

The Focus

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church February 2023

Pastor's Notes

“On its lower hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, all round the lower hem, with bells of gold between them all round—a golden bell and a pomegranate alternating all round the lower hem of the robe. ³⁵Aaron shall wear it when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord, and when he comes out, so that he may not die.” -- Exodus 28:33-35

During our annual meeting the congregation heard the difficult decision made by the session to retire the church bell currently in the steeple. **DON'T PANIC! WE ARE NOT GETTING RID OF THE BELL – JUST CHANGING ITS LOCATION.**

Now with that out of the way, I did some investigating into the use of bells for religious purposes. The above Scripture speaks of bells on the hem of the garment of Aaron, a high priest anointed and consecrated by the Lord. No one was to approach earthly rulers without being formally announced. The sound of the bells was intended to announce to God that the high priest was coming into the holy place. The sound of the bells also let people outside the holy place know that the high priest was still alive and moving about.

Metal bells were first developed in ancient China and were used in Buddhism and Hindu ceremonies. In the 400s missionaries in China brought handbells to Europe. Bell tower bells were first authorized for use in Christian churches by Pope Sabinian in 640 AD as a part of the celebration of Communion.

In the middle ages church bells were thought to have supernatural powers. Bells were said to ring themselves in times of tragedy and disaster. Bells were rung to drive away evil, heal the sick, calm storms before a journey, protect the souls of the dead. Superstitions led churches to ring the bells to ward off evil spirits and grant wishes to the newlyweds.

The bell that is currently in our Steeple has in recent history, primarily rung to call the faithful to worship. It beckons all to set aside their everyday lives in order to give themselves again to God. To the surrounding community, it is a statement of faith, that God is here with us. Hope lives!

With the necessity of replacing our leaking and deteriorating steeple, the cost of keeping the bell in the new structure was prohibitive. But this gives the bell an opportunity for a definition. Instead of being an *auditory* reminder and call to faith, it will be a *visible* inspiration. Our electronic carillon will continue to toll the hour and beckon worshipers. The bell will be given a place for all to see and be reminded of its service of alert to the glory of God. I hope it will also function as a reminder that we are all to be “bells” and raise a joyful noise to the Lord to all the world.

Yours in Christ’s service,

Pastor Su



What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. It's official name is "Day of Ashes," so called because of the practice of rubbing ashes on one's forehead in the sign of the cross. These ashes are made from the previous year's palms used on Palm Sunday.



In the Old Testament a person would cover themselves with ashes as a sign of mourning expressing remorse, sorrow, lowness, and humility. King David wore ashes after his illegitimate son died, a sign that he was mourning the loss but also that he was sorry for the sin he had committed in conceiving the child with Bathsheba.

Genesis states: "From dust we came and to dust we shall return." Ashes are dust, reminding us of our mortality and God's gift of life through Jesus Christ.

During Lent, we focus on our own mortality and sinfulness. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, when we come forward to receive ashes, we are saying that we are sorry for our sins and that we want to use the season of Lent to correct our faults, purify our hearts, control our desires and grow in holiness so we will be prepared to celebrate Easter with great joy.

There will be a worship service when we will offer the imposition of ashes on February 22, 2023 at 7:00 PM in our sanctuary. This will also be available on Zoom. For those joining us virtually, ashes will be available for pick-up by contacting the church office.

Lenten Mid-Week Communion

Beginning on March 1, a brief Communion service will be held each Wednesday at 11:30 AM here at the church. These worship opportunities have been a regular part of our Lenten observation for many years. It's a great mid-week pause to connect with God during this time of contemplation. If you are able, plan to remain after the service for a brown bag lunch and fellowship.



Guest Preacher on February 26

We will welcome to our pulpit Rev. Schaunel Steinnagel who is the Associate Pastor at The Welcome Church in Philadelphia. Known as the Church Without Walls, The Welcome Church is a place of healing and hospitality that serves the needs of those who are experiencing homelessness.. Rev. Steinnagel will be sharing her experience with this amazing ministry.

**Friday Night Fellowship –
March 5, 2023 -- Hawaiian Night!**

Join us for fun, fellowship, food and mission as we celebrate “Hawaiian Night!” In the cold of winter, we will be thinking of warm tropical breezes as well as warm and caring hearts.

Our mission project will be to make soup and other items for The Welcome Church. Put on your grass skirt and hula on over at 6:00. This will be a potluck meal with drinks provided. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall if you are planning to join us. All are welcome. Aloha!



Pancake Supper – February 26, 2023

Pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage – Yum! What could be better than breakfast for dinner?! It is a tradition just before Lent (or, in our case, in the early days of Lent) to use up all the fat in the house and eat pancakes. We are going to do that together here at the church. Our Youth Group will be cooks and hosts that day. Dinner will start at 6:00 PM. We are asking for a \$7 per person donation. (You can't beat that at Perkins!) Please sign up in Fellowship Hall or call the church office.



After our exciting “Hoagie Making Night” and “Escape Room” adventure (February 5th group will be coming back together on February 26th for the Pancake Supper (see article). We won’t be meeting on the 19th due to the long weekend and lots of folks are going to be away.

March will get us back on our regular schedule of every-other-week beginning on March 5th. This will be a regular in-house meeting on March 5th. Seventh – Twelfth graders will be working on a mission project that night so come at 6:30 ready to do some good work.



Annual Meeting Highlights

On January 29, 2023 the annual meeting of the congregation was held following worship. At that time new officers were elected. Missi Dell’Orefice and Louise Stemplewicz were elected as deacons. Both Missi and Louise have served in the past. As it has been said, “once a deacon, always a deacon.” These two have taken that to heart. As deacons they will serve with the other deacons providing care for the congregation and surrounding community.

Also elected to serve were Amy Raab and Courtney Woolslayer as elders. Both Amy and Courtney grew up in Forest Grove Church and now, as adults, will be using their faith to provide leadership to the community that led them through childhood. Appreciation for retiring leaders Elder Michael Myers, Deacons Marilyn Cook and Dee Tori was expressed.

In addition to the election of leaders, the financial report was given and the 2023 budget was shared. Our staff was given a 1% salary increase.

The congregation received the report of the Property Committee concerning the church steeple. That structure is in substantial disrepair and will be replaced. It is hoped that this work will be concluded by late summer. Part of the report included the session decision to remove the church bell. More details about that are in Pastor Su’s article in this newsletter edition.

The meeting concluded with an expression of deep appreciation for the yeoman's work that was done by Michael Myers and Pat Gessner on the 2019-2023 building project that included the removal of the church manse, reconfiguration of the parking lot and rear entrance, removal of the old oil tanks, new sanctuary windows and parking lot lights. A bench has been placed in the vestibule area in honor of these two faithful workers. A celebratory lunch took place after the meeting in their honor.

Pastor Su led the congregation in prayer at the end of the meeting. Annual committee and financial reports are available at the church.





Celebration of Baptism

Nicholas Christopher Foster

Parents:

Matthew and Shannon Foster

Siblings:

Joseph, Anthony, and Michael



Friday Night Fellowship



Our Mission in January was focused on helping others keep warm.

An evening with friends sharing homemade soup while making blankets for those in need.

Thank you to everyone who donated warm blankets and clothes.





Our Youth Group went out in our community to “Build a Hoagie.”

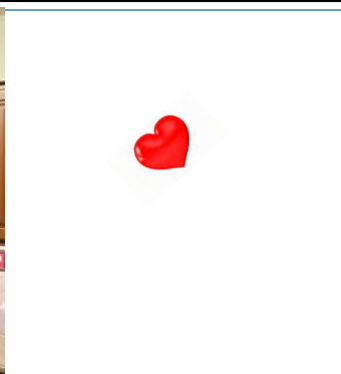


Beth Conti with
Evin Kimbel
and
Aaron Myers



Phyllis Scarpill
With
Keegan Fullman
and
Sam Holton





Craig and Donna
Jencks with
Keegan Fullman
and Sam Holton



Tim and Sharon Ruh
With
Aaron Myers and Evin Kimbel



Doug and Vini Christie
with Sam Holton
and Keegan Fullman

Bill and Sue Wark
with
Aaron Myers and
Evin Kimble



Pat Pizza with
Evin Kimble and
Aaron Myers



Elder of the Month, Feb.

Deacon of the Month, Feb.

Pat Gessner

Rachel Dell'Orefice

Sunday Morning Coffee Host:

February 5 Marilyn Cook February 12 Martha Greenwood

February 19 Leanne Yerkes February 26 Emilie Cullerton

January 2023 Carillon Schedule

The carillon plays each day at 12 noon and at 6:00 in the evening and plays 3 different selections each time

February 5 In Honor of Scouting.

February 12 In memory of Lottie Reif.

February 19 In memory of Frank Greenwood.

February 26 In memory of Charles and Wayne Hurst.

Sunday School Teachers:

February 12 Karen Myers February 19 Ruth Squillace

February 26 Kim King

‡



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

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended December, 2022

FGPC

Operating Fund
For the month Ended
December 2022

Offering & Misc Income	\$ 13,249
Large Fund Income	<u>11,817</u>
Total Income	\$25,066

Expenses	
Pastor Compensation	7,825
Staff	4,402
Office	901
Music & Worship	750
Christian Education	97
Property	2,063
Stewardship/Finance	80
Parish Life	251
Mission	4,000
PILP Loan interest payment	551
Chicken Barbeque	<u>636</u>
Total Expenses	21,556

2022 Operating Fund

Surplus (Deficit) 3,510

Fund Balance @ 11/ 30/22 80,442

Fund Balance @ 12/31/22 \$ 83,952

<u>Benevolence Fund</u>		+
<u>31-December-22</u>		
Balance @ 1/31/22	\$ 4,734	
Receipts & Transfers	4,032	
Disbursements:	1,131	
Balance @ 12/31/22	<u>\$ 7,635</u>	

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road
Furlong, PA 18925-1120



F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 3

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Worship Schedule

10:00 am Worship

Church Office Hours

9am-2pm (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday)

Phone 215-794-8575

Pastor: Reverend Susan L. Fall

Email: pastorsu@forestgrovechurch.org

Music Director: Leanne Yerkes

Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan

Frank Orzehoski, Asst. Treasurer

Natalia Blinova, Childcare

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org

www.ForestGroveChurch.org