and closing the church for services.

Christian Education: The commission reported on the closing program for Sunday School on May 21. Plans for the configuration of classes next year were shared.

Stewardship and Finance The committee presented several items: It was explained that Boscov's Day coupons and Piston Diner coupons can be used to raise funds for our church.

The commission also set plans for a special discussion time on Pentecost and an Every Member Visitation in the fall.

Worship and Program: The commission secured volunteers for the April 30 service, at which elder Jake Mangano will deliver the sermon. The annual review of our music staff was also discussed.

Communication and Outreach: The committee presented our new promotional brochure and discussed installing an outdoor sign near the street in front of the annex to advertise our activities.

Membership and Fellowship: The commission is looking into holding another Strawberry Festival in June.

The meeting concluded with prayer.

Special note from the pastor: "As I have been driving through our towns, I have seen a number of For Sale signs. Please keep an eye out for them.

"When you see a moving van in your neighborhood, let me know and I will make it a point to visit a new resident and invite them to worship with us. You might do the same!"



DEACONS CORNER: Next Deacons meeting 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 23, annex

Blood Drive – Thursday, May 18, 2 to 7 p.m., Fellowship Hall

News:

Blood Drive: Sign up with Joyce Woodrow

Communion: March 5: Communion was served to 96 people; Holy Thursday: 64 people received communion.

Greeting cards: They were sent to 34 members in March -- 22 birthday, 5 anniversary, 4 special members, 3 get well; In April, 34 cards were sent -- 15 birthday, 6 anniversary, 3 get well, 4 special members, 2 sympathy, 4 confirmation. We also mailed 24 invitations to seasoned singles for the Sunshine Luncheon.

Food collection: The March contribution was 47 items and in April it was 60 items. The year, to date, the total is 243 items. Thank you!

Suggested food items for May: Macaroni & cheese, tuna fish, mayonnaise, canned soup. Please note that all nonperishable food is welcomed.

Visitations: There were 61 visitations made by deacons during March and April.

Mark your calendars

May 3: Sunshine Luncheon -- noon in the lounge.

May 7: CROP Walk -- see Sue Golding for registration/donor forms

May 14: Mother's Day

May 18: Blood Drive -- Fellowship Hall, 2 to 7 p.m. See Joyce Woodrow to sign up

**** Please put your donations in the green offering envelopes! Thank you!**

And most importantly: **Please inform us of anyone needing assistance or a visit. **

Please notify Rev. Shedwick of any prayer requests to be announced in church or online.

God Bless - In Christ's service, your Board of Deacons:

Steve Antosky, Nolan Becker, Liz Billings, Cassandra DeFinizio, Steve Elliott, Madison Kratzer, Nancy MacDermott, Carol Martino, Joan Mullin, Kayleigh Reim, Sue Reim, Andrew Reynolds, Peg Schoen, Dottie Shedwick, Ada White and Joyce Woodrow, moderator

Sunday School's year-end program will be May 21

Our Sunday School year ends on Sunday, May 21, with our closing program at 9:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Each class will present what it has learned this year.

We have had a great year! Our classes learned about the Fruits of the Spirit and our faith in God. Our three service projects this year were to write letters to our military heroes; to write and decorate cards for cancer patients; and, with the congregation's help, we collected nearly 90 household items for Joseph's House, a homeless shelter in Camden. A BIG thank you to all.

Sue Reim, our nursery teacher, is retiring after teaching for almost 30 years. She has been an inspiration and will be sorely missed! With that in mind, we need a nursery teacher and two helpers for other classes. Please consider helping out, and contact Jeanne Mangano or Bonnie Dawson if you can help or have questions.

Have a wonderful summer, and we look forward to seeing you on Sept. 10 for Rally Day.



Notes from the Organ Bench by Quint Lerch May 2017

Our Palm Sunday and Holy Week services

This year, our Holy Week got off to an unusual start with the presentation of a modern Passion Play, in much the same design and content of ancient passion plays that were popular in medieval times, the earliest of which dates to the 13th century. Brad Gilmore envisioned this presentation more than a year ago, and he and the participants worked very hard over the last year to make his vision a reality. His idea was to present a modern retelling of the typical passion plays presented throughout Europe since the Middle Ages. Strangely enough, his use of a rhyming, rap-style dialogue was an element of the original plays, albeit without the rap cadence that is unique to today's culture and in which Brad employed his novel design. This presentation was original, moving, poignant, joyful and uplifting in a way that most of us could not have imagined. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Brad and all the talented actors and singers who participated in this fantastic and memorable presentation. I cannot imagine a more appropriate way to start our journey through Holy Week. Many thanks to Brad and the entire cast for a stunning presentation.

Many thanks also go to the participants in our solemn and moving Maundy Thursday service as well as members of the choir and soloists Dave Taylor, Ammie Davis and Linda Kershaw. As for our Easter services, our newest church members -- Jimmy Clyde, Ethan Davis, Austin Golding and Nick Zorio -- ably led our sunrise service. And for our traditional Easter service at 10 a.m., we were treated to a magnificent opening hymn/anthem featuring our Bell Choir, Sanctuary Choir, Youth Choir, Cherubs and the congregation. Many thanks to Carol String for her able leadership in this service. We are truly blessed here with the magnificent talent and leadership we have in our music program. Thank you, congregation, for your support and appreciation of our efforts.

Special summer music begins May 28

It's that time of year again. We will start special musical presentations beginning May 28. So if you have a yearning and a talent, please tell me as I have 15 slots to fill from May 28 to Sept. 3. Start vocalizing now or go digging in your closet and drag out that violin, clarinet, flute or even a ukulele, and we'll find some appropriate music and an open date. Speaking of the ukulele, it is interesting to note that it was brought to Hawaii by Portuguese immigrants (who called it a machete) when they came to the island to work on the sugar-cane plantations in the late 1870s. It was quickly embraced by Hawaiian natives who gave it a Hawaiian name meaning "jumping flea," symbolizing the speed of the player's fingers over the strings. The ukulele is now the official instrument of the state. So, I'm hoping someone out there really does play the ukulele because it would be a first in our church. Thank you in advance for making our summer worship so special, and possibly unique.

Important upcoming dates

May 14: Youth Sunday/Mother's Day service – Yingers ring at 11 a.m.

May 21: Last Sanctuary Choir of season sings, 11 a.m.

May 28: Special summer music begins, 11 a.m.

Whitman poetry expert to speak at women's event

The guest speaker for our annual Mother-Daughter dinner, which will begin at 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, inside Fellowship Hall, is Rocky Wilson.

He is a poet, performance artist and Walt Whitman interpreter who lives near the Delaware River in Camden, where he has been writing and performing for more than 30 years.

Rocky is a long-time favorite at the Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center in Camden, both for his popular children's shows and for his powerful, dramatic plays. He holds a master's degree in dance from Temple University.

His studies in creative writing at Rutgers University-Camden have enabled Rocky to create a unique blend of words and movement that bring his stories and poetry to life. A lover of Walt Whitman's poetry, he has done several full-length performances about the poet in local libraries and schools.

Rocky has been a substitute teacher in Camden for many years and is attempting to make the Guinness book of world records in that category. He recently had his first book of poetry, "*The Last Bus to Camden*" published.

Called the "Puppet Laureate of Camden," Rocky often bicycles across the Ben Franklin Bridge with a monkey puppet on his hand.

Mother-Daughter annual dinner slated for May 10

Our church's annual Mother-Daughter dinner is scheduled for 6 p.m. May 10 in Fellowship Hall.

Please join us for a delicious meal prepared by the men of the church and for fellowship.

Get your reservation ticket(s) for this free event on Sundays before or after church from Barbara Daugherty.

New Narthex display shows off youth groups of past, present

We thank Meghan Geserick and Tracey Urion who worked with the members of the Youth Group to create the informative display in the Narthex.

Energy, enthusiasm and dedication are clearly evident in the photographs of the various group events.

Also included are reminders of teen activities from previous years. The photo at right shows just one of the displays



A request for church pictures from your History Committee

Those of you who take pictures of current church events, which serve as a visual record we'd like to preserve for future History committees, are asked to either e-mail your digital files to Janet Koehler or have prints made for the History Committee.

It would also be very helpful to have vital info written on the back, (the event, date, those in the photo, and your name).

We believe the vitality of First Presbyterian endures and is a testimony to God's presence in our lives. We pray that the history of our church will continue to be told and retold for many more decades. All newsletters and bulletins are collected and preserved toward that end.

We sometimes get items or pictures from past members or their families. Several members of our congregation frequently e-mail us their pictures. We are thankful. Everything we collect is shared either in displays, the written history of the church or the newsletter and website.