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Celtic Cross

February 2018

Dearly Beloved:

The season of Lent is almost upon us. This is the season of *focus*, the season when we seek to be more intentional in our spiritual life so that we can grow deeper in Christ. Perhaps we focus on sacrifice, or on self-examination, or study, or service – all fundamental ingredients of living deeply and richly in Christ. But pastor/poet Steve Garnaas-Holmes offers a different way to focus in this season, drawn from lesus' parable of the gardener in Luke 13:

Repentance

The owner said, "I look for fruit on this fig tree and I find none. Cut it down!"

The gardener replied, "Let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it..." (Luke 13:6-8)

What if the task before you is not to mine some vein of regret, not to subtract or amputate, not to punish yourself or squeeze yourself into a shape but to allow a gentle gardener to dig around your roots, to gift you with manure, to trust in fruits you don't yourself yet see, to wait for hidden beauty to emerge, grace that is already there to flower?

Can you leave your fear of the axe?
Can you let go long enough
to imagine blossoms?
Can you bless your blest, bare branches?
Can you let the gardener dig?

Can you hold still?

What if this Lent we set aside trying to change ourselves, and focused on holding still in the Gardener's presence so that God can get to work in us, digging around in our roots, pruning what needs to be pruned, stimulating growth in some new direction — even with a gift of some manure? This Lent, why don't we focus on regularly holding still before the wise, skillful, gracious Gardener so we can become more beautiful and bear much fruit? Read on to find ways of holding still in what can be a holy season of renewal. Good Lent, Carter and Kerry

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Worship Matters

Sunday Mornings at First Presbyterian:

9: 15: Sunday School 10:30: Worship

February 4 – Service for the Lord's Day Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

February I I -- Service for the Lord's Day Cherub Choir sings

Wednesday, February 14, Ash Wednesday Service

7:15 p.m. in the Community Room. See p. 3 for more details.

February 18 – Service for the Lord's Day Scout Sunday

February 25 – Service for the Lord's Day Sacrament of Holy Baptism Celtic Choir sings

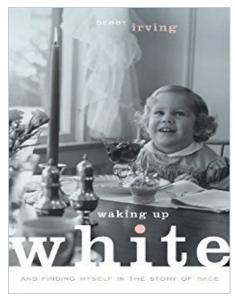
Waking up White: Finding Ourselves in the Story of Race

Author and Educator Debbie Irving

will speak and lead us in discussion on

Sunday, March 4, 2:00—4:30

No admission fee but registration is required. Friends and neighbors welcome!



Contact Marie Kayati, at 610-326-0620 or fpoffice@fpcpottstown.org

Plans are in the making for an afternoon at the theater...*

Let's head to STEEL RIVER PLAYHOUSE together for a SPECIAL EDITION of

"TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD"

The performance will be followed by a talk-back with the cast.

Sunday, March 18 (or March 11—date to be confirmed), 2:00 matinee

Special Ticket Prices: \$20 adult/ \$17 senior / \$15 student

Reserve your tickets now at fpcpottstown.org, or call Marie in the church office.

*with Bethel Community Church

HOLD STILL, AND FOCUS: Wednesdays in Lent

Ash Wednesday Feb. 14th at 7:15 p.m.

This Valentine's Day, hold still and focus on "the Love that wilt not let you go."

Wednesday Evenings

(Feb. 21, 28, March 7, 14, and March 21 – Service for Wholeness)

Focus on... Scripture

Hold still and listen to Dr. Jennifer Koosed (a First Presbyterian favorite!) of Albright University speak on "Saving Israel: Assassins, Tricksters and Other Biblical Heroes." Ancient Israel was a small confederation of tribes, often beset by other nations and empires. Whereas there are plenty of war stories in the Old Testament, many of the most dramatic triumphs involve lone actors who risk it all to save their people. This series will look at a number of these non-conventional heroes, from the biblical book of Judges to the apocryphal Judith.

Focus on... Marriage

Join Carter and Kerry as we hold still and take a closer look at each other (yikes!). Have no fear: we will not be divulging TMI (too much information), and we will not ask you to talk to anyone other than your spouse. We'll draw on a variety of sources, and some video clips from the internationally recognized "Marriage Course" produced by the Anglican Church (the speakers have a delightful British accent...).

Focus on... Prayer

Spiritual director Amy Shutt will offer self-guided contemplative prayer practices and guided meditations for stillness in the sanctuary.

Focus on... Mission

Jeff and Sarah will help children and youth focus on some of the ways we are joining God's work in the world: Living Waters for the World, Operation Backpack, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, to name a few. There may not be as much "holding still" in this group, but there will be joy in serving!

6:00 Evening Prayer
6:20 Table Food and Fellowship
(\$5/person, \$12/family)
7:00 - 8:00 Focus Groups

Sign up by emailing fpoffice@fpcpottstown.org or on the bulletin board in the hall.

Or, on Thursdays, Focus on ... Music

Join the choir in singing the beautiful music of this holy season. Even if you cannot sing in the choir throughout the year, hold still for 40 days and learn the music of Lent and Easter that fills our souls.

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Spiritual Formation Opportunities

Sunday Mornings

• Forum Class (Community Room)

February 4 and 11: "Living and Losing: A Look at Grief and Resilience"

When someone we know and love dies, how can we navigate through our grief? How do we respond to a friend or family member who has lost a loved one? How do we help children with their grief? Claire Drexler, a counselor with the Center for Loss and Bereavement in Skippack will be leading the discussion. Claire has spent her entire career working with individuals coping with grief, as well as people in palliative care and hospice settings.

February 18: "Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy" We will listen to Adam Grant and Sheryl Sandberg and others discuss (by video) the issues raised in the best-seller written by Grant and Sandberg. Sandberg is the chief operating officer for Facebook and lost her husband suddenly three years ago. Grant teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and has researched and written about facing adversity and finding resilience. Join Carter in a discussion of the issues raised in the presentation.

February 25: "Alzheimers and Medications to Prevent Dementia"

Dr. Cherian Verghese will share information about a clinical trial he is conducting related to medications to prevent or slow down dementia and cognitive impairment.

- Thoughtful Christians (Mary Ann Yost Room) Teacher: Debbie Remelius Topic: The Gospel of Good Humor
- Men's Sunday Mornings (Pastors' Conference Room). Teachers: Gary James, Tim Peckham, and Wesley "Binky" Huff, and Carter. Topic: The Psalms (Bible study)

Weekday Opportunities

- "Sisters of the Way" Bible Study: 9:15-10:45 a.m. every Thursday. Teacher: Kerry
- Praying the Scriptures Group (Lectio Divina): Tuesday, February 6 and 20 at 7:30 p.m. Join Kerry and others for a quiet hour of praying the Scriptures.
- Next Week's Sermon: Tuesday, Feb. 13 and 27 at 7:30 p.m. Teacher: Carter
- Theology Reading Group: Will meet in April to discuss Martin Luther's "On Christian Liberty." Check with Carter if you have questions or are interested in joining in the discussion of Luther's short but historic essay.

Deacons' Bench—Blood Drive, Tues., Feb. 20, 3-7 p.m.

Do you ever feel like you want to help someone? Now you can, and they won't even know it was you! This is what giving blood is about. Our blood drive is February 9 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Tell a friend or just come yourself. You can schedule an appointment online at www.giveapint.org. If you have any questions, contact our Parish Nurse, Dawn Skelly.

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Music and Recreation for Children

Children in grades 2-5 join Jeff for an exciting time of games and fellowship as we grow a community of young friends and then make a joyful noise to the Lord together with Mrs. B. for 45 minutes. The Celtic Choir usually sings the third Sunday of the month. Meets every Wednesday, 4:30-5:45.

HENS Nursery School Registration Open for Church Members

Church members now have an opportunity to register for openings in the HENS Nursery School for 2, 3, and 4 year-olds for the 2016-7 school year. If you are interested, or have questions, contact the director Becky Bostwick, at 610-326-3690 or by emailing her at hensnurseryschool@gmail.com.

If you have a friend or neighbor who might be interested, let them know!

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Music Notes

We are preparing an array of beautiful music to warm your hearts and stir your souls through this cold month of February!

On Communion **Sunday, February 4th**, The Chancel Handbells will open the service with an arrangement of "Earth Shall Ring." This piece is based on a hymn from *Piae Cantiones, a song book containing 74 medieval Latin church and school songs.* (About half of the songs in the *Piae Cantiones* are believed to be of Finnish origin, as they have not been found in other sources. Needless to say, it has become Finland's musical treasure!) The Chancel Choir will follow the prelude with one of our most beloved introits, "Surely the Presence of the Lord is in This Place." Our anthem will be Mark Hayes' arrangement of "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing." Deb will play "Larghetto" by Giordani during the offertory and Martin's "Learning to Walk" and "The Road Home" at communion. Viviani's "Trumpet Finale" will be performed as the postlude!

Hopson's "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright" will open the service on **Sunday, February 11th** celebrating the Transfiguration of our Lord. Those adorable Cherubs will sing "Jesus is Calling" as the anthem. We look forward to their angelic voices! The Chancel Choir will offer Lauridsen's "O Nata Lux" as the offertory. The piece is also from a collection entitled *Lux Aeterna*. Each of the five connected movements contain references to **Light** and are assembled from various sacred texts. Look for the translation of this beautiful text in the bulletin. Deb will conclude the service with "Trumpet Tune" by Franceschini.

February 18th's service will open with the prelude, "Adagio Cantabile" by Tartini. The beloved anthem "Lead Me On" will fill the sanctuary, sung by Chancel Choir. C.P.E. Bach's "Allegro" will be heard during the offertory. Anna Laura Page's "May the Grace of God Go With You" will move our spirits as the benediction response and Deb will complete the service with Corelli's "Trumpet Tune."

We begin **Sunday, February 25th**'s service with Deb's gorgeous prelude "Sarabande" by Leclair. Our Celtic Singers will perform the anthem "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me." while the Chancel Choir offers Mary McDonald's arrangement of "Coming Home" as the offertory. Deb will conclude the service with Gabrieli's "Trumpet Tune."

All sung and played in praise!
The Music Ministry ~ Cindy, Deb and Jo Ann

Church Family News

Please keep in your prayers the following members who have been ill, injured, or hospitalized lately: Marion McNey, Dave Allebach, Marcia Zeigler, Tom Zeigler, Suzanne Fritsch, Donna Rhoadarmer, Kathy Benning, Nancy Orgill, Dottie Melchiorre, Bonnie Skone, Cora-Celeste Missimer, Don Grim, Paul Lepard, Anna Chilton, and Barry West.

We rejoice at the birth of John James Davis, III, son of John and Julie Davis.

Fellowship Opportunities

PrimeTimers

7 Feb. (Wed.) MIDWINTER HOMEMADE SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON

Lunch at noon in Fellowship Hall followed by a viewing of the classic film,

"Singin' in the Rain" at 1:15 p.m. in the Community Room. Please call Mary Ann

Hudson if you can make soup, bread, or dessert.

11 March (Sun.) POT LUCK DINNER AND HYMN SING

Pot Luck Dinner at 5 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Hymn sing at 6 p.m.

Please bring a salad, side, main dish, or dessert to share (sign up on the bulletin

board)

Men's Breakfast—Saturday, February 17, 8 –9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Join Carter, chef Bill Wilson, and the guys for our monthly gathering of guys. We eat, talk, have a devotion and discussion led by Carter—all by 9 a.m. Contact Carter if you have any questions.

Faithful Friends and Faithful Friends with Children

The next gatherings for both groups are in the process of being scheduled. Stay tuned and check your emails. If you would like to be added to the email list, please let Carter or Kerry (Faithful Friends) or Jeff (Faithful Friends with Children) know.

Faith and Nature

Join us on Sunday, February 18th for our annual Winter Walk In the Woods. This year we will be keeping it local, as we explore the trails of the Althouse Arboretum in Upper Pottsgrove. If you have yet to visit this beautiful sanctuary, you owe it to yourself to come along with us and enjoy the quiet winter stillness and serenity along the well maintained trails. Native songbirds and wildlife are common throughout the arboretum, so bring along a pair of binoculars because you never know what we may see. We will hike approximately 3 or 4 miles at a very casual pace. Hiking boots are recommended as there could be mud in spots or snow on the ground. Please sign up on the bulletin board and be sure to provide your cell phone number in case we need to cancel because of inclement weather. Any questions, please feel free to contact me at: mdeegan2882@comcast.net or by phone at: 610-564-4167.

Hope to see you out there!
-Mike Deegan

Counters Corner

February Counters:

Head Counter: Tom Zeigler

Regular Counters: Sue Moyer, Lois Glenn, and Chuck Krueger

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Session Digest

At its January 24 meeting, the Session:

- Shared joys and concerns.
- Elected Jon Allen Treasurer for 2018.
- Received the report from Treasurer Jon Allen regarding the 2017 Treasurer's Report which showed that the church was able to meet mission commitments and capital fund allocations and end the year with a small surplus. The Session approved the final mission and capital fund allocations.
- Received the recommendations of the Personnel Committee regarding staff salary and benefit increases. Approved the Personnel Committee's proposed changes to the terms of call of the co-pastors, which is subject to approval by the congregation at the annual meeting on Jan. 28.
 Approved revisions to Personnel handbook.
- Approved the budget for 2018 which includes the recommendations of the Personnel Committee. The budget will be presented to the congregation at the congregational meeting.
- Approved the baptism of Ava Nicole Wilson, child of God and daughter of Kendra Wilson, on February 25, 2018 (date of birth: Oct. 1, 2015).
- Approved Carter taking leave February 5-10 to move his mother in Atlanta, Ga. Approved
 Kerry taking study leave April 17-20 to attend a conference on "Mapping Your Journey of
 Faith: Guidance from C.S. Lewis, Teresa of Avila and the Ancient Celts" at Holy Cross Monastery.
- Discussed the officers' retreat and follow up plans.
- Discussed plans for serving a dinner during Lent.
- Approved two additional holidays to be included in the Personnel Policy: the days after
 Thanksgiving and Christmas. Approved a revised Personnel Policy that includes those two
 holidays and integrates the previously approved sexual harassment policy.
- Approved the final 2017 Porter Broward report and allocated the remaining unspent money of \$1963.01 to be split between the Mission and Capital Improvement funds.
- Approved \$329 from the Memorial Fund for a new table for the Handbells.
- Received the committee reports and the reports of the Deacons.
- Please keep in your prayers:

Hospitality: That we might extend our arms to our neighbors and visitors.

Worship: For the monthly fellowship time following worship to be meaningful.

Administrative: For guidance in making decisions on upcoming projects.

Spiritual Formation: For strong participation in Seekers, Sunday School, and Lent programs.

Endowment: That the church might live generously and grow the Acorns of Faith.

Nominating: Thanksgiving for those who accepted the call to serve.

Mission: Thanksgiving for all who provide meals and shelter during the winter.

Stewardship: That we may indeed "Live Generously" in 2018.

Personnel: Prayers for our staff in 2018.

Financial Highlights from 2017

Budgeted Giving and Other Receipts in 2017: \$568,491 Actual: \$573,217 Budgeted Expenses: \$568,491 Actual: \$543,908

Surplus for 2017: \$29,309 (goes into Gen. Fund reserve)

Health Ministry News

Here we are...February and **American Heart Month** again! I was thinking...what a tough month to talk about this when many of us are probably exercising less and eating more "comfort food". Ah-Ha. ...This is the BEST time to be reminded of how important it is to take care of our heart. Of course we know that exercise and a good diet can keep your heart healthy, but what else can you do to keep your heart going strong? According to an article by the Cleveland Clinic, there are 5 habits you can incorporate into your lifestyle everyday to help your heart health be the best it can be!

I. Eat healthy fats, NOT trans fats

We need some fats in our diet, including saturated and polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats. We don't need is trans fat, which increases your risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke over a lifetime. Trans fat clogs your arteries by raising your bad cholesterol levels (LDL) and lowering your good cholesterol levels (HDL). By cutting them from your diet, you improve the blood flow throughout your body. Trans fats are industry-produced fats often used in packaged baked goods, snack foods, margarines and fried fast foods to add flavor and texture. Trans fat appears on the ingredients list as partially hydrogenated oils. Look for 0 percent trans fat.

2. Practice good dental hygiene, especially flossing your teeth daily.

Many studies have shown that bacteria in the mouth involved in the development of gum disease can move into the bloodstream and cause an elevation in a protein that is a marker for inflammation in the blood vessels.

- **3. Get enough sleep.** Sleep is an essential part of keeping your heart healthy. If you don't sleep enough, you may be at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease no matter your age or other health habits. Aim to sleep 7-8 hours per night. If you have sleep apnea, you should be treated as this condition is linked to heart disease and arrhythmias.
- **4. Don't sit for too long at one time.** Research has suggested that staying seated for long periods of time is bad for your health no matter how much exercise you do. Experts say it's important to move throughout the day. Park farther away from the office, take a few short walks throughout the day and/or use a standing work station so you can move up and down. Aim for 30 minutes of exercise 5 times a week. Remember some is better than none!
- **5. Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke!** Studies show that the risk of developing heart disease is about 25 to 30 percent higher for people who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work. This is because the chemicals emitted from cigarette smoke promote the development of plaque buildup in the arteries.

Take the time to get your physical every year!

If you are **monitoring your blood pressure at home**, occasionally have your machine checked when you have your manual blood pressure taken. Dawn is always available to take your blood pressure and can also check your machine for you.

Lectionary Readings for February

For the week of February 5-11:

II Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; II Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

For the week of February 12-18:

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; I Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

For the week of February 19-25:

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

For the week of February 26-March 4:

Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; I Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

Library News

There are quite a few books and movies missing from the library. Can everyone look on their shelves for these books and movies? It will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Adult DVDs with GREEN stickers on them

Selma

Manchester by the Sea

Children's Religious books with YELLOW stickers on them

The Lord is My Shepherd by Anne Wilson, ill.

The Story of the Tower of Babel by Alice Joyce Davidson

Designed by God so I Must be Special by Bonnie Sose

Two by Two by John Winch

Family Faith Formation

Creating a Sacred Space in your Home.

An important part of building faith in your family is practice; and an important part of practice is having a place to practice. Whether your family prays together daily, recaps Sunday School weekly, does bed time or breakfast thanksgiving; whatever your family's faith practices are, having a Sacred Space set aside in your home will help make these practices more comfortable and enjoyable for your family. Here are some tips for creating a Sacred Space:

- -Make it comfortable. Have chairs, cushions, blankets, etc. Whatever is necessary to make the space comfortable for your family. If it's not comfortable you are less likely to use it.
- -Keep it clean and clutter free. Nothing is more distracting during a prayer than the stack of mail that just came in from the mailbox.
- -Think about how all your senses will experience the space. Is it too sunny or too dark? Are there smells from the kitchen? Can you hear the dishwasher running?
- -The space should be inclusive. Let each member of your family pick a piece of art or decoration for the space.
- -Let the space be simple, don't over crowd it

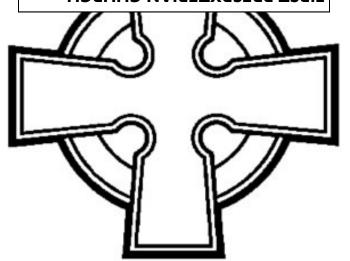
I hope this helps your family develop a Sacred Space in your home.

-Jeff

(Adapted from Faithful Families by Traci Smith)

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				Bible Study 9:15 am Yoga 11 am Jr. GS 5 pm Meal 5 pm Begin. Bells 6pm Bells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	2	A Midwinter's Day of Reflection 9am-4pm
4 Sunday School 9:15 am Worship/ Communion Tom Craver, Preaching 10:30 am	Cub Scouts 7 pm	Yoga II am GS 6:30 pm Lectio-Divina 7:30 pm	Yoga II am Prime Timers Mid- winter Lunch 12 pm/ Movie 1:15 pm M/R 4:30 pm Relay 5:45 pm Evening Prayer 7::15 pm Committees 7:30 pm	Bible Study 9:15 am Yoga I I am Jr. GS 5 pm Meal 5 pm Begin. Bells 6pm Bells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	9	I 0 Birthday In-Kind Baking
Sun. Sch. 9:15 am Worship Cherubs Sing 10:30 am Jr. Seekers deliver Valentines 3-5 pm Confirmation Class 5 pm Sr. Seekers game night & ice cream 6:30 pm	Cub Scouts 7 pm	Yoga II am GS 6:30 pm Next Week's Sermon 7:30 pm	Yoga II am M/R 4:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:15 pm Deacons 8 pm	Bible Study 9:15 am Yoga 11 am Meal 5 Jr. GS 5 pm Begin. Bells 6pm Bells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm	16	Men's Breakfast 8 am Cub Scouts Pine Wood Derby Workshop (8am-1pm)
Sunday School 9:15 am Worship Scout Sunday 10:30 a.m. New Officers Orientation (after worship) F&N Winter Walk (Althouse Aboretum))	Presidents' Day Church Office and HENS closed	Yoga II am Blood Drive 3-7 pm GS 6:30 pm Lectio-Divina 7:30 pm	Yoga II am Prayer Shawl I2:30 pm M/R 4:30 pm Prayer 6 pm Supper 6:20 pm Focus Groups 7 pm Session 8 pm	Bible Study 9:15 am Yoga 11 am Meal 5 Jr. GS 5 pm Begin. Bells 6pm Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30	Cub Scouts Pine Wood Derby Set-up 5 pm	Cub Scouts Pine Wood Derby (all day)
Sun. Sch. 9:15 am Worship/Baptism Celtic Choir sings 10:30 am Sr. Seekers rock climbing (after worship) Confirmation Class 5 pm Jr. Seekers Hand Painting 6:30pm	26 Cub Scouts 7 pm	Yoga II am GS 6:30 pm Next Week's Sermon 7:30 pm	Yoga II am M/R 4:30 pm Prayer 6 pm Supper 6:20 pm Focus Groups 7pm Comp. Friends 7 pm		\$\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	



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