

The Focus
Forest Grove Presbyterian Church
February 2024



PASTOR NOTES

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, do that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” – John 3:16

There are few verses in the Bible as familiar as John 3:16. It is boldly displayed at football games, billboards, t-shirts and cards. Martin Luther referred to it as “the heart of the Bible, the Gospel in miniature.”

Reference to its being the “heart” of the gospel seems most appropriate as it speaks of God’s everlasting love that prompted the greatest gift of all time in the incarnation of God’s only begotten Son, Jesus, who gave himself up for our sake.

We will start our Lenten journey this month as we walk with Jesus toward the cross and our salvation. How appropriate that it should fall in the month associated with love and this year, we begin our journey on the day set aside for the recognition and celebration of love, Valentine’s Day. Yes, February 14th is also (maybe more importantly) Ash Wednesday when we receive our ashes as a reminder that from dust we came and to dust we shall return. But, thank God, dust we do not remain, thanks to the forgiveness of sin made possible through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Now we are engrafted into Christ and this supreme gift so that through faith we receive eternal life.

This February 14th, as you honor and share love with your beloved, take time to praise and worship the One who calls us beloved. Please note the article in this newsletter about the service that will be offered on Ash Wednesday.

As the prophet Isaiah has declared, we are inscribed on the palm of God’s hand and as a mother cannot forget her nursing child, so we are not forgotten. Now that's love!

Yours in Christ’s service,

Pastor Su



Pastor Su



Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2024

This year we will be holding the Ash Wednesday service at 11:30 AM on February 14. If you are unable to attend that service but would like to receive ashes, please contact Pastor Su.

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, lowliness, 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.



Lenten Mid-Week Communion

Beginning on February 21, 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.

YOUTH GROUP

We are off to a New Year at Youth Group but have the same purpose – to grow in faith through fellowship, activities and teachings. In February this will include Bowling at Thunderbird lanes on the 4th, making pancakes for the church Pancake

Supper during Friday Night Fellowship on the 9th (we start cooking at 5:30 PM). Finally, after taking the week off for President's Weekend, we will come back on February 25th to meet here in the church for a regular evening gathering. It's always a good time at Youth Group. Everyone in grades 7 – 12 are welcome and can always bring friends.

SCOUT SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 11, 2024

Once again Scouts from our troop 71 will join us in worship. They will be taking on responsibility during the service by sharing as liturgists, presenting an epic chancel drama, and ushering. This year's service will also include a Court of Honor that will be particularly special for this congregation. Sam Holton will receive his Eagle Scout award. This congregation has provided support to Sam not only with his Eagle project of constructing a fence to surround our church playground as well as plantings along the edge of the church building, but also on his faith journey that assisted him in living reverence as every Scout pledges to do so.



There will be a special Coffee Hour following the service. Please take this opportunity to congratulate Sam and also to get to know some of the other Scout troop members, leaders and families.



Friday Night



Fellowship

FEBRUARY 9, 2024

It's Mardi Gras Night! Wear your purple, gold and green and come to the church at 6:00 for a pancake supper (the traditional food for the day before Lent), mission and fellowship.

Do you know the meaning behind the Mardi Gras colors? Purple stands for justice. It has also been associated with royalty since antiquity — the Persian king Cyrus wore a purple tunic as his royal uniform, while some Roman emperors even forbade any non-royal from wearing the hue. Its popularity among kings was primarily due to its exclusivity. Derived from a rare sea snail, the coveted “Tyrian purple” took upwards of 250,000 snails to produce just one ounce of dye, making it extraordinarily rare and prohibitively expensive.

Gold stands for power. It has connections to wealth as a precious metal, but its inclusion is also a nod to traditional heraldry, symbols that represent family origin, giving it a color palette that represents the utmost importance.

Green stands for faith. The color has noble associations that similarly extend back to antiquity. The ancient Egyptians were known to paint representations of their gods using malachite, a vibrantly hued green stone. Yet, above all, the color green points to prosperity. Beginning the Middle Ages, the color green was often worn by bankers, merchants and other upper-class families.

Also, when we think of Mardi Gras, we think of masks. Representing freedom from rules and social structures, masks allowed individuals to mingle amongst different classes without damaging one's reputation.

All of these symbols are to mimic the identity and teachings of Jesus.



WITH APPRECIATION

We are grateful to all of our church leadership who give of their time and talents to the work of Jesus Christ here at Forest Grove Church.

A special "Thank You" to Rachel Dell'Orefice for her service as a

deacon for the past four years. Deacons are called to a ministry of "compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress." In so many different ways, Rachel has lived up to this calling and many have been the beneficiaries of her efforts.

Thank you Rachel!!!

Dana Daniels has been elected to join the board as a new Deacon, and Maggie Realley was elected to a second two-year term. The work of the deacons continues through their service as well as those who continue to fulfill their terms of call including Missi Dell'Orefice, Merrily Henley, Gerry and Louise Stemplewicz. When there is a need, these folks are ready, willing and able to help.

The Forest Grove congregation is also blessed to have amazing and very capable Elders. Their focus is on the oversight of the entire congregation through their work of teaching, praying, shepherding and leading. Our Bi-laws state that we are to have a board of nine serving Elders. With Janice and Bob Propsner coming on as new Elders, our board will be complete. The other serving Elders include Maggie Rash, Terry Holton, Donna Jencks, Bill Wark, Sharon Ruth, Amy Raab and Courtney Woolsey.

As the Bible tells us, we all have been given different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. We can thank God for equipping these saints with their gifts and for their willingness to put those gifts to work in service of the ministry of Jesus Christ at this church. We are truly blessed!



Bible study is offered each Monday morning, 9:30 – 11:00 here in the church building as well as on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/127591875>
Meeting ID: 127 591 875 or by phone: 301-715-8592 or 253-215-8782.

Led by Pastor Su, the group has recently begun a study of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Known as the letter of joy, Paul writes this Epistle while in a Roman prison. Studying its contents, we learn how and why to rejoice, even when times are tough. Paul implores that congregation to remain faithful by holding onto the knowledge that God alone is God and that they are cared for by the All-Powerful One.

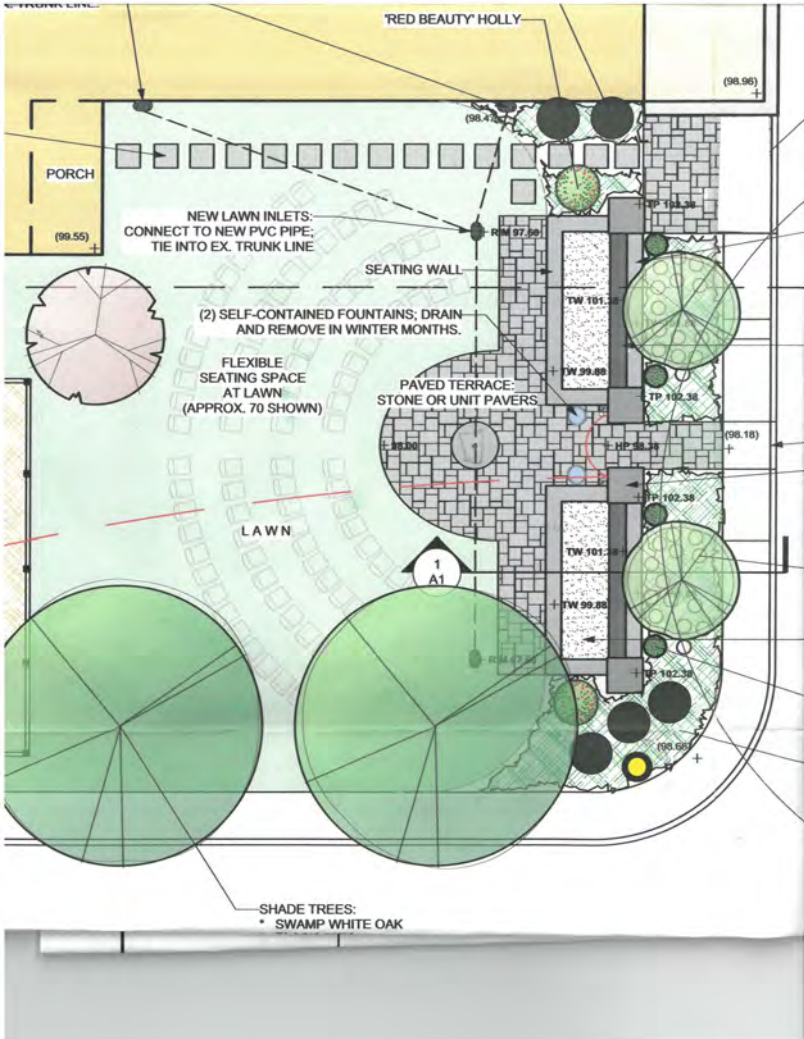
Coffee and good discussion are provided each week. Bring your Bible, your questions and your love for God and join this thoughtful group. You don't have to be a biblical scholar, just a seeking heart.



MEMORIAL GARDEN UPDATE

From the time the decision was made to remove the church manse, the plan has been to fill that space with a Memorial Garden where ashes can be interred.

After much planning, within the next few weeks construction will begin. It will be located in front of the playground and will feature a memorial wall where plaques can be adhered. Drawings of the garden are available in Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact Pastor Su.



Friday Night

Fellowship



Simple Gifts Project™







JUNE 24-28 , 2024



VBS will be held once again at Anchor Presbyterian Church, 9:00-noon. Registration for those ages 3 yrs.-6th grade will begin on February 19. Teen helpers (7th – 12 grade) as well as adult leaders are needed. Please contact Pastor Su if you would like to help.

Summer Camp at Johnsonburg

Registration for summer camp programs at the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center at Johnsonburg is open. There are lots of great options for kids from 1st – 12th grade.

Learn more at <https://www.campjburg.org/>.

Forest Grove Church has a long-standing commitment to camping ministry by making camping available to all. Scholarships are always given for this powerful faith-nurturing experience. Let Pastor Su know if your child will be attending.





Thank you to Ann Bromme for donating our Christmas Tree this year which beautified our sanctuary this season.

Now the season has pasted and we regifted the tree to Leanne's Goats.





The weather was in the 70's today so we went on a little outing to Airlie Gardens in Wilmington. Not many flowers but there were some blooming trees. I have attached a few pictures that I thought you may like to see. The one of my mom and I was taken in front of a Bottle chapel. It is made up of 2800 colored bottles.

The tree is an Airlie Oak that is one of the largest of its kind and dates back to the 1500's.

Blessings to you all!

**Karin Davis & Martha Greenwood
From Bolivia, North Carolina**



To the Deacons, bakers, chefs, helpers and church participants.

Thank you for a wonderful memorial luncheon for our mother, Esther Welch. It was perfect. There were compliments all around about the food and the lovely tables with pink carnations. Your hard work was much appreciated. And, thank you too for the "to-go" bags which our house guests enjoyed for the second round. Thanks to all, Love, Liu and Terry

Elder of the Month

February Sharon Ruth

Sunday Morning Coffee Host:

February 4 Leanne Yerkes

February 18 Vini Christie

Ushers:

February 4 Gerry and Louise Stemplewicz

February 11 Craig and Donna Jencks

February 18 Beth Conti and Maggie Realley

February 25 Bill and Peggy Mellinger

Carillon Schedule

The carillon plays each day at 12 noon and at 6:00 in the evening and plays 3 different selections each time and plays at 10am Sunday.

February 4 In memory of Lottie Reif

February 11 In Honor of Scouting

February 18 In memory of Frank L. Greenwood

February 25 In memory of Charles and Wayne Hurst

Communion Servers: February 4 Maggie Rash and Donna Jencks

Sunday School: February 18 Ruth Squillace February 25 Kim King

Deacon of the Month

February Missi Dell'Orefice

February 11 Beth Conti

February 25 Emilie Cullerton



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

FGPC Operating Fund

For the month Ended

December 2023

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended December, 2023

Offering & Misc Income	45,930
Large Fund Income	<u>0</u>
Total Income	\$45,930
Expenses	
Pastor Compensation	9,025
Staff	3,717
Office	2,070
Music & Worship	331
Christian Education	136
Property	1,416
Stewardship/Finance	1,242
Parish Life	177
Mission	0
PILP Loan interest payment	577
Chicken Barbeque	<u>0</u>
Total Expenses	18,691
Transfer to Memorial Fund	0
<u>2023 Operating Fund</u>	
<u>Surplus (Deficit)</u>	27,239
Fund Balance @ 11/30/23	<u>62,806</u>
Fund Balance @ 12/31/23	<u>\$ 90,045</u>

Benevolence Fund

January to December 2023

Balance @ 1/1/23	\$ 7,635
Receipts & Transfers	616
Disbursements:	0
Balance @ 12/31/23	<u>\$8,251</u>

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road
Furlong, PA 18925-1120

J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 4



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 Orzechoski, Financial Manager

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org

www.ForestGroveChurch.org