

The Focus



Forest Grove Presbyterian Church May 2021

"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers."
-- Ephesians 1:16

Pastor's notes:

To say that these past two months have been hard would be putting it mildly. As an exceedingly independent person, having my freedom taken away as a result of my broken ankle has forced me to recognize that I can't do everything on my own, resulting in the necessity to accept help from others.

During my years of ministry I found myself often counseling others to allow people assistance when offered. It allows others to be a blessing and to be blessed by the opportunity to share their gifts as well as devotion. I learned that this is easy advice to give but hard to accept. No one really wants to be dependent. Our teenagers certainly know this as they flex their independence muscles and try to move away from under their parents' thumbs.

This attitude goes completely against our faith's teaching. We learn that we are totally dependent upon God for everything we have – not just the food we eat and the clothes we wear due to God's good creation, but also the mercy and forgiveness of Jesus Christ – a freely given gift that we cannot earn on our own. And as much as we might feel like we come to the garden alone, we are surrounded by a great crowd of witnesses, those who love God and through him embrace and love others. That's the church!

When the church first began, it started with a small group who needed each other and then shared all that they had. This continues to help define what it means to be a faith community and I for one have come to a deeper appreciation for what that means.

So, yes, I am very grateful for all the love and support I have received these past two months. I do not cease to give thanks for you, all of you, who provided me with meals and treats, offered rides, picked up my groceries, took out my garbage, cleaned, sent cards, picked up my mail, delivered resources from my office, and said prayers on my behalf. This truly is church. I am grateful. I am blessed and I hope you have been blessed in the process. You are in my daily prayers of thanksgiving.

God bless you!!

Yours in Christ's service,

Pastor Sue



**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW DIRECTOR OF
YOUTH MINISTRY
JASON GORDON**



Since the pandemic our youth have struggled to engage in youth group. But our youth matter to God and to us as a church. We want to provide the best possible program for our teens and so the leadership has committed to providing good leadership. The search process began about two months ago and God blessed us by bringing Jason to Forest Grove.

Jason is currently living in Richboro and works with at-risk youth as a Youth and Family Counselor at Warwick House as well as a Recovery Coordinator/Case Manager at Merakey Behavioral Health in Blue Bell.

Jason grew up in the church and was very active in campus ministry while in college as well as attending a local congregation with friends. It was with this local church that Jason went on mission trips and felt the need to take his passion for caring for youth and his love for God and bring them together. Truly the Spirit has been at work in Jason!

The search committee, made up of the Christian Education Committee, a youth representative and the Chair of Personnel, talked with Jason's references. A comment that was most notable and offered consistently was that when there were group activities for the youth, everyone wanted to be in Jason's group! We hope that our youth will want to be in Jason's group! Officially he will be starting with us on June 1. At that time he will start to get to know our youth and their families even as we continue to navigate the pandemic.

The congregation at large will meet Jason during worship on June 6. He will be reaching out needing support. Please think about how you can offer your gifts and talents for this important ministry. Even little things like transportation to outings or snacks can be very helpful.



IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Many are wondering when we will return to our building and worship in-person inside. At each session meeting for the past year this issue has been addressed. While there are many churches who have returned to meeting in their sanctuaries, Forest Grove has followed CDC guidelines and has considered our small space. Session continues to be dedicated to offering worship to the Lord in a way that allows both for safety and participation.

The state is lifting COVID restrictions as of May 31. Until then we will continue to offer outdoor in-person worship, when the weather cooperates, as well as on Zoom. Session will be meeting prior to May 31 and will resume the discussion about worship and make a decision. Meanwhile, we encourage everyone to get vaccinated. It is good stewardship to care for yourself as well as others. Remember, our children are still vulnerable. Let us not be discouraged but see the joy of the light at the end of the tunnel. We can do this just a little longer.



**LAST DAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL UNTIL
THE FALL IS MAY 23**

Our children have become very proficient with the use of Zoom which has allowed our Sunday School to continue during the pandemic. Every week Beth Conti puts together a supply bag for each child that includes an activity page, craft supplies and a special treat. She then hand delivers these bags to those who are local and puts them in the mail for those at a distance. Beth as well as Donna Jencks have been the primary teachers that have shared the love of God with our children. Occasionally Kim King has come in to teach as well. Our children have been blessed by these dedicated faithful women and all can be truly grateful for them.

Virtual learning hasn't worked for everyone. We anticipate that in September we will be back in the building where Sunday School will be held as it has been in the past, beginning after the Children's Message during the worship service. We all look forward to seeing our young ones in person again!

THURSDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY

A faithful group has been meeting each Thursday evening at 7:00 on Zoom since the beginning of the pandemic. It has been a richly rewarding time for many as we support one another and are supported by God through our study together. Currently the group is studying the book of Ruth. This short Old Testament writing is timely due to the emphasis it places on the treatment of foreigners and how God works through the most unexpected individuals. Ruth, a Moabite woman who Israelites forbade marriage to Jews, became the ancestor not only of King David, but also of Jesus the very Son of God.

This study will conclude on May 13. After that the group will take a break for the summer and will return again in the fall with a brand new study. Even though we will not be together on Thursdays, please take time during the evening to breath deep and take in the beauty of God's creation during the warm months. Contemplate the week and make note of the many ways and places where God has been at work – especially the unexpected ones. We will share these together in the fall if not before.



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE

This year's blood drive will be held on **September 11**. Donations are needed now more than ever. Please mark your calendar with this important date.

**Something Yummy to try this month.
Send us your Summer/Barbeque recipes
We will add your recipe to our FGPC Cookbook**

Lemon Ricotta Pancakes

Submitted by: Su Fall

- 1 1/2 cups flour**
- 3 1/2 tbsp sugar**
- 2 tsp baking powder**
- 1/4 tsp baking soda**
- 1/2 tsp salt**
- 1 cup milk**
- 3/4 cup ricotta (low-fat or whole)**
- 3 large eggs**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**
- 1 - 2 tbsp lemon zest (depending on how lemony you want them)**
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice**
- 1 tbsp butter, melted**



Preheat an electric griddle to moderately-high heat (or use a non-stick skillet set over medium heat).

In a mixing bowl whisk together flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Make a well in center of flour mixture and set aside.

In a separate large mixing bowl, whisk together milk, ricotta, eggs and vanilla until well blended. Add butter, lemon zest and lemon juice to milk mixture and blend until combined (it will curdle a little, that's fine).

Immediately pour milk mixture into flour mixture and whisk just to combine (batter should be slightly lumpy). Pour 1/3 cup batter onto buttered griddle or skillet and cook until bubbles begin to appear on surface and bottom is golden brown, then flip and cook opposite side until golden brown. Serve warm dusted with powdered sugar if desired and drizzled with maple or berry syrup.

**COOKBOOKS ARE STILL AVAILABLE \$15 EACH
ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS OUR CHURCH STEEPLE.**

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORERS

July 12 – 16, 2021



We are going to try again and pray that restrictions due to the pandemic will be lifted sufficiently to offer a program to our middle schoolers. Monday – Friday, 9:00-3:00, kids in grades 6-10 are invited to participate in a weeklong series of adventures. Each day the group will engage in different activities that will take them beyond the church to engage in God’s creation through different environment and outdoor experiences. Here’s a list of just a few learning activities:

- milking cows at Delaware Valley University
- day at the shore
- tubing on the Delaware



Two different days exploring different environment issues will round out the week.

Explorers will be required to follow CDC guidelines for social distancing. They are to bring their own lunch each day.

Registration numbers are restricted to 10. Friends are welcome. Sign up by calling the church office. This program will be led by Pastor Su who is also looking for volunteers to help with transportation. Please contact her if you can help one or more days.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – REGISTRATION

July 19 – 23, 2021



July 19 – 23 will be the week when 4 year olds through 6th graders will gather at the church from 9:00 – noon for Vacation Bible School. This year's theme is "Rocky Railway: Jesus' Love Pulls Us Through." It seems like an appropriate theme especially as we have gone through a very trying season over this past year-plus of challenges. Jesus has pulled us through and continues to help us do hard things and be bold as well as give us hope.

Registration for VBS is now available online at our church website: www.forestgrovechurch.org. You can also call the church office. Friends and neighbors are all welcome.

Adult and teen leadership is also needed. Volunteers can help in any of the following ways:

- decorations
- group leader
- snack leader
- arts and crafts leader
- science leader
- recreation leader
- cinema leader

Please contact Kim King or Su Fall if you will give your heart, faith and time to our children as a VBS volunteer.



Silver linings and Epiphany stars

I just came across a photo of my 16 year old nephew when he was about 18 months. He was in his stroller with his mom pushing and he noticed a tall flower alongside the walk and motioned to his mom to go to it. She has a lovely picture of him smelling it. Such innocence!

Linda Bowers



What a wonderful celebration we had on Sunday, May 2nd. Pastor Su was without her cast and able to walk with only a single crutch. Ryon took part in his last official Sunday service, and we joined together to enjoy a picnic lunch under the big tree. We were able to meet his friend, Emily, and hear about their past studies and hopes for the future. God blessed us in so many ways including a beautiful day and many visible, maskless smiles. Carol Eckmeder

One silver lining has been that we have got to see Ryon every Sunday. Dwight and I both have MDiv degrees and who would have thought 30 years ago that we would be watching our son read scripture, preach sermons, and pray to God in another state. It has been a true joy! Thank you! Praying for all of you! Dwight and Lydia



Last fall we enjoyed gathering outside with participants bringing their own lunch and chair as we sat and enjoyed both our food and our fellowship. These assemblies usually last no longer than one hour but are a wonderful way to stay connected and deepen friendship.

All are welcome including guests!

**Bring your own chair,
packed lunch.**

**And meet, us under the
Big Tree at the back of**

**MIDWEEK LUNCH
GATHERING
BEGINS MAY 12th**

FAREWELL RYON HERIN

On May 2nd we bid a very sad good-bye to our intern, Ryon. He has been an important partner in ministry this past year meeting with members of the congregation when it was possible to do so, led adult education and of course, weekly worship and sharing a few sermons.

And we do wish him “farewell” in all that God calls him to do in service to Jesus Christ. Ryon will be staying in the area over the summer working at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in Newark, NJ as a student chaplain. The congregation will see him in August when he provides pulpit supply for a Sunday while Pastor Su is on vacation.

In the fall, Ryon will enter his final semester of seminary. After that, it is up to God. One thing is for certain, God will use the gifts Ryon has been given in abundance for service to Christ’s church. We have been honored to be a part of the process for Ryon to hone his skills. The blessing goes both ways. Praise the Lord, and God bless you Ryon!



**Sunday Services followed by a
Farewell Picnic
For Ryon Herin**





**See you in August
Ryon!!**



Name: **Emilia Lily Fullman**

Born: April 11, 2021

Parents: Clark and Becky Fullman

Siblings: Keegan and Braden

May Birthdays



Alvin Cornell	5/3
Ralph Martin	5/7
Gerry Stemplewicz	5/8
Charlotte Lucera	5/10
Kurt Schroeder	5/11
John Barnhart	5/12
Jim Conner Sr.	5/12
Jason Hampton	5/14
Riley Lucera	5/15
Gary Davis	5/16
Kim Shvanda	5/17
Tim Ruth	5/18
Linda Sanders	5/19
Jolie Hyndman	5/23

Up Dates:

Judy Ferguson's email:

jsfergus139@gmail.com



Please send us your updates to the Church office.

Also, any pictures you would like to share. Family vacation pictures, new babies, hobbies.

Operating Fund

For the Three Months Ended
March 31, 2021

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended March 31, 2021

Offering & Misc Income	\$	57,969
Large Fund Income		<u>5,457</u>
Total Income		\$63,426

Expenses

Pastor Compensation	23,800
Staff	10,429
Office	4,110
Music & Worship	675
Christian Education	380
Property	6,000
Stewardship/Finance	144
Parish Life	0
Mission	0
Other	<u>0</u>
Total Expenses	\$45,538

2021 Operating Fund

Surplus (Deficit) 17,888

Fund Balance @ 12/31/20 66,731

Fund Balance @ 3/31/21 \$ 84,619

Capital Campaign @3/31/21

Pledge Receipts	<u>\$ 304,618</u>
Pledge & Non-Pledge	\$ 380,764
Construction Loan	<u>190,000</u>
Total	<u>\$ 570,764</u>
Disbursements	<u>\$ 506,091</u>

Benevolence Fund

31-March-21

Balance @ 2/28/21	\$4,721
Receipts & Transfers	570
Disbursements:	
Balance @ 3/31/21	<u>\$5,291</u>

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
Music Director: Leanne Yerkes
Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan
Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org
www.ForestGroveChurch.org