

The Focus

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

January 2020

Pastor's Notes

It's here – 2020, a new year. For the past nine years I spent New Year's Eve with my grandson. His parents went out with friends and so, to my good fortune, I got childcare duty. This year was different. His parents decided to stay home and in that I failed at New Year's revelry last year – I fell asleep at about 11:00 – my grandson opted to stay home. Last year he phoned home to offer someone conscious a Happy New Year.

This change of tradition got me thinking about the whole celebration of the New Year. What is it about wishing another a Happy New Year on the stroke of 12 that is so important? It seems that celebrating the turn of the calendar from one year to the next is as old as civilization itself. It has been celebrated in many different ways across cultures most of which revolve around the wish for good luck in the days ahead. The Dutch, for whom the circle is a symbol of success, eat donuts. Greeks bake special *Vassilopitta* cake with a coin inside, bestowing good luck in the coming year on whoever finds it in his or her slice. Fireworks on New Year's Eve started in China millennia ago as a way to chase off evil spirits. The Japanese hold New Year's *Bonenkai*, or "forget-the-year parties," to bid farewell to the problems and concerns of the past year and prepare for a better new one. Disagreements and misunderstandings between people are supposed to be resolved, and grudges set aside. In a New Year's ritual for many cultures, houses are scrubbed to sweep out the bad vibes and make room for better ones.

Psychologist David Ropeik suggests New Year's traditions revolve around the desire for survival. Wishing for good luck has an obvious connection. Resolutions are also a big part of the season and can also be viewed as a desire for survival. Most can be boiled down to living a better, healthier life and so commonly include things like treating

ourselves (got to shed those extra pounds) and people better, making new friends, and paying off debts. It's been so throughout history. The Babylonians would return borrowed objects. Jews seek, and offer, forgiveness. The Scots go "first footing," visiting neighbors to wish them well.

How does all this social "resolving" connect to survival? Simple: We are social animals. We have evolved to depend on others, literally, for our health and safety. Treating people well is a good way to be treated well. "Love your neighbor as yourself," it turns out, is a great survival strategy. Isn't that just what Jesus said, not for the sake of a better year ahead but for a better life ahead?

2019 has been yet another year of violence, hate speech, and jockeying for power. As I write this article the news is in the background. It is full of stories of "How to stay safe (survive) in the New Year." Call it psychology or call it faith but I think we all need to go back to what Jesus said which is fundamentally all about our deepest need – to survive and survive well. It isn't just what we want; it's what God wants for each and every one of us. "Love one another and yourself." Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." That's the beginning, middle and end of Jesus' teachings. May it be the beginning, middle and end of a new year.

Yours in Christ's service,

Pastor Sue



Thank you from Allies, Inc. for the Christmas Gifts

Many from the congregation extended their Christmas shopping lists to include 30 disabled adults living in group homes run by Allies, Inc. These individuals have very limited resources and not much family to speak of – but they have us! The love of God was certainly felt by those touched by our generosity, and that includes the Allies staff who are always affected by the compassion of strangers.



ADULT EDUCATION SERIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT

God created all that there is and gave humans the responsibility of caring for this good creation. Beginning Sunday January 12th at 11:30am for three weeks, we will turn our attention to environmental needs and how we can and must be good stewards of this good earth. A special speaker, Oz Halpern, will kick off the study on the 12th providing his expertise on this topic. We will wrap it up on the 26th when we consider what we can do as individuals and as a congregation to improve our environmental stewardship. Child care will be provided.

Don't Forget Mother Hubbard's Cupboard



With the New Year often come resolutions to make life changes. One of the most popular resolutions is to shed some of those pounds put on during the holidays (or all year long). Most of us at Forest Grove Presbyterian have the luxury of making such a resolution – whether we keep it or not. It is hard to imagine that there are many who have the choice made for them because their food cupboards are consistently sparse. During the cold winter months, these individuals are making decisions of whether to “heat or eat.” As a result, the need at the food pantries is great. In our own area, three times a week hungry people make their way to the Doylestown food pantry. They are grateful that there is a place to go in this area where they can receive much needed assistance. It is hard to believe that there are such people in this area of affluence, but there are poor among us – everywhere! As you enjoy your daily bread, remember those who have little or none. Sponsored by our Deacons, there is a small wooden cupboard in Fellowship Hall by the entrance into the sanctuary where you can bring your much needed donations. It is called “Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard” but we sure don’t want it to be bare! Any food donations are greatly appreciated and are taken to the Food Pantry when the cupboard gets full. The goal is to go weekly. Suggestions for donations include: beans, rice, canned meat, peanut butter, vegetables (fresh or canned), cereal and soup. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!



We're still working on it!

Parking Lot and Sidewalks: Most of the paving work is complete. The septic tank caps that are elevated in the middle of the lot will remain that way until the top paving coat is done in the Spring. The sidewalks may be prepped and poured by the time this *Focus* reaches you!

Site Lighting: We are disappointed with the parking lot lighting. The lights are much too bright. Unfortunately, decreasing the lumens is more complicated than simply changing the light bulbs. We are investigating ways to reduce the lumens and ask for your patience while we work on this problem.

Rear entrance: As previously reported, a representative of the Sheffield Group company is working with our architect to finalize pricing and prepare a contract. It is expected that work will begin on the rear entrance in Spring 2020.

Sanctuary windows & painting: The contract for new windows was signed with Renewal by Andersen (RbA), and the second down payment will be made in mid-January. Pre-installation inspection and final measurements have been taken by RbA, and construction of our windows will begin at a RbA site.

Kitchen stove: We haven't forgotten about the stove! Propane is needed for the stove, and it is necessary to place the propane tank a specified distance from the building. We didn't want a tank sitting in the middle of the future children's play area, so the decision was made to bury the tank. The scheduling of that installation is being worked on now.

If you would like more information or have questions, contact the following people:

Construction loan & site work -
Rear entrance -
Sanctuary windows & painting -

Pat Gessner
Paul Wachtendorf
Craig Jencks

Annual Reports are Due

With the ushering in of the New Year, we remember 2019 by our annual report. All reports are due to the church office by January 13.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

January 26th is our annual meeting of the congregation to receive the annual reports, vote on the Ruling Elders and Deacons placed into nomination and the Pastor's terms of call. All members of the congregation are urged to remain after worship for this important meeting and to celebrate who we are together in God's service.

The Nominating Committee is still looking for both elders and deacons to fill a two year term. The distinction between elders and deacons include the role each plays in the life of the congregation. Elders are to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Together with the pastor, they exercise leadership, government and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation. To that end, they meet monthly (4th Tuesday) as a collective board and then serve on a session committee of the church.

The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Deacons meet collectively once a month (3rd Thursday) and visit the homebound and those who are ill. They provide meals on a temporary basis to members of the congregation when needed as well as for funeral receptions.

Both ministries are in fulfillment of Jesus's command to care for the church and one another. Of both offices, it can be said that there is joy and great comradery around the table as they do their important work. If you would like more information about being an elder or deacon or you would like to be considered for either position, please contact Pastor Su, Maggie Rash or Missi Dell'Orefice.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Opportunity
Monday, January 20**

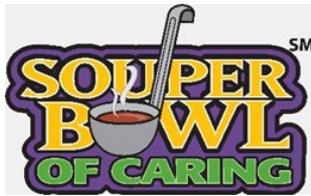


**"Life's most persistent and urgent question is:
'What are you doing for others?'"**

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Each year, Americans across the country answer this question by coming together on Dr. King's Holiday to assist their neighbors and communities. On Monday, Jan 20, 2020 at 9am, we will join the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown in a day of service. This will be our second meal packing event with *Rise Against Hunger*, the national organization whose mission is to provide food and aid to communities around the world. We will be packing meals comprised of rice, soy, vegetables and 23 essential vitamins and minerals to be shipped to hundreds of locations around the world. Join us, as we continue to support our global neighbors, in an enriching experience suitable for people of ALL ages.

Since the event is held in Germantown and there is limited parking, we will carpool from Forest Grove at 8:00 AM. Anyone who wishes to travel independently is welcome to do so. All who participate are asked to register at <http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/FPCG2020>. Contact Pastor Su if you need help with registration. Our congregation is making a donation for the cost of meals through our mission budget. If you wish, an additional donation may be made when you register for the event. **Again ALL AGES AND ABILITIES CAN PARTICIPATE.** Last year there were young preschoolers and octogenarians working together as well as every age in between. The more the merrier!!



Souper Bowl of Caring – February 2, 2020

For the past several years the youth in our congregation have made soup that is then donated to Aid for Friends. This Bucks County organization services the “frail elderly” in our area. This effort is called the “Souper Bowl of Caring” because it is held on Super Bowl Sunday – and is an expression of caring for those in need. We need everyone’s help to make this mission a success. As we have done on The Church Has Left the Building Sunday, food donations are requested from the congregation. Anything that can be thrown into a pot to make soup is appreciated. Suggested items include chicken broth/stock, frozen or fresh vegetables, beans, raw or cooked chicken. Donations can be made before Sunday morning by bringing them to the church marked with “Stone Soup.” Preparation will begin at 9:00 AM on the 2nd so it can cook during worship. Last time we did this over 100 servings of soup were made. Let’s see if we can top that!

MISTER ROGER’S NEIGHBORHOOD CONVERSATION

Several members of the congregation went to the movies to see the recent film about the well-known children’s television show host. His overall message was all about extending kindness to all – just like Jesus taught! We want to follow up this movie experience by both watching the other recent documentary about his life and then having following up discussion. Those that wish to engage in this opportunity should plan to remain after worship on **February 2nd and February 9th** for 2 hours. Sandwiches will be provided. If you are interested, please sign up in Fellowship Hall.



On January 24th our Friday Night Fellowship (FNF) will resume. This month's theme is "Love." We have a flexible start time beginning at 6:00pm with our mission project. Dinner is at 6:30. We conclude the evening at 8:00 for those who can stay that long. Others may leave at 7:30 in order to get little ones (or big ones) to bed.

Our mission project this month is related to our theme of *Love*. We will be extending love and caring to the disabled adults and their families who attend the weekly "Coffee House" at the Tree of Life Presbyterian Church in Springfield, PA. There will be simple arts and crafts projects as well as cupcake decorating. These will be used at their annual Valentine's Day event in February.

Next month's theme is "Crazy Shoe Night." We will be making blankets for Synergy Project and collecting shoes for Soles 4 Souls.

There was lots of laughter and the deepening of relationships happening at FNF. Costumes are optional; sense of humor and play are required. If you don't feel it when you arrive, you will before you go home! Bring your family, friends and neighbors. If you need help with transportation, please call the church office. We want everyone to be able to join us.

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New Storytelling Service: February 7, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

How well do you know Bible stories? Can you put into words how these stories actually relate to your everyday life? If your answer is “yes,” “no,” or “sort of,” the new Storytelling Service could be a wonderful opportunity to engage with God’s message of steadfast love, forgiveness and ongoing care for God’s creation. On February 7th there will be a gathering for dinner, storytelling and singing. The story that will be told is the biblical story as described by Pastor Su. This story is also our story and so it will be retold by participants as a creative and modern rendition. The creativity will come from individual and group imaginations as well as the use of art, drama, music and other mediums. When we personalize the sacred story, we open ourselves to the ways that God is at work all around us. This time is meant to inspire us in our everyday lives beyond the doors of the church.

We are asking for volunteers to bring a portion of the meal. Plain cooked pasta will be provided, we just need the rest. Since our stove is not working, we ask that the items be brought in a way that can be served immediately. Crockpots work great to keep sauces warm! If you are willing to donate part of the meal, please take one of the food item slips that will be hung on a partition in Fellowship Hall. We are asking for all participants to sign up so that we can have the appropriate amount of food. This is an intergenerational event where friends and neighbors are also welcome.

VBS 2020 is coming!



SAVE THE DATE: Vacation Bible School, July 20-24

Plans are already being made to explore God's amazing love with our 4 year olds through sixth graders. We will meet each day from 9:00 AM – noon when the children will experience an energizing, Bible-based program that will give them an opportunity to grow in their understanding of God and God's love for us in Jesus.

Once again Kim King is our VBS coordinator. She is looking for volunteers to serve as group leaders, snack helpers, recreation leaders, and story tellers. Contact Kim, Su Fall, or the church office if you are interested in helping. Remember, we supply the resources, you supply the love for God and children! Registration will be available soon including online.

THANK YOU

A special *Thank you* to all who helped make this past Advent and Christmas season so meaningful. To the entire cast of our Christmas musical *Shepherds, Sheep and a Savior*. The Sunday morning worship on December 22nd was anything but *baaaad!* In fact it was GREAT! Thanks to Leanne Yerkes and Maggie Rash for leading this production. Thanks to all who put in the rehearsal time following the weekly Sunday service in order to make this worshipful offering so inspiring. Our Shepherds, sheep and chorus were amazing! Let's do it again next year!



Advent 2019



MISSION IN ACTION



**Extending the love of Jesus, partnering
with God in mission.**



January 2020 Schedules

Ushers

1/5 Gerry and Marsha Stemplewicz
 1/12 Doug and Vini Christie
 1/19 Paul Wachtendorf, Craig Jencks
 1/26 Marilyn Cook, Pat Gessner

Greeter

1/5
 1/12
 1/19
 1/26

Coffee

1/5 Sarah Lucera
 1/12 Carol Eckmeder
 1/19 Martha Greenwood, Dot Tinari
 1/26 Vini Christie

Nursery

1/5 Sarah Lucera
 1/12 Jenny Kimbel
 1/19 Carice Ledyanrd
 1/26 Karen Myers

Elder of the Month

Deacon Dee Tori

Capital Campaign @1/1/2020

Pledge \$304,618
 Pledge & Non Pldg. Rcpt
 Disbursements

Operating Fund

Offering & Income

Large Fund Income

Total Income



January Birthdays

Vanessa Conner 1/5
 Ruth Squillace 1/5
 Carice Ledyard 1/10
 Pat Gessner 1/13
 Emilie Cullerton 1/15
 Kara Holton 1/15
 Michael Myers 1/18
 Gail Rosencrance 1/18
 Eric Greenwood 1/19
 Jake Sanders 1/23
 Carol Fegley 1/23
 Jack Bradney 1/24
 Marilyn Cook 1/24
 Walter Cullerton 1/26
 Mary Lou Humlhanz 1/26
 Larry Conti 1/29
 Vini Christie 1/31

Expenses

Pastor Compensation

Staff

Office More Information

Music & Worship next month !!

Christian Education

Property

Stewardship/Finance

Parish Life

Mission

Xfer to Capital Fund

Total Expenses

Operating Surplus(Deficit)

Fund Balance 12/31/18

Fund Balance 10/31/19

Benevolence Fund Balance
 @9/30/19

Receipts/Transfers: 0

Disbursements: 0

Balance

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
	<i>January 2020</i>					
5	10am Worship/Communion Sunday School, Coffee/ Fellowship	7 Worship & Music	8 10am Bible Study	9 10am Bible Study	10	11
12	10am Worship, Sunday Sunday School, Coffee/ Fellowship 11:30 Adult Education Youth Group	14 6:30 Beekeepers	15 10am Bible Study	16 10:30 Deacon's	17	18
19	10am Worship, Sunday Sunday School, Coffee/ Fellowship 11:30 Adult Education	21 7pm Stewardship 7pm Property	22 10am Bible Study	23	24 6pm Friday Night Fellowship	25
26	10am Worship, Sunday Sunday School, Coffee/ Fellowship , Annual Mtg. 11:30 Adult Education	28 6:30pm Sessions	29 10am Bible Study	30	31	

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church
1856 Forest Grove Road
PO Box 462
Forest Grove, PA 18922

**COME
WORSHIP**
with us!



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Fall/Winter Worship Schedule

begins Sunday September 8
10:00 am Worship

Church Office Hours

9am-2pm (Monday-Thursday)
Phone 215-794-8575

Pastor: Reverend Susan L. Fall
Email: pastorsu@forestgrovechurch.org
Director of Youth and Family Ministry
and Seminary Intern: Peter Jonescu
Music Director: Leanne Yerkes
Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan
Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org
www.ForestGroveChurch.org