

The Focus



Forest Grove Presbyterian Church February 2021

Pastor's Notes

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice!” --Philippians 4:4

“What would you do if you were stuck in one place and every day was exactly the same, and nothing that you did mattered?” This is the complaint of the crabby weatherman Phil Connors, Bill Murray’s character in the 1993 film, *Groundhog Day*, after he finds himself perpetually living out the February 2nd holiday in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, his least favorite day of the year. At one point, Phil wishes he could repeat a more pleasurable, decadent day over and over and not a day spent celebrating “a large squirrel predicting the weather.”

If we’re honest, our lives aren’t completely dissimilar from this movie. For the past eleven months (has it been only eleven months?) for many of us, the majority of life has been spent doing the same tasks with the same people. How we long for more excitement that comes with diversity. In the past a snow day would have meant a break from reading, writing and arithmetic, but virtual learning has meant that the morning alarm goes off and it is school as usual for our children – and their parents!

Paul writes to the Philippians that they are to rejoice always. This was a community where Paul and his companion, Silas, were treated very badly and Christians in general were being persecuted. Paul writes this letter during his imprisonment in Rome. Nothing about that situation would seem to indicate a reason to rejoice and yet Paul does. He recognizes that there is more to life than what appears on the surface. Rejoice in the knowledge that in all times and circumstances God is present. God offers life worth living if we would trust God and learn what is truly important and can bring joy.

It takes the character Phil Connors living the same day over and over again to finally turn from superficial pleasures to deeper satisfaction and joy found in love and community. Maybe it takes us living through an isolating and, for many, painful pandemic day in and day out to help us appreciate what is truly important and satisfying for each of us.

We just held our annual congregational meeting – on Zoom, of course. Reviewing 2020 was in many ways hard as we mourn the losses we have had to endure. It was also an opportunity for joy as we recognize how God has been at work among us. Not only have we been held together in new ways, but also we have drawn others into our community who otherwise would not have been able to do so. We have learned to appreciate the simplicity of seeing each other's face and hearing the sound of each other's voice. We have learned to look for silver linings and recognize God at work where we otherwise would have missed. We have learned to appreciate the simple things of life as God's abundant blessings.

My Epiphany "Star Word," that word that is to be a guide for the year to come, is "trust." As my days seem to be an endless "Ground Hog Day," reliving so much today what seems to be just like yesterday and the day before that, and the day before that, I am learning to trust that God is still good and blesses in the most simple and important aspects of life. For me, that is a reason to rejoice this day. I pray it is and will be for you as well.

Yours in Christ's service,

Pastor Sue



SCOUT SUNDAY

The 12th point of the Scout Law states, "A Scout is Reverent." Boy Scouts of America (BSA) celebrates its anniversary on February 8th and the Sunday closest to that day is when the Scouts demonstrate their reverence by participating in their sponsoring organization's worship service. This year that recognition of Scouting takes place on February 7th when the boys from our troop, Troop #71B, will attend and help to lead the service.

BSA is one of the largest youth organizations in the United States, with about 2.3 million youth participants and about one million adult volunteers. The BSA was founded in 1910, and since then, about 110 million Americans participated in BSA programs at some time in their lives. BSA is part of the international Scout Movement and became a founding member organization of the World Organization of the Scout Movement in 1922.

The stated mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to "prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law." Youth are trained in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance through participation in a wide range of outdoor activities, educational programs, and, at older age levels, career-oriented programs in partnership with community organizations.

We are proud to be the sponsoring organization for Troop # _____. While we wish we could celebrate Scout Sunday in-person with the boys and their leaders, we look forward to doing so when it becomes safe.

ASH WEDNESDAY – February 17, 2021



In previous years Forest Grove Church has joined with the congregations of both The Anchor Presbyterian Church and Thompson Memorial. This year, due to the pandemic, we will be joining with The Anchor on Zoom at 7:00 PM. The service will include the imposition of ashes and communion.

Like communion, you will self-administer the ashes. Wearing ashes is done for two reasons: a personal act of remembrance and as a sign or a witness for others. Traditionally, the ashes come from the burnt Palms from last year's Passion Sunday celebration, which begins Holy Week. So, these ashes bring us back to our last celebration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus for us. On this first day of Lent, we begin a journey of renewal - from death to life. This is a joyful season. We will make sacrifices, in order to try to let God reform our desiring, but this is a time for God to be generous to us.

When the ashes are placed on our foreheads, the minister says one of two formulas to help us remember who we are and the mission to which we are sent:

"Remember, man/woman, you are dust and to dust you will return."

"Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel."

We are reminded that we are creatures and that our lives were given to us. But, we are also reminded that our lasting home is in eternity, with God. This is current world not our lasting home.

We are reminded that our call is to turn away from sin and to believe the Good News of our salvation in Jesus. This is a joyful reminder. It challenges us, for sure, but reminds us of why we want to turn from sin.

Finally, we wear our ashes as a sign. It is not a boastful sign through which I say, "Look at me and see how holy I am." Rather it is much more like saying, "I'm willing to wear this sign in the world so that others will see that I've been reminded of where I come from and where I am going. Also, I've heard the call to turn away from a life of sin and to give my life to living the Gospel of Jesus."

Again, like communion, the elements we use for Ash Wednesday are not sacred, it is what we do with them in faith that sets them apart. Ashes from previous year's palms will be available to those who wish to use them by contacting the church office. Others may use ashes from their own fireplace. Communion elements, some sort of bread and juice/wine, can be from your own kitchens.

SOUPER BOWL WAS SUPER!!



Thanks to so many who took the opportunity to make homemade soup for Care for Friends. In the past we have made between 80-100 servings of soup. This year, this pandemic year, we made over 150 servings! Many did their cooking together on Zoom. Others put their culinary skills to work at a time that was convenient. The end result a wide variety of soup was prepared and then delivered to those who will appreciate it. Care for Friends workers say that soup donations are distributed as soon as they are received. So our soup has already filled empty bellies.

Care for Friends provides food and friendship to seniors, kids and adults in need within the 5-county Philadelphia region. With a network of more than 250 meal centers, the organization has 16,000 volunteers, and 14,000 grateful client friends. In addition to the home visits and meal deliveries, Caring for Friends provides aid and advocacy, including caregiver support, safety assessments, and other assistance, to help "friends" remain in their own homes and maintain their independence.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Every two years a class is offered to 8th and 9th graders where they will explore the Christian faith through church history, doctrine and membership. If they are ready and if they so choose, on Pentecost Sunday these young men and women will then make their own commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and to take on the responsibilities and privileges of church membership.

The class is being taught by Pastor Su and held, for now, on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 using Zoom. If you know an 8th or 9th grader who is interested in joining the class, please contact Pastor Su.

CONFIRMATION CLASS MISSION PROJECT NEEDS YOUR HELP

Part of confirmation class is spent living out Jesus call to go into the world and care for the needs of others. This is what it means to be the body of Christ. This year's project is helping homeless teens through the Synergy Project, a mission our congregation has supported frequently. The program offers survival supplies (food, clothes, hygienic products, sleeping bags, tents, tarps, etc.), peer support, informal counseling (individual, family, or group), information and referral services and assistance to get off the streets, if desired. Street Outreach coordinators spend most of their time in a Jeep, van, on a mountain bike, canoe or kayak, or walking to remote areas or city streets reaching out to youth who tend to settle in places that are not easily accessible, assisting them to find permanent housing or making it safer for them to be on the streets.

Our confirmation class is sponsoring a mission project that will provide some of the supplies homeless youth need on an ongoing basis. They are asking for your help by donating any of the following items: hand warmers, soap, towel, washcloth, snacks (homemade cookies, brownies, chips or granola bars), hand wipes, reusable water bottle, deodorant, portable phone charger (purchase at 5 and below), adult size underwear (men's and women's), canned food with pop tops.

The class will put together kits that will then be taken to the Synergy Project donation center for distribution. In addition, if anyone has a sleeping bag or tent they are no longer using, these also can be donated. Please bring all items to the church by February 21. If you need someone to pick up any of these items from your home, please contact Susan Flanagan in the church office

NEW ZOOM MISSION PROJECT – February 23, 2021

On Sunday the 23rd we will gather on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/127591875> Meeting ID: 127 591 875 or by phone: 301-715-8592 or 253-215-8782 to make cards for those serving in our military. We will be working with “Hugs for Soldier.” This organization was founded in 2003 as a ministry of the First United Methodist Church in Duluth, GA. Scholastic Parent Magazine named it as one of the Top Ten organizations in the United States to offer support for our troops.

Gather your supplies and “best wishes and appreciation” thoughts. All cards will be screened by Hugs for Soldiers prior to being placed in one of their care packages. Guidelines for making cards are as follows:

Keep your message upbeat and positive. Express thanks for their service, dedication, sacrifice, and/or time away from home. Our troops need to be encouraged.

Sample Salutations: Dear Hero, Dear Brave One, Dear Service Member, Dear Warrior.

You may include your own mail or email address so recipients can choose to reply. CHILDREN: Use first name only. ADULTS: you may use your name and contact information. *(Recipients may or may not write back; please do not be disappointed if you do not receive a response.)*

Be creative. Draw pictures and talk about you. Keep cards and letters to a size of 8 1/2" x 11" or under for ease in shipping and distribution. You can use colorful construction paper within the paper size limit.

DO NOT USE GLITTER OR CONFETTI or any other product that could come loose when we open the box or envelope in which you are mailing us your cards. No envelopes please. All cards will be packaged together.

THURSDAY EVENING STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP

Each Thursday evening at 7:00, using Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/127591875> Meeting ID: 127 591 875 or by phone: 301-715-8592 or 253-215-8782, a group comes together to study some aspect of Christian faith as well as enjoy fellowship and Christian caring. Lately they have been exploring the book of Revelation. While that book directly addresses the persecutions and suffering of the early Christian church, it is a book for any who are feeling distressed and struggling to stay hopeful. The class is being led by Pastor Su

A Caring Congregation - Bible Study

I am excited to introduce you to a new study series that I will be leading for our Thursday night Bible studies at 7 PM. Starting the 25th of March, we will start a study called Caring Congregations. In this study, it is my hope that we will learn how to care for others in our congregation during this difficult time and in the future when we can visit others in person. We will learn how to pray for others, how to reach out and visit those of our congregation in need, how to listen to others, and how to care for our fellow members through grief and hard times. As members of the body of Christ, we all bring different gifts which shape how we care for others. For some, their gift is listening. For others, their gift could be cooking meals for those in need. Through this study, you will get a glimpse into the life of pastoral care that both the deacons and the pastor share in caring for members of the congregation, in good times and in bad. We will learn that pastoral care is not only the work of the deacons and the pastor but also the work of the congregation as we are all called to be ministers to one another and our community. Guided by the Holy Spirit and Scripture, we will journey together in exploring how to use each of our unique gifts in caring for each other and our wider community. I hope to see you soon!!

Blessings, Ryon Herin, Princeton Seminary Intern

Tentative Schedule of Caring Congregations

February 25th- The Role of the Congregation

March 4th- The Gifts of the Congregation

March 11th- Prayer

March 18th- Listening and Boundaries

March 25th- Visitation and Volunteering

April 1st- Leading through Times of Grief

April 8th- Being a Caring Congregation: Wrapping it all up

Silver Linings and Epiphany Stars



"For me, the silver lining has been through Zoom. I have been afforded the opportunity to attend worship at Forest Grove. Prior to this the only time I could experience your service was the rare occasion that I made my way to your neck of the woods."

Cyndi Dickson

Well, it actually took me sometime to figure out "my (Epiphany) word". I thought about it, prayed about, discussed it with others. I finally figured it out... "Balance". It's so needed in my life. Work tends to consume my life. I am practicing on leaving work at work! I also have my car club stuff, chairing our marketing committee. When I get home...my focus is on the family. But I still need that time to myself where I can clear my head. I enjoy running... but it's a bit cold out at the moment, so I have been going on morning walks... I put my music on and headphones in and either walk around the block or office complex with a nice hot cup of coffee. I've even tried a bit of mediation. It's a work in progress... but it's a good start to 2021.

Brad Sanders

My word is joy. I find it when my cat smiles at me, when I place the last piece in a puzzle, hear from a friend whom I haven't hear from in awhile, an experimental recipe turns out well, when I get to see the shape of an individual snowflake.

Linda Bowers



“Patience” Back in March when the Pandemic started encroaching on our country and stay at home orders were in place. My initial thoughts were a few weeks, and we would be back to normal. I missed my work; I missed the calls and friendly voices, and I missed my normal schedule. I began to feel overwhelmed, isolated, and realized that this was not me. I stepped back and realized I needed to focus and the virus was something I could not control. I choose the word “Patience” as my word to work with. As the weeks went by, so many weeks I stopped myself when I felt rushed or running thoughts going through my head. I worked with “Patience” and found that taking that time with those that I love, listening, understanding, and accepting was a way that God filled me with peace and love. Patience has allowed me to slow down, look around me and appreciate all that there is. But now I am back to work, wearing a mask, social distancing and I have reset my inner self to stop and listen and be “Patient” and when that doesn’t work I breathe and say “Calm”. God has got this!

Susan Flanagan

January 24, 2021

To our Forest Grove Family,
Jim and I have been overwhelmed by the kindness of our FGR family following Jim's recent fall. We have appreciated every phone call and each delicious meal we have received. The lovely presents from the Revisionary brings a prominent place just inside our front door. I like to think that it announces the joy of Christmas for us!

Again, many thanks and may we all continue to celebrate the joys of Christmas, Jesus Christ,

In His Love,
Judy Ferguson

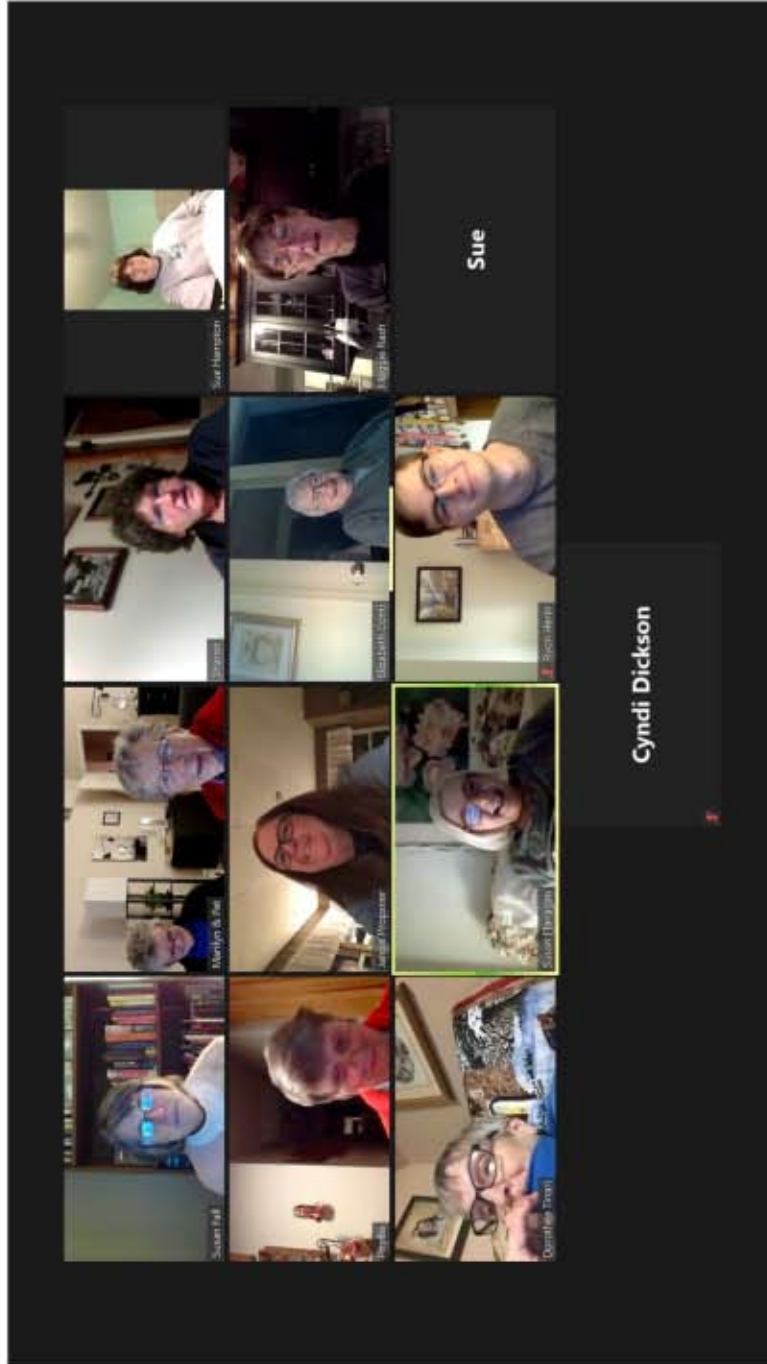
Every Thursday 7pm on Zoom

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Esther Welch

I'M A BIG SHOT



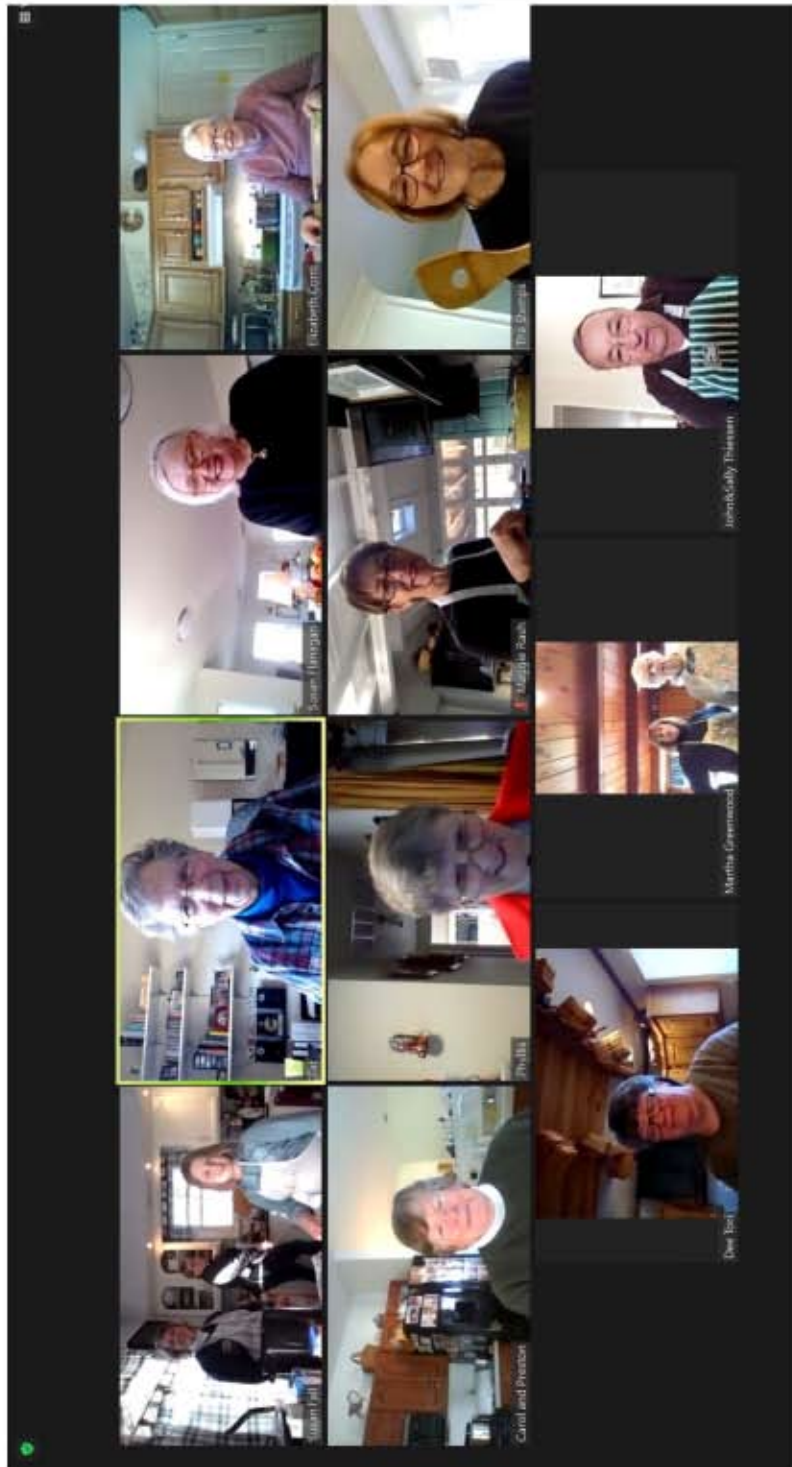
I GOT MY
COVID-19 VACCINE!



 Doylestown Health

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Operating Fund

Twelve Months Ended
December 31, 2020

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended December 31, 2020

Offering & Misc Income	\$	199,247
Large Fund Income		<u>22,664</u>
Total Income		\$221,910

Expenses

Pastor Compensation	93,965
Staff	49,267
Office	15,883
Music & Worship	2,864
Christian Education	1,286
Property	19,686
Stewardship/Finance	695
Parish Life	137
Mission	4,700
Other	<u>4,758</u>
Total Expenses	\$193,240

2020 Operating Fund

Surplus (Deficit) 28,670

Fund Balance @ 12/31/19 38,060

Fund Balance @ 12/31/20 \$ 66,731

Capital Campaign @12/31/20

Pledge Receipts	<u>\$ 304,618</u>
Pledge & Non-Pledge	\$ 354,929
Construction Loan	<u>190,000</u>
Total	<u>\$ 544,929</u>
Disbursements	<u>\$ 503,734</u>

Benevolence Fund

31-December-20

Balance @ 11/30/20	\$4,696
Receipts & Transfers	
Disbursements:	
Balance @ 12/31/20	<u>\$4,696</u>

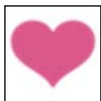
February Birthdays



Pat Pizza	2/2	Brielle Guarracino	2/11
Christine Sanders	2/4	Maggie Rash	2/19
Motchel Guarracino	2/5	Kaydy Ledyard	2/23
Natalie Pizza	2/7	Aaron Myers	2/25
James Conner Jr.	2/9	Rebecca Hampton	2/27
		Sandi Ghering	2/28
		Leila Shvanda	2/28



Happy Valentines Day 2020



Address/phone updates:

Will and Nimi Meyers
2 HealthQuest Blvd.
Apt. B203
Flemington, NJ 08822

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road

PO Box 462

Forest Grove, PA 18922



F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 1

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

Seminary Intern: Ryon Herin

Music Director: Leanne Yerkes

Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org

www.ForestGroveChurch.org