

The Focus



Forest Grove Presbyterian Church November 2020

Pastor's Notes:

"...Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining." -
Exodus 16:9

It has been almost eight months since we last sat together side by side worshipping God in our sanctuary. The Session has had lengthy discussions on how to return safely. We believe that God wants only good things for us and through the blessing of technology using Zoom, we have been able to continue to join together as a community of faith lifting our hearts in praise to God. We have been able to add to our numbers those who, for differing reasons, did not join us in the past. God truly is walking this road with us.

With the weather getting cooler and the knowledge the scientists and doctors have been able to acquire regarding this virus, we feel we can offer indoor in-person worship beginning November 1. Here are things you need to know about what that experience will look like:

Mask must be worn at all times while in the building (covering both the mouth and nose).

Due to the limited number of people allowable in the building at one time, reservations are required and must be made by 2:00 Thursday afternoon by calling the church office. A list will be kept and check-in will be necessary on Sunday when temperatures will be taken and waivers checked.

Seating will be in designated pews only to allow for social distancing beginning in the back and working forward. This means you may not be able to sit in your usual spot.

Windows will be open in the sanctuary to allow for increased ventilation. We will have the heat on but you may want to wear a sweater.

There will be no singing. Our denomination and other music organizations are advising against singing and we will adhere to our denomination guidelines. There will be music and those who are attending the service in their homes using Zoom are, of course, welcome to sing.

At the conclusion of the service, congregants will be dismissed from the front to the rear of the room to allow for social distancing through our narrow doorway. As with outdoor worship, there will be no coffee hour in the building but those attending on Zoom will continue to be invited to enjoy a beverage of choice when placed in a “break-out/chat room.”

This is hard, but God is with us. Please note that the sound system is different from what we have been using outside. There may be a glitch or two but we hope that we can all approach this with patience and even a sense of humor.

It is my earnest desire that God will allow us to look back on this moment in time and be thankful: thankful that we held together as the loving body of Christ; thankful that God’s presence was felt in meaningful and powerful ways; thankful for new relationships; thankful for moments of “normal”; thankful that we had the strength and fortitude to endure even while learning new technology, utilizing old, and had patience with our children, our spouse, our neighbors, our friends, and ourselves; thankful that we could express our frustration and even anger at God and yet God was still loving, forgiving, compassionate and provided just what we needed even if it took a while to receive or appreciate it.

Let’s all try to think of something fun that has happened in these past months that wouldn’t have if we weren’t living under our current conditions and share them with me. I could use the laugh. I promise I’ll share.

Yours in Christ’s service,

Pastor Sen



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES ON NOVEMBER 8

“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—“ – Deuteronomy 4:9

Here at Forest Grove Church, we take God’s instructions seriously, to teach our children. At each child’s baptism, as a congregation, we promise to care for and nurture our children. During this pandemic, like other aspects of our lives, this has been a challenge. Our Christian Education committee is ready to meet that challenge by offering a Zoom Sunday School class for all ages at 11:30 each Sunday on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/127591875>.

For one half hour our children will be hearing stories, singing songs, engaging in activities and games about God and God’s teachings. These simple lessons pack a lot into thirty minutes, but our teachers know that our kids love to be busy!

The first lesson is about God the Creator. We may think we are pretty good at creating things, but everything we create comes first from God the Creator whose imagination is infinite!

A material list will be sent to families. These are mostly household items with a few easy to obtain things. If you prefer, Sunday School Class Kits are available either at the church for pick up or by delivery to your home. Please contact Su Fall about how you would like to receive these materials.

We know that with hybrid and virtual learning being the typical means of education these days, many of our children are “Zoomed out.” Going for this means of nurturing children has several things going for it:

- they are short
- they are active
- they are interactive
- they appeal to different learning styles
- it’s easy on parents – no need for parents to become their own child’s teachers
- they are convenient – did we mention that they will be recorded and made available on our website?

At times like these, our faith tells us that God is still with us. We want our children to know this truth as well. It is why we feel it is so important to offer Sunday School at this time. We hope many of our church family will take advantage of this opportunity. If you would like to be a teacher for a week or more, please contact Beth Conti or Su Fall.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED ON MONDAYS

Because of weekend activities in our church building, cleaning will not take place until Tuesdays. As a result, the church office will be closed on Mondays. The church staff will be working from home on Mondays. Office Administrator Susan Flanagan will be in the building Tuesdays – Thursdays, 9:00 – 2:00.



THURSDAY EVENING
ADULT STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP
7pm on Zoom

Seminary intern Ryon Herin has been teaching a weekly study on the book of Acts. A group meets on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/127591875>) each Thursday evening at 7:00. In addition to lively discussion, we also have time to check in with each other for support and fellowship. At a time when interaction with others is restricted, it is helpful to draw near to each other and to God. It's like a virtual hug. Although not as good as the real thing, it sure is a blessing. If you haven't joined before, newcomers are welcome. Each lesson is self-contained.

A new study will begin on November 19 that will focus on Advent and the coming of the Messiah. More than ever we find ourselves praying, "Come, Lord Jesus." What are we praying for and how does scripture help us to understand God's coming to us in human form long ago and what we wait for when Christ has promised to come again. In addition to reading and studying scripture, we will sing some familiar carols. It is a way to help make this season bright!





CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

It feels like the capital improvement projects have ground to a halt. The reality is that due to the current heavy demands for construction workers, our project is taking much longer than anyone expected. Unfortunately there are some corrections to the work that has already been done, especially with regard to the placement of the ramp off the back parking lot and into the building.

As we await the project's completion, we want to express our appreciation for all those who have helped to make the dream of new windows, the removal of the manse to make space for a memorial garden and better access to our church building a reality. Many made financial commitments over a three year period. Unfortunately in the middle of construction we also have been hit with the current pandemic. That has contributed significantly to the prolonged timeframe for completion. It has also meant that some were put into a financial place that caused for an adjustment to their pledge or their commitment has slipped their mind due to all the stress and disruption in their lives.

We hope that those who are able will fulfill their pledges so we can keep on top of the financial aspect of this project. If you have any questions where you stand, please call the church office. Your contributions are private and only known to God, you and Susan Flanagan, our Office Administrator. If you have not contributed to the campaign but would like to do so, you can also give Susan a call.



IT'S TIME TO THINK STEWARDSHIP

If the truth be known, it is always time to think stewardship. According to scripture, God created earth for humankind and we are now stewards of God's creation. This means it is our responsibility to look after and take care of this world not just for a few weeks each year, but each and every day. When we do this, we trust that we are working with God in order to provide not just for today's needs, but for the good future that God is unfolding as each day goes by.

Still, each year, as the harvest is gathered in, we think of our own stewardship and how it not only allows for provisions within this year but how we are going to plant the seeds of the kingdom for next year. As Jeremiah said, "...I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future of hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) From this we get this year's stewardship theme: Faith in Our Future.

Stewardship is utilizing and managing the gifts God provides of our time, talent and treasure for the glory of God and the betterment of God's creation. This is our individual responsibility and the corporate responsibility of the church. Consider all the ways you *steward your life*, how you take care of the resources you have been blessed with over time. Stewardship helps us administer our blessings. Stewardship is a responsibility, giving is an act and generosity is an attitude. Add love to the mix and we have a bright future together.

For the next few weeks you will be hearing about stewardship of Forest Grove Church and how we can participate as faithful followers of Jesus who believe in God's good future through sermons and messages from members of the congregation. You will be sent a brochure about the ministries of our church as well as a commitment card where you can express your own desires to share your resources for the building of God's good future. Until then, please prayerfully consider God's faithfulness in the past and consider your part in God's future.



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Like everything else, Christmas Eve worship will look very different this year. Because our sanctuary is small and the number of those who wish to worship the newborn King is rather large, the Advent-Christmas Task Force has been trying to think outside the box so no one is "turned away from the Inn." Many churches have been worshipping from the safety of their cars in parking lots. We think this just might be the solution for Forest Grove Church. Plans are being made for worshipers to come to the church and park on the cemetery lawn. We are working on broadcasting the service over the radio. In addition, the service will also be live on Zoom. Taking advantage of the setting, there will be live animals and biblical visitors. The service will be somewhat abbreviated but will include carol singing and candlelight. More information to follow as the plans unfold.

SAVE YOUR PLASTIC DRINK CONTAINERS

This year the church will be aglow on Christmas Eve with luminarias. This tradition began in the Southwest but has gained popularity throughout the United States. The hope among Roman Catholics is that the lights will guide the spirit of the Christ child to one's home. At Forest Grove, we are hoping the lights will guide the spirit of the Christ child to our hearts as we gather for worship. The luminarias will be made from plastic milk/drink containers so we need your help.

Please bring your CLEAN gallon or half gallon containers to the church. There will be a marked drop-off bin near the rear entrance door. In addition, help is also needed to assemble each luminaria, place them on Christmas Eve (including lighting the candles) and then clean up afterward. If you would like to help in any way, please contact the church office.



A Special thank you for all the Prayers, calls and cards during my surgery and recovery. xo Martha Greenwood



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

BOY SCOUT TROOP 71

The troop enjoyed a wonderful camping weekend recently with different patrols pitching their tents in several different locations. Just imagine all the gear it takes to make such a trip with a bunch of boys and their adult leaders! To ease the burden of transporting all the gear, the troop recently acquired an additional cargo trailer. Several returned to the church following the October 25th service. The story of the new trailer was then shared. It seems that it went through several owners. When the scout leader was walking up to it in order to make an inspection, he glanced at the writing on the side of the trailer. First glance, was the word “Grove.” Immediately he thought, “Willow Grove” but then he saw more of the writing. It read, “Forest Grove.” Surprised, he kept reading. The next line read, “Presbyterian Church” and finally on the bottom, “Mission.” It seems that this trailer’s original owner was the Forest Grove Presbyterian Church – our church! After several subsequent owners, like a dog who keeps sniffing, it made its way home!

The Scout leader explained to me that right now, trailers are in great demand. They sell within minutes. He put a bid in just forty minutes after it was listed. There were ten other offers but the current owner learned that this would be used by a Scout troop and, wanting to be supportive of this organization, decided to accept Troop 71’s bid. He had no idea the sponsoring body when the before the sale was made.

It is so wonderful to be a sponsor of a Scout troop but maybe this a sign that God thinks so as well! Let’s all continue to keep the Scouts and their leaders in our prayers.

Operating Fund

Nine Months Ended
September 30, 2020

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended September 30, 2020

Offering & Misc Income	\$	143,007
Large Fund Income		<u>16,998</u>
Total Income		\$160,005

Expenses

Pastor Compensation		70,904
Staff		38,168
Office		11,953
Music & Worship		2,009
Christian Education		1,143
Property		14,468
Stewardship/Finance		346
Parish Life		0
Mission		4,600
Other		<u>4,758</u>
Total Expenses		\$148,349

2020 Operating Fund

Surplus (Deficit) 11,656

Fund Balance @ 12/31/19 38,060

Fund Balance @ 9/30/20 \$ 49,717

Capital Campaign @ 9/30/20

Pledge Receipts		<u>\$ 304,618</u>
Pledge & Non-Pledge		\$ 332,984
Construction Loan		<u>190,000</u>
Total		<u>\$ 522,984</u>
Disbursements		<u>\$ 442,353</u>

Benevolence Fund

30-September-20

Balance @ 8/31/20		\$4,496
Receipts & Transfers		200
Disbursements:		
Balance @ 8/31/20		<u>\$4,696</u>

PLANS FOR ADVENT

Although our lives have been disrupted by the pandemic, Jesus is still comes to us which we remember and celebrate during the Advent season. A task force has been hard at work considering ways to bring the light of Christ into our darkened world. Here is a list of what will be happening throughout the four weeks leading up to the birth of Christ:

Saturday, November 28: ZOOM ADVENT WREATH MAKING PARTY. Each Advent Sunday during worship we light candles on our church Advent wreath. This year we will be inviting those worshipping with us a home to join in this ritual as we all light the candles on our own wreaths together during the service. To do this, all are invited to make their own wreath. We are going to make a party of this by Zooming our collective creativity at 4:00 Saturday afternoon. If you would like to receive an Advent wreath making kit, please contact the office no later than Tuesday, December 17. Not everyone will need all the items in the kit so here are the possibilities. When you reserve your kit, please indicate which items you will need:

- a metal tray to serve as the wreath base
- floral wet foam oasis
- live greens
- four candle pillars (candle pillars replaces the need for a wire circular candle holder for tapers)

Kits will be labeled and available at the church anytime from November 22-25 or for a donation, we will deliver to your home.



Sunday, December 6 – “Ugly” Christmas Sweater during Worship. Wear your favorite or most bizarre Christmas sweater during worship and Pastor Su will use these images to describe the meaning of Christmas.



Saturday, December 12, 6:30 PM – Carol Sing and Bonfire at the Ruth farm. Christmas Carols are among the most beloved songs for many people. We will gather outside and sing around a bonfire (socially distanced – if you have experienced a Ruth bonfire you know that isn’t difficult) the joy and promise of the season. S’more kits will be available for a special treat along with hot chocolate. Feel free to bring your own thermos if you would prefer. Raindate: December 13 at 6:30. Ruth Farm address: 831A Pineville Rd., New Hope, PA

Sunday, December 20 – Sharing Favorite Christmas Songs/Poems/Readings during Worship. Everyone is invited to share by recording a sacred Christmas song (vocal or instrumental), poem or reading. You can either record yourself on your computer or iPhone, or Pastor Su will record you on Zoom. The recordings will then be edited together to create a montage of the “Birth of the Savior” that will be presented during the worship service that morning. Please contact Pastor Su if you would like to participate.

CHURCH COOKBOOKS

After all the gathering of recipes, copying and proofing, the cookbooks will be available on November 15! To whet your appetite, here's a sample recipe for you to try at home:

Grandmother Odom's Apple Cake

4 cups Raw apples peeled & coarsely cut (5 large. Granny Smith).

2 cups Sugar

½ cup Vegetable oil

2 lg. Eggs

2 tsp. Cinnamon

2 tsp. Baking soda

2 cups Flour

1 cup Chopped walnuts

Confectioner's sugar for dusting

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Peel and chop apples, set aside.

Beat together sugar and oil, add eggs one at a time beat until creamy.

Whisk together flour, cinnamon and soda.

Add dry mixture to sugar, oil and eggs by thirds.

Remove from stand mixer and fold in apples.

Let sit for 5 minutes.

Stir well and add walnuts

Mix well.

Pour batter into a greased and floured 10 cup Bundt pan or Tube pan and place on a sheet pan to bake.

Bake 60-65 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Cool in pan 10 mins. Then invert on a cake rack. Dust with confectioner's sugar if desired.

If you think that sounds good, just wait until you see what other delicious culinary delights are promised in this compilation. The books will be available for \$15. Call the church office with your order.

The book is a very colorful small three-ringed binder so you can add more to it and will fit nicely in a draw or on a shelf. Remember, the holidays are coming and this would make a great gift. All proceeds will go toward the repair of our leaking steeple.

November Birthdays



Address Change:

**Chris and Sarah Lucera
Charlotte and Riley
289 S. Fieldstone Ct.
Yardley, Pa 19067**

Jim Hampton	11/2
John Dura Sr.	11/2
Nick Dell'Orefice	11/7
Maggie Realley	11/7
Dorothea Tinari	11/12
Scarlett Bradney	11/13
Sandy Rekemeier	11/18
Bill Hyndman V	11/19
Suzanne Ottilo	11/20
Peggy Mellinger	11/21
Judy Ferguson	11/22
Ethan Dobbins	11/26
Wes Schroeder	11/26



Happy Thanksgiving



Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road

PO Box 462

Forest Grove, PA 18922

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Worship Schedule

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

Seminary Intern: Ryon Herin

Music Director: Leanne Yerkes

Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org

www.ForestGroveChurch.org