

The Focus
Forest Grove Presbyterian Church
February 2025

Pastor Notes

“Each one of us has a body, and that body has many parts. These parts all have different uses. ⁵ In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body. And each part belongs to all the other parts. ⁶ We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace that God gave us.” – Romans 12:4-6

As of February 3rd, I have been an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament for forty years. For me, this has been a significant milestone. I first felt God’s call to this work when I was a sophomore in high school. After taking all the necessary steps and meeting the requirements, in 1985 hands were laid upon me and I was commissioned by the power of the Holy Spirit to use my gifts for pastoral ministry.

The fortieth anniversary (of anything) is known as the “Ruby Anniversary.” This seems particularly significant for me as I celebrate this milestone in that the color of a ruby is red. Educational disciplines are assigned colors and the color of theology is red. Red is also the color for Pentecost. This designation is given because of the flames of fire that appeared above the apostle’s heads when they were gifted with the Holy Spirit. Red, then, is the color for that member of the Holy Trinity. This makes sense when looking into its deeper meaning. Red is the color of blood – that which gives life. Red is the color for fire – that which has power and cleanses. Red is also the color of love. All of these are characteristics of the Spirit of God.

Traditionally, when ordained to ministry, the candidate receives a red stole. The stole is to represent a yoke symbolizing that the wearer is “yoked” or connected to God and God’s life-giving love and power.

For forty years I have worn that yoke in its various liturgical colors, but my favorite is my first one, the red one. I don’t take wearing it lightly. It is an awesome/daunting calling, at times challenging and certainly joy-filled. The latter is most definitely true especially as I am blessed to engage in ministry with the faithful of Forest Grove Church.

I want to thank everyone for celebrating forty with me. Yes, I was surprised at the recognition I received in worship. I am humbled and grateful to share my gifts with your gifts as together we are the body of Christ. You never know just how the Spirit will use us, and, looking over the past years, God has used us – together! Looking ahead, who knows where the Spirit will take and employ us. One thing is for certain, God will give us life and power and cleansing and love to accomplish God’s good purpose. That is a reason to celebrate – forty and more!

Yours in Christ’s service,

Pastor Su





March 5th is Ash Wednesday. It is in the day in the Church year where we mark the beginning of the season of Lent. During this season, we are all invited to reflect on the things in our lives that may be causing us to be distant from God and distant from others. Beginning around the 11th century, the Ash Wednesday service became a way for Christians to physically mark and remember the beginning of the season.

Historically, during the service, ashes are prepared from the palm fronds used during the Palm Sunday of the prior year as a way to point toward the Gospel message of the upcoming Easter. The ashes are mixed with oil and placed with the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the service participants and the words, "From dust you have come and to dust you will return," are shared with each person. This can be a startling statement to hear. However, the purpose is not to alarm but to remind us that we have been created by God and that it is God who holds us in life and in death.

As we did last year, worship, including the imposition of ashes, will be held on Wednesday at 11:30 AM. Our brothers and sisters in Christ from The Anchor church will join us.





BOOK CLUB GATHERING – A HEARTWARMING START

This past Sunday, after a wonderful time of fellowship, our book club came together for the very first time. All agreed that Pastor Su’s message that day about paying forward the loving kindness our Lord shows us each day was the perfect introduction to our first book, *Angels on Earth*. This beautiful collection of true stories reminds us how even the smallest acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference in both the giver’s and receiver’s lives.

Our book club is led by Betts Slim, Mary Young, and Bunny Pierce. To help us find the best meeting schedule, Betts handed out a short questionnaire. Once everyone’s input has been reviewed, the date for the next gathering will be announced.

The leaders are excited to share that the next book selection is *The Invisible Thread* by Laura Schroff, the same author as *Angels on Earth*. This inspiring story follows Laura’s journey with a young boy who simply asked for some money for food—an encounter that changed both their



lives. It was this very experience that led others to share their own stories of kindness, which became *Angels on Earth*.

The group would love for more to join! Whether you love to share your thoughts or simply enjoy listening to the discussion, you are always welcome. There’s no pressure—just warm conversation, good company, and uplifting stories. Stay tuned for details on the next meeting. We can’t wait to see you there!



On March 7 we will be back in our own building for Friday Night Fellowship. It's Pajama Night! The Youth Group will be making breakfast for all who attend. There will be a freewill offering to cover the cost of the meal.

Our mission project for this month will be to decorate socks for homeless children and adults as well as put together an activity bag for children staying at the Homeless Shelter in Levittown. You can help by donating white socks of any size – especially kids and little kids socks.

Of course, Pastor Su will have some fun activities to “wake us up.” Sign up in Fellowship Hall if you want to join in the activities! All are welcome (and wear your PJs or at least bring your teddy bear!).



WEST VIRGINIA MISSION TRIP

Thanks to everyone who have been supportive of this summer's trip to West Virginia. Both the Gingerbread House and Super Bowl Hoagie sale were great successes. There will be more opportunities to help with fundraising in the months ahead.

The trip is scheduled for July 19 – 26. More adult leaders are still being sought for what promises to be a most memorable and rewarding experience. While it has been referred to as the "Youth Mission Trip," it really is intergenerational. We are all in this together.

The group will be working with the West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Work Camps that was started by a Presbyterian pastor but has grown into an ecumenical movement. The mission is to repair the homes of low income families which often include the elderly. If you might be feeling the Spirit tugging on your heart to make a difference in someone's life beyond your personal borders, please contact Pastor Su. Your gifts will be appreciated.

YOUTH GROUP

We have some fun stuff coming up for Youth Group. At 5:30 – 7:30 the group is meeting at Ultra Zone in Bensalem for Laser Tag. The cost is \$20. Friends are welcome. Please let Pastor Su know if you will attend and if you will bring someone with you.

Looking ahead, the group will get out their culinary skills when once again they will be making the pancakes for Friday Night Fellowship on March 7 (see article). As a reward for that good help, the group will be bowling at Thunderbird Lanes in Warrington.

It's not too late to sign up for the summer mission trip to West Virginia. The dates are July 19-26 with a cost of only \$100/person. Talk with Pastor Su if you are interested.



Forest Grove is blessed with some very special folks who provide leadership in our congregation.

Some of these are Deacons who provide the 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.” A special “Thank You” to Merrily Henley and Gerry Stemplewicz for their service in this ministry. In so many different ways, both have lived up to their calling and many have been the beneficiaries of their efforts. Thank you!!!

Leanne Yerkes and Kevin Young have been elected to join the board. The work of the deacons continues through their service as well as those who continue to fulfill their terms of call including Dana Daniels, Missi Dell’Orefice, Maggie Realley, 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. Retiring this year from the board are Sharon Ruth and Bill Wark. Theirs are big shoes to fill but we are grateful that God has equipped Ruth Squillace and Mary Young with the gifts for this service and they have answered the call to serve. The other serving Elders include Donna Jencks, Janice and Bob Propsner, Amy Raab, Maggie Rash and Courtney Woolslayer. What an awesome group of leaders and true blessings!

DEACON FOOD DONATION WAGON

In our vestibule is a wagon that is always on the move taking donated food to those in need. With the cost of groceries what they are, these donations are needed now more than ever. Each week the deacons take the donations to the Bucks County Food Pantry in Doylestown. In addition, the deacons make a monthly monetary donation. While suggestions for weekly donations are given in the church bulletin, items that are of particular need include: Protein: canned meat, beans, lentils and peanut butter. Grains: Shelf stable milk, powered milk, dry-grated Parmesan cheese

Prepared meals: pasta sauces, soup, stews, Mac 'n cheese, baked beans
Fruits: Canned in its own juice
Vegetables: Especially carrots, potatoes, yams or tomatoes
Baking goods: Cake mix, flour or sugar

Fresh produce that doesn't require refrigeration

Other: oil, condiments, healthy snacks, spices, salad dressing, nonstick cooking spray, coffee, creamer

If you have a week when your grocery bill is less, maybe you can put some extra donations in your shopping cart. Whenever given, any and all donations are greatly appreciated.



The series on the Sermon on the Mount continues. Each Monday morning, 9:30 – 11:00 the group meets both in-person and on Zoom.



Matthew 5-7, contains some of Jesus most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples, and to the others who first heard them? How do they enhance our reading of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, and how do they speak across the centuries to listeners today? If we pay careful attention to his words, Jesus provides us a road map to living as God would have us live.

Copies of the week's lesson can be found on the table outside the sanctuary. All seekers are welcome.

It's time to start planning for Vacation Bible School! This year's dates are June 23-27. In March we will start registration, so, save the dates! The program is for 4 yr. olds – 6th graders. Older youth can serve as helpers – and we need them!



Once again we will meet at 9:00 – Noon at The Anchor Presbyterian Church in Wrightstown (just about five minutes down the road). We need adult and teen helpers to make the program a success. Areas of involvement include: Elementary and Preschool leaders, Snack Leaders, Science Leaders and Childcare for one infant. We also need folks to help set up the decorations that help transform the space into something awesome. This work is done in the evenings a week or two before VBS starts. Please contact Pastor Su if you want to help or if you have any questions.



BOOK CLUB GATHERING



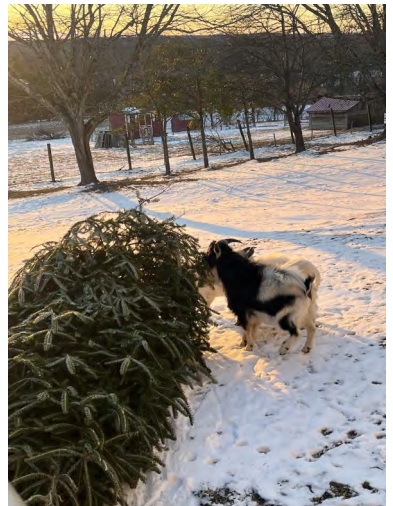


SCOUT SUNDAY 2025





BABY GOATS ENJOYING OUR CHRISTMAS TREE





Annual meeting



Elder of the Month

February Maggie Rash

Sunday Morning Coffee Host:

February 2 Scout Sunday

February 16 Beth Conti

Deacon of the Month

February Missi Dell'Orefice

February 9 Emilie Cullerton

February 23 Bunny Pierce

Ushers:

February 2 Gerry and Louise Stemplewicz

February 9 Kevin and Maggie Realley

February 16 Beth Conti and Susan Thomes

February 23 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 2 In Honor of Scouting

February 9 In memory of Lottie Reif

February 16 In memory of Frank Greenwood

February 23 In memory of Charles & Wayne Hurst



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

Sessions 2025

Maggie Rash - Clerk

Donna Jencks

Mary Young

Courtney Woolslayer

Amy Raab

Bob Propsner

Janice Propsner

Ruth Squillace

Deacons 2025

Louise Stemplewicz

Dana Daniels

Maggie Realley

Missi Dell'Orefice

Leanne Yerkes

Kevin Young

FGPC FINANCIALS Ended December 31st 2024

FGPC Operating Fund
For the month Ended
December 31, 2024

Offering & Misc Income	63,083
Large Fund Income	<u>0</u>
Total Income	\$63,083

Expenses	
Pastor Compensation	8,356
Staff	3,789
Office	983
Music & Worship	58
Christian Education	18
Property	3,132
Stewardship/Finance	79
Parish Life	311
Mission	178
PILP Loan interest payment	525
Chicken Barbeque	0
Credit Card Holding	<u>646</u>
Total Expenses	18,075

Transfer to Memorial Fund 0

2024 Operating Fund
Surplus (Deficit) 45,008

Fund Balance @ 11/30/24	91,427
Feb. Transfers from Holding Acc	<u>3,500</u>
 Fund Balance @12/31/24	 <u><u>139,935</u></u>

Benevolence Fund
As of December 2024

Balance @ 1/31/24	\$ 8,251.47
Receipts & Transfers	2,245.76
Disbursements:	0
Balance @ 12/31/24	<u><u>\$ 10,497.23</u></u>

Forest Grove Presbyterian Church

1856 Forest Grove Road
Furlong, PA 18925-1120



F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 5

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

Administrative Assistant: Susan Flanagan
Frank Orzechoski, Financial Manager

Email: office@forestgrovechurch.org
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