

The Focus

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church March 2023

Pastor's Notes

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’” -- Matthew 8:20

Jesus spoke the words above to a certain individual who approached him asking if he could follow along with him. Jesus' mission was not to any one individual or small group, but was for the whole world. That kept him on the move, and according to other scripture readings, Jesus was dependent upon the hospitality of others to provide lodging. Jesus was a “couch surfer.”

This isn't a lifestyle to be mimicked necessarily. For Jesus, it was a choice that suited him well for his unique ministry. For most of us, however, home is that sacred place of escape, security, and refuge. Among its definitions, home is said to be the place in which one's domestic affections are centered.

I have occasionally wondered if there was a part of Jesus that wished for that singular place of escape that included a roof over his head and a chair whose contours had, over time, become contoured to the shape of his unique physique.

In 2015 there were an estimated 100 million homeless people in the world. These are not homeless by choice but by circumstance. In 2022 Philadelphia's homeless population was 4,489 – and that's just the number that were able to be counted. This is an increase of 15% over 2021.

In Jesus' parable found in Matthew 25 where the sheep and the goats are separated, each ask the question, “When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn't help?” “He (Jesus) will answer them, ‘I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me—you failed to do it to me.’ (Matthew 25:44-45 *The Message*)

Recently Rev. Schaunel Steinnagel was our guest preacher who spoke about the ministry to homeless women with which she is involved at The Welcome Church. Out of that our congregation has been inspired to help provide a home for one individual. We aren't putting a roof over that person's head, but we are helping to provide for what is needed under the roof – bedding, kitchen and bathroom supplies. It is no small thing to move from homelessness into a home and we are helping.

This is a one-shot effort, but maybe it doesn't have to be. There is a great hymn that states in the first verse: "For everyone born, a place at the table, for everyone born, clean water and bread, a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing..." If you would like to join in thinking about how we can continue to help with the needs of the homeless or others who are the overlooked or ignored, talk to me. Let's use the power of the Spirit that is given to us in our baptism to fulfill our call to be bearers of the good news.

Yours in Christ's service,



Pastor Su

Wednesday Communion Services

There is an opportunity each Wednesday at 11:30 to take a pause and sit with God as we worship together around the Lord's Table. This brief half hour service is a reminder of the goodness of God as we journey to the cross. The joy of Easter is known to us only by God's supreme gift of love in Jesus' sacrifice. Come, journey and remember together.



Our Boy Scout Troop 71 Heroes

The Scouts from Troop 71 in Forest Grove, Pennsylvania, were enjoying a nice swim on a Delaware beach last summer when a crisis suddenly developed. Far out from shore, a man — not part of the troop — was struggling to keep his head above the surface of the water.



The adult leaders, all strong swimmers with previous knowledge of the area, and all of them properly trained in the BSA's Safe Swim Defense and BSA Swimming & Water Rescue, then made a series of decisions that likely saved the man's life.

Here is their story, in their own words.

(Richard Lotito, 43, Scoutmaster, Troop 71) Troop 71 was on a camping trip to Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware. During the trip, the boys went to the beach for a swim. We always follow Safe Swim guidelines — all our Scouts were swim-tested and approved as swimmers. We were in possession of throw bags, PFDs, life vests and a rescue tube. We implemented the buddy system and had seven adult leaders assigned as lookouts or lifeguards for the Scouts that were swimming in the safe swim area.

(Robert Boquist, 55, Eagle Scout, Troop 71 assistant Scoutmaster) I was acting as lookout. As I had training as a BSA Aquatics Instructor and am a certified lifeguard with the American Red Cross, I had been coordinating all of our lifeguard actions. As a Wilderness First Aid instructor, I was also our designated first-aid resource in our emergency action plan.

(Jason Morehouse, 46, Eagle Scout, Troop 71 committee member) After a period of approximately 90 minutes, the adults got the Scouts out of the water because there seemed to be a strengthening current that made it unsafe to continue swimming beyond the break. Simultaneously, the break at the shore was increasing in strength and was challenging for even some of the stronger Scouts to maintain safe positions.

(Rich Lotito) A beach visitor came up to us to advise that someone was struggling to swim ashore by the rock jetty. After hearing this we then were able to audibly hear the yells of "help" coming from that area and visually confirm the victim's location.

(Dean Cotroneo, 49, assistant Scoutmaster) I noticed a woman waving her hands in the air to get our attention. She didn't speak English, so I couldn't make out what she was saying. She kept pointing to the ocean frantically. I proceeded to run down the beach where onlookers were gathered and saw a distressed swimmer flailing his arms and screaming "help."

(Rob Boquist) I scanned past the surf zone and saw someone in the water waving his arms. He appeared to be about 75 yards offshore. As I looked at the waves and conditions, I could see the swimmer was caught in a rip current.

With no lifeguards on duty, both Dean Cotroneo and Jason Morehouse instinctively jumped in the water and started swimming toward the person in distress. To get to the victim quickly, Rob Boquist ran up the beach to enter the rip current closest to the shore.

(Jason Morehouse) As I approached, it was clear that the person was an adult male approximately 20 years old. He was screaming for help, and he was sometimes falling below the level of the water. He was gasping for air and seemed only moments from going under when I reached him. As I approached, I told him that I was there to help and that I had a rescue tube I was going to give him. I stabilized the swimmer and began swimming with him in an assisted carry/swim position. Rob joined me soon after.

(Rob Boquist) The current was now pushing us toward the northern rock jetty. This created a hazardous situation. If we tried to get to shore, and the current pushed us into the rock jetty, all three of us could be badly injured on the rocks. Jason and I stopped again and talked about our situation. I looked north to the other side of the rock jetty and saw some vigorous wave action, and some surfers in the waves. I knew this was actually one of the safer areas to go, to make sure we did not re-enter a rip current, and I told Jason that's where we should go. He agreed, and we began towing George (the victim) toward the north side of the jetty. As we got closer to the surf zone, we started to get pounded by breaking waves. We kept letting George know when a wave was coming so he could hold his breath as the wave went over the top of us.

As they approached the shore, a surfer came out with his board to help. Using that surf board, they were able to get George over an intense break and finally to shore. There they carried him onto the beach as he was too weak to walk unaided due to exhaustion.

George had swallowed a lot of seawater, but after vomiting some of it up, he was starting to feel better.

(Rich Lotito) Had Troop 71 not been there or did not act when they did, this young man would have drowned for sure as there were a lot of bystanders on the beach and they just did not know what to do.

(Dean Cotroneo) Onlookers were commenting to us, “Thank God the lifeguards were here.” And Rob said, “We aren’t park lifeguards — we are Scouts!”

Robert Boquist and Jason Morehouse each received Heroism Awards from the Boy Scouts of America for their actions that day. Dean Cotroneo received a Certificate of Merit.

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SCOUT SUNDAY



There is no better expression for the joy of Easter than “Hallelujah!” It is a time of celebration that has been expressed throughout the ages in song. To enhance our worship, a special choir is being assemble and led by Leanne Yerkes, our Director of Music. In preparation for Easter worship, choir rehearsals are being held immediately after our Sunday service for just half an hour. All voices, all ages are invited to join. Please talk with Leanne if you have any questions.

What's Happening at Youth Group

February was a month where the group focused their on helping around the congregation. They prepared the church Pancake Supper and then helped one member of the congregation with clearing out their home in order to donate household items to The Well, the Women's homeless shelter in Philadelphia that is a ministry of The Welcome Church.



Now that it is March and the church liturgical calendar has us walking the road to Calvary along with Jesus, the group is going to spend some time thinking about the challenges and distractions of their own lives and community that lead to violence and harmful behavior. With all that is happening in our world, a Savior is needed now more than ever.

Of course in addition to addressing such serious subjects, there will also be fun and crazy activities. All youth in 7th – 12th grade are welcome to join us every other week at 6:30 – 8:00. Our upcoming meetings will be held on the following dates: March 19 and April 2. Friends are also welcome!



Thursday Night Bible Study on Zoom

Each Thursday evening at 7:00 a Bible study is offered on Zoom led by Pastor Su. The current study is called “Savior” and focuses on coming to a deeper understanding of what Jesus’ death means for us. We see crosses everywhere and even wear this instrument of suffering and death around our necks. Why is this so precious to us? How does this change everything? These are the questions that are being addressed as the theology of Atonement is explored. At the end of the five week study, participants will be able to have a deeper understanding of what it means to live an Easter life.

All are welcome to join using Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/127591875>. Each week’s lesson is independent so there is no reason for concern if one week is missed.



Save the Date:

June 25 – 30, 2023

9:00 – Noon

Pre-School – 6th Grade

This year we will once again join with our friends at The Anchor

Presbyterian Church in Wrightstown for an epic week of fun learning about God’s love for us. This year’s theme is “Rainforest Explorers.” The rainforest is a wild place. To make it through this unknown world safely, kids need a guide who can keep them on the right path.

At **Rainforest Explorers VBS**, learn how Jesus is our ultimate guide in the rainforest and throughout our lives. We might feel lost, but He'll show us the way. He'll never leave us.

If you can help with this year’s program, please contact Pastor Su. Registration for VBS is online using our church website.

Friday Night Fellowship



Fellowship

During our March Friday Night Fellowship 55 servings of Chicken Vegetable Soup were made that has been donated to Caring for Friends. This organization provides two basic

aspects of life for seniors in our area: food and friendship.

In addition, snack packages were also assembled that will be given to The Welcome Church in Philadelphia for their worship services that provides for those living on the street.

Due to Good Friday falling on the first Friday, the April gathering for Friday Night Fellowship will be held on April 14. Once again there will be fellowship, a meal, games and a special mission project. The theme is “Italian Night.” Spaghetti and meatballs will be provided. Other sides will need to be provided by participants. Sign up is in Fellowship Hall.



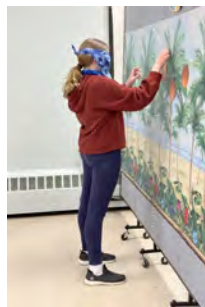
Looking Ahead to Holy Week

The forty days of preparation during the season of Lent will soon be over. Soon the shouts of “Hosanna!” will become “Crucify him!” and then “Alleluia!” To make our way through the dramatic events of Holy Week, the following worship opportunities have been planned:

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| April 2: 10:00 AM | Palm Sunday worship. Palms will be distributed as we find ourselves among the crowd shouting “Save us!” |
| April 5: 11:30 AM | Midweek Communion |
| April 7: 6:00 PM | Good Friday Worship. The theme will be a combination of the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Worship will begin with a light soup supper as we remember Jesus in the Upper Room with his disciples, his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, trial before Pilate, crucifixion and death. |
| April 9: 9:00 AM | Easter Potluck Breakfast |
| 10:00 AM | Worship with Choir and Bell Choir |
| 11:00 AM | Easter Egg Hunt |

CPR CLASSES OFFERED AT CHURCH

A double benefit; if you'd like to learn CPR, and donate part of your class fee to church at the same time, this is your opportunity. We're pleased to announce a Heartsaver CPR classes on Sat March 11th 9-11:30 AM. The cost is \$45/person. After the costs of \$25/person are met for the book and the CPR card, a donation of \$20/person will be given to church. If interested, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. For questions, please feel welcome to contact Dana Daniels at 215 450 0705 or ddpineville@verizon.net



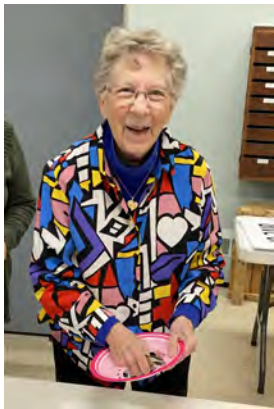




Thank you to our **Youth Group** for hosting a delish Pancake Supper we all enjoyed!



So
Yummy



Welcome our new Officers
 Courtney Woolslayer—Elder
 Amy Raab—Elder
 Missi Dell'orefice—Deacon
 Louise Stemplewicz—Deacon



Elder of the Month, March **Deacon of the Month, March**

Terry Holton

Louise Stemplewicz

Sunday Morning Coffee Host:

March 5 Beth Conti

March 12 Marilyn Cook

March 19 Louise Stemplewicz

March 26 Emilie Cullerton

March 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

March 5 In memory of Edith Elliott.

March 12 In memory of Alice Gilbert

March 19 In memory of Martin Klair.

March 26 In memory of Watson F. Rockafellow.



Sunday School Teachers:

March 12 Karen Myers

March 19 Ruth Squillace

March 26 Kim King



**Ray and Joan Curran
Heritage Pointe Rehab and
Healthcare Center
400 South Main St.
Doylestown, PA 18901**



**MARCH
BIRTHDAYS**

Dolores Albert	3/1	Craig Jencks	3/22
Mary Bode	3/1	Eloise Hyndman	3/27
Duke Ripp	3/2	Shane Ledyard	3/27
Hailey Guarracino	3/6	Rick Wiggins	3/28
Brad Sanders	3/10	Regina Guarracino	3/30
Richard Wright	3/11	Gail Shaffer	3/30
James Conner III	3/12	Evin Kimbel V	3/31
Sally Thiessen	3/15		
Terry Holton	3/20		

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended January, 2023

FGPC

Operating Fund
For the month Ended
January 2023

Offering & Misc Income	\$ 60,075
Large Fund Income	0
Total Income	\$60,075

Expenses	
Pastor Compensation	7,718
Staff	3,686
Office	820
Music & Worship	452
Christian Education	0
Property	1,821
Stewardship/Finance	87
Parish Life	0
Mission	0
PILP Loan interest payment	547
Chicken Barbeque	0
Total Expenses	15,131

2022 Operating Fund

<u>Surplus (Deficit)</u>	44,944
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Fund Balance @ 12/ 31/22	83,952
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Fund Balance @ 1/31/22	\$ 128,896
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Benevolence Fund

31-January-23

Balance @ 12/31/22	\$ 7,635
Receipts & Transfers	0
Disbursements:	0
Balance @ 12/31/22	\$ 7,635

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road
Furlong, PA 18925-1120



M A R C H 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

Handbell Director: Sue Lewis

Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan

Frank Orzechoski, Asst. Treasurer

Natalia Blinova, Childcare

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org

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