



The Celtic Cross

January 2015

Letter from the Co-Pastors

Dearly Beloved:

“It is no use saying that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Nor will those who live at the end of the world have been born too late. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts. But now it is with the voice of our contemporaries that he speaks, with the eyes of store clerks, factory workers, and children that he gazes; with the hands of office workers, slum dwellers, and suburban housewives that he gives. It is with the feet of soldiers and tramps that he walks, and with the heart of anyone in need that he longs for shelter.”

Those words, written in the middle of the twentieth century by Dorothy Day, stand as a reminder for us as December turns into January. Although Christmas is over and the Christmas decorations even now may be back up in our attics, the One born in Bethlehem remains with us. And although we live more than 2000 years since Christ was born, the question remains: will we make room for him in our hearts and welcome him when we encounter him in our daily lives?

Making room for him in our hearts—it is a matter of letting go of our agendas and priorities so that Christ’s agenda and priorities can take front and center in our lives. Christ will never bully us or bulldoze into our lives. Instead, he stands at the door and knocks, waiting for us to welcome him.

Welcoming him in our daily lives—it is a matter of looking for Christ in those we encounter and serve. But his presence is often hidden. As Day also wrote, “If Mary had appeared in Bethlehem clothed...with the sun a crown of twelve stars on her head, and the moon under feet, then people would have fought to make room for her. But that was not God’s way for her, nor is it Christ’s way for himself now when he is disguised under every type of humanity that treads the earth.” The person we might pass by without noticing, or the person we might keep our distance from or look down upon, is that Christ?

As the new year begins and we make our new year’s resolutions, may they include welcoming Christ into our hearts, and being open to meeting him each day in the people we encounter!

See you Sunday,
Carter and Kerry

If you are able, please help us “undecorate” the church on Wed., Jan. 7 at 7:00 p.m.—many hands make light work!

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Worship Matters

Sunday Mornings at First Presbyterian

9:15 Sunday School for all ages; 10:30 Service of the Lord's Day; 11:30 Fellowship Time

January 4—Service of the Lord's Day
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

January 11—Service of the Lord's Day
Renewal of Baptismal Covenant
Cherub choir sings

January 18—Service of the Lord's Day
Celtic Choir sings

January 25—Service of the Lord's Day

Music Notes

I hope you enjoyed the prelude music to the Christmas Eve service. We certainly enjoyed performing the *Messiah* for you! I would like to take a moment to thank the Chancel Choir, for all of their hard work and dedication through this busy season. I would also like to acknowledge our fabulous soloists; Chip DePrefontaine, Beth Ann Straub, Linda Hale and Danielle Buchanan! And BRAVO to our string ensemble which included: Spring Ford Middle School Orchestra Director, Kristen Katzianer, violin, Marple Newtown High School Orchestra Director, Elizabeth Reese, violin and Pottsgrove Orchestra Director, William Einhorn, viola, along with Jeff Fox-Kline, Deb Voytko and Scott Sample. Thank you so much for being so generous with your God given talents !

January is a wonderful time to join the Chancel Choir, if you feel you are being led to serve in this capacity. If you love to sing and your "Happy Birthday" really sounds like "Happy Birthday," join us! We can help you prepare in a variety of different ways for each week's service. Feel free to contact me at cynthiafoust@comcast.net or leave your information in the office with Peggy.

Cynthia Foust, Music Director

Fearless Generosity—Have We Heard From You Yet?

If you have not had an opportunity to turn in your pledge card yet, there is still time! Please do so by January 15 so we can put together final stewardship results to give guidance to the Administrative Committee and Session as they prepare a budget for 2015. What is God calling us to offer in 2015? We each have some way we can contribute, whether through gifts great or small. And what better way to respond to God's great gift at Christmas!

—The Stewardship Committee

Upcoming Events

Seekers Workcamp Stockholders Lunch with Video Premiere Coming Soon

Because of the generous donations of all who “bought stock” before last summer, we were able to send a marvelous group of high school students to Lewes, Delaware for a week of work, service, and spiritual growth. To thank all of our stockholders, the Seekers want to invite you to join them for a chili lunch in Fellowship Hall on an upcoming Sunday at noon where another award-winning video will be shown. The lunch and meeting, originally scheduled for January 4 has been delayed at the request of our video production crew. Look for the rescheduled date in the church bulletin and on Facebook and the church website.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation—February 1, following worship

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, February 1 following worship. The agenda for the meeting includes:

- Election of deacons and elders (the list to be presented by the Nominating Committee will be listed in the Sunday worship bulletins in January, beginning January 18);
- Election of at-large members of the Nominating Committee;
- Vote on any proposed changes to the salary, benefits, or vacation leave for the pastors;
- Hear a financial report for 2014 and be presented with the 2015 budget approved by Session;
- Receive the annual written reports of the committees and ministries on the congregation;

Please join us for this annual exercise of democracy and faith!

More Presbyterian Questions and Answers in January with Carter

What is the Trinity? Does God will evil and suffering in the world and in our lives? Do Presbyterians believe in the virgin birth of Jesus? Do Presbyterians believe in a literal Adam and Eve? What do we believe about the end of the world? Why do Presbyterians baptize babies?

We did not get to answer all of your questions last year so this January we are offering a sequel to last January. Bring your questions and join us in the Community Room, beginning on Sunday, January 4 at 9:15.

Gathering of Guys—February 27-28 (Friday-Saturday)

Come join Carter and the guys for our bi-annual men’s retreat. This year we will meet in a new place—Camp Sankanac on Pughtown Road. We begin on Friday night at 7:30 and we will finish up Saturday afternoon in time for you to be back home for dinner. There will be good food, fellowship, discussions, and worship, and there will be plenty of free time to walk the beautiful grounds or just hang out. The cost is \$60 (checks payable to the church), and if the cost is the only thing keeping you from coming, let Carter know. Let Carter (clester@fpcpottstown.org) know if you are interested in going or look for the sign up on the church bulletin board later in January.

Spiritual Formation Opportunities

Adult Opportunities on Sunday

- **All Adult Classes Are Joining Together in January (Community Room)**

January 4, 11, 18, and 25: More Presbyterian Questions and Answers—The Sequel! Teacher: Carter

What is the Trinity? Does God will evil and suffering in the world and in our lives? Do Presbyterians believe in the virgin birth of Jesus? Do Presbyterians believe in a literal Adam and Eve? What do we believe about the end of the world? Why do Presbyterians baptize babies? We did not get through all of the questions in last year's January series so we will continue the discussion this January. Bring your questions and we will try to work through them together on Sunday mornings in the Community Room, beginning January 4.

Weekday Opportunities

- **“Sisters of the Way” Bible Study:** 9:15-10:45 a.m. every Thursday. Teacher: Kerry
 - **Next Week's Sermon:** Join Carter from 7:30—8:30 PM on Tuesday, January 13 and 27 to discuss and reflect together on the text for the next week's sermon. Teacher: Carter
 - **Praying the Scriptures (Lectio Divina) Group:** Tuesday, January 20 at 7:30 p.m. Join Kerry and others for a quiet hour of listening deeply to the Scriptures. We will not meet on Jan. 6.
 - **Theology Reading Group:** Monday, January 26 at 7:30 p.m. We will meet at Carter's house to discuss the topic of “Forgiveness,” reflecting on books written by Lewis Smedes and Desmond Tutu. You can join us whether or not you have a chance to do the readings. Questions, directions, NCAA basketball tournament projections? Talk to Carter.
-

Devotional Books Available

Looking for a book of daily devotions? The Spiritual Formation Committee will make available copies of Disciplines which has daily devotions for each day in 2015. The committee subsidizes the cost so that church members can purchase them for only \$8 a copy. Books may be obtained from Jeff or from the church office. Large print editions are also available for \$10.

Music and Recreation in January

Resumes January 7, 2014. If you have not been able to make it for the fall semester, come join in for the spring! We will meet at the usual time, 4:30 to 5:45. We can't wait to see you all there!

Sunday School Attendance Recognition—Sunday, January 11

The Spiritual Formation Committee will recognize those children who have had outstanding attendance this past Fall during the Service on Sunday, January 11.

The following children have perfect attendance...

2/3's

Adrianna Whitlock
Ryan Whitlock

4yrs/Kdgtn

Emma Allen
Kendra Freas

1st/2nd

Rita Whitlock

4th/5th grade

Alina Orzechowski

Junior High

Becca Lipsky

The following Children have outstanding attendance, which means they missed only two Sundays this whole semester...

2/3's

Jaylee F

4yrs/Kdgtn

Parker Radswillas
Bailey Radswilas
Evan Temple

1st/2nd

Evan Deegan

Kelsey Weidner

3rd grade

Zachary Lipsky
Delaney Bradley
Klara Orzechowski

4th/5th grade

Gabe Roseo

Junior High

Abigail Campbell
Emily Weber
Ashley Livezey
Julianna Roseo

Senior High

Julian Weber
Cecilia Roseo

Seekers' News

Junior Seekers, Grades 6-8

Sunday, January 11 Pool Party! 12:00-2:00 p.m. Drop off at the church, Pickup at the YMCA. Come to the Pottstown YMCA for a pool party in their heated pool. Just because it's cold outside, doesn't mean we can't have fun!. **RSVP Jeff!**

Sunday, January 25– TED Talks 6:30-8:00 We will get together to have a time to learn more about the world as we watch relevant and interesting TED talks. Get ready for a fun night of interesting and fun conversation.

Advisors: Jeff and Sara Pinard, Sandro and Rosie Roseo, Elizabeth Lester and Jeff Fox-Kline

Senior Seekers—Grades 9-12

January 4 – Bowling. Because of the late postponement of the workcamp stockholder meeting, details are still being worked out. Check all of the usual places for the details.

Sunday, January 26 3:00-5:00 Broomball We will gather together to get some time on the ice. Look forward to playing some broomball and sliding around! Pickup and drop off will be at the Fox-Klines'.

Advisors: Kim and Phil Wheeles, Donna and Gary Rhoadarmer, Don and Melinda Kisela, and Gwen and Tim Allen

Faith and Nature—Winter Walk, Sunday, February 15th, 1:30 p.m.

Thanks to all who participated in our events and outings in 2014. From a truly wintry winter walk and finding snowy owls to start the year, to spotting an endangered woodpecker in the spring, paddling kayaks in the summer, enjoying a spectacular hike at Lehigh Gorge in the Fall, to being in the presence of dozens of eagles in November, it was a truly blessed year. I am thankful to share these moments with my church family.

Our first event of 2015 will be our Winter Walk in the Woods on February 15th at Nolde Forest. Weather permitting we will hike approximately 3 miles. The trails are well maintained, but some are steep in sections. There are many trail options so feel free to come and go as you please. It's a great opportunity to get the family out of the house and away from the video games and to chase away the winter blues. And it's free! This is a beautiful and unique place to hike and enjoy the quiet stillness of the forest in winter. We will meet at church @ 1:30 pm.

Hope to see you out there in 2015.

—Mike Deegan

Fellowship Opportunities

MEN'S BREAKFAST—Saturday, January 17

We gather for food and fellowship this month on Saturday, January 17 from 8 to 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Come join Carter and the guys for fellowship, fun, devotions, and prayer. Tom Zeigler is this month's chef.

PRIME TIMERS—Wednesday, February 4 at 12 noon in Fellowship Hall

On February 4 at 12:00 Noon, join us for a Hawaiian Luau Lunch in Fellowship Hall. After lunch, we will watch "Blue Hawaii," starring Elvis Presley in the Community Room. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside Peggy's office.

YOUNG ADULTS IS NOW "FAITHFUL FRIENDS" AND "FAITHFUL FRIENDS WITH CHILDREN"

The former "Young Adult" group has grown enough to break into two groups: "Faithful Friends" and "Faithful Friends with Children" is gathering—it is a group for those with preschool-aged children. We gather for dinner and fellowship approximately every other month at each other's homes or the church. Children are welcome! The details were still being worked out at press time, so for this month's date and place, contact Jeff or look in the church bulletin.

In February, "Faithful Friends" will gather. Check out next month's *Celtic Cross* for the details.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY—TUESDAY, JANUARY 20 AT 7 P.M.

Join us as we knit prayer shawls together. Completed shawls are shared with church members and friends facing difficult challenges. Beginners are welcome! Questions? Contact Jane Barndt.

Church Family News

Please keep in your prayers the following members who have been ill or hospitalized recently: Scott Weekley, John Davis, Sarah Boyer, Dick Ludwick, Gina Strimple, John McNey, Lois Glenn, Chad Stacks and Horace Fletcher III.

We remember and send condolences to the families of Sara Winterstein and Faye Bush, who passed recently, and to Barry Moyer and family upon the passing of his father, Earl.

Jean Hollenbach would like to extend her thanks for the prayers, cards, and visits while she was in Manatawny Manor.

Thank you! Thank you!

- To Eileen Wade, Sandy White, Diane Land, Rosie Roseo, and all who helped us decorate the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. And thanks to Barbara Lewis for coordinating the goodies, to the Junior High Seekers and Prime Timers for preparing the Operation Backpack gifts, and for the Senior High Seekers for helping to guide the younger children with their craft projects.
- To Jeanette Feroe for coordinating our annual Red Cross blood drive.
- To Barbara Peckham and her able Worship Committee who pulled together many 'behind-the-scenes' details of the season, including cleaning the candleholders for Christmas Eve!
- To Sara Kehs and the Mission Committee who led us in the Children's Christmas Clothes project and Sharon Holloway, Liz Genther, and the Sisters of the Way crew for coordinating the collection of sweet potatoes for the Cluster Christmas food baskets.
- To Sara and Don Grim who coordinated the Christmas stockings for Community Meals—with much help from Peggy.
- To Lisa Livezey, all of the Deacons and guest chefs John and Chad Livezey, Sandro Roseo, Mike Ferreri, and dishwasher extraordinaire Dave Weller for helping us all enjoy another wonderful Deacons' Breakfast.
- To Dave and Doreen Duncan and the Community Meals team who served the dinner on December 18 to our Community Meals guests.
- To Bill Dupree and the Nominating Committee for working hard to put together a slate of officers to nominate at the annual meeting.
- To Dave Duncan, Charlie Jenkins, and Mike Matrone who dared to climb the ladders to change the sanctuary light bulbs and get the lights ready for Christmas Eve.
- To all who helped out with the Christmas pageant including musicians, Leanne Campbell, Sarah Pinard, Gabe Francis, Billy Foster, Juliana Roseo, Becca Lipsky, and Pastor Jeff, to all parents including wardrobe coordinators, Gwen and Tim Allen, to Charlie Jenkins, Bill Campbell and their constructions crews, and to Bob Hartman, Jr. for his help with the audio.

People-to-People—insert

Looking for a plumber or an attorney? A coach or a realtor? And would you prefer it to be a church member? Then check out the Hospitality Committee's "People-to-People" directory which you will find as an insert to this newsletter. But we know the listings here are not complete. Are you interested in being listed as a babysitter or grass cutter, a snow clearer or financial advisor? Then give us your contact information, sending it either to Peggy or Carter.

Session Digest

At its December 17 meeting, the Session:

- Shared joys and concerns.
- Elected Bill Campbell to serve as clerk pro tem.
- Approved Carter and Kerry's requests for study leave and vacation leave in 2015.
- Continued the discussion, "Looking Back and Looking Ahead," focusing on what God may be calling our congregation to accomplish in the next year or two so that we can grow 'deeper in Christ and reach farther in love.'
- Discussed plans for the officers' retreat on Saturday, January 24.
- Approved a contribution of \$1000 to be made from unexpended 2014 Porter-Broward funds to the Colebrookdale Railroad Preservation Trust. Current and former officers will be able to check out the railroad as part of the Officers' Retreat on January 24.
- Agreed to move the January Session meeting to Wednesday, January 28 so that Treasurer Michelle Thompson will have more time to close the 2014 financial books and work with the Administrative Committee to prepare a 2015 budget. The budget meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 21.
- Approved the date for the annual congregational meeting to be Sunday, February 1.
- Received the financial reports from Michelle Thompson and approved that the monthly Mission Contribution and Capital Improvement allocations be paid.
- Received the report of the Nominating Committee that there is only one Deacon slot to be filled before the full slate is completed.
- Received a status report from the Stewardship campaign.
- Received the Hospitality Committee report that 300 Christmas cards were hand-delivered to neighbors of the church.
- Elected Marlene Wrigley and Barbara Longstreth to serve as commissioners to Presbytery on Thursday, January 27.
- Also received reports from the Administrative, Spiritual Formation, and Mission Committees and Deacons.

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Administrative: Thanksgiving for volunteers stepping forward to complete projects.

Mission: Gratitude for the Barth Elementary volunteers and the joyous responses to our drives for Christmas clothes and potatoes for the Cluster.

Hospitality: That we continue to offer warm and smiling faces to reach out to our community.

Spiritual Formation: For our Sunday School teachers and the children and youth who attend Sunday School.

Worship: For wondrous Christmas Eve worship.

Nominating: That we might "get 'er done!"

Stewardship: Thanksgiving for cheerful givers and hopes for a few more in this final month

Endowment: Thanksgiving for generous members looking out for the future of the church and prayers for continued growth in the "Acorns of Faith."

Financial Report (thru Nov 30):

Budgeted Income for 2014:	\$566,947	Budgeted Expenses for 2014:	\$589,270
Budgeted Income through Nov. 30:	519,702	Budgeted Expenses through Nov. 30:	540,164
Actual Income through Nov. 30:	505,195	Actual Expenses through Nov. 30:	509,318
This time last year:	480,868	This time last year:	419,311

Deficit to date:
 (after Mission/Cap. Improvement
 allocations paid) (16,734)
 Surplus at this point last year: 43,766

Last year's surplus was the result of the Assoc.
 Pastor position being filled later than budgeted.

Family Faith Formation

When studying a second language there is really only one way to become fluent in it: by practicing it. This holds true whether that second language is Spanish, French, or speaking about God. The National Study of Youth and Religion shows that parents who talk about faith at their home, who model regular attendance, and highly value their faith, raise children who stay religious and who stay connected to the church. Talking about God in the home can be difficult at first, but once you start practicing, you realize that it becomes second nature. Say a prayer with your kids before meals, ask them about God, talk to them about how God has moved in your life and you will find that your kids will likely be much more willing to do the same with you!

—Jeff

Counters Corner

Thanks to our volunteer counters in January:

Head: Hank Phillips (January 4 and 18) Sharon Trevoy (January 11 and 25)

Counters: John and Liz Genter and Jim Madden.

We still have some open slots in 2015. If you can volunteer, contact Hank Phillips, the coordinator, at hankphillips@comcast.net.

Lectionary Readings

For the week of December 28 to January 4:

Jer. 21: 7-14, Psalm 147: 12-20, Eph. 1: 1-14, John 1: 1-18

For the week of January 5 to 11:

Genesis 1: 1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 10:1-7, Mark 1: 4-11

For the week of January 12 to 18:

1 Samuel 3: 1-10, Psalm 139: 1-6, 1 Cor. 6: 12-20, John 1: 43-51

For the week of January 19 to 25:

Jonah 3: 1-5, Psalm 62: 5-12, 1 Cor. 7: 29-31, Mark 1: 14-20

For the week of January 26 to Feb. 1:

Deut. 18: 15-20, Psalm 147: 12-20, 1 Cor. 8: 1-13, Matt. 1: 21-28

Branches of the Vine

Christmas Generosity and Mission Trip

The Mission Committee is appreciative of all of the “extra giving” projects undertaken by members of the church family in this season of giving.

- 140 children received a brightly wrapped gift bag with pajamas or a new outfit of clothes for the winter months, through the Cluster Outreach Center children’s department.
- 300 boxes of potatoes were collected and taken to the Cluster to be put in “Christmas baskets” for families at Christmas.
- Over 200 dinners were served to Community Meals guests in December
- Guests at Community Meals on Thursday, December 18 received Christmas stockings stocked with goodies coordinated by the Prime Timers.
- The Deacons’ Assistance Fund helped several families at Christmas.

We give thanks to God that His love and compassion are being born into the world through you.

Merry, merry Christmas!

Adult Mission Trip to Bayville, N.J., April 26 to May 1

Mark your calendars now. If you have questions, contact Tom Zeigler, Kerry or Carter.

Deacons’ Bench

The next blood drive is scheduled for February 5.

Thanks to all who have been putting Redner's and Professional Pharmacy tapes in the envelope above the Mission Basket. Keep them coming. Each month they are taken to the Cluster, and they are very much appreciated.

Would you rather receive your newsletter by e-mail?

Please send your request with your e-mail address to Peggy, fpoffice@fpcpottstown.org.

January 2015

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

				1 Happy New Year	2	3
4 Sun. Sch. 9:15 Worship 10:30 Communion Sr. Seekers Bowling Sr. Seekers B.S. 4:30	5 Cub Scouts 7	6 Staff Meeting 3 Boy Scouts 7	7 M/R 4:30 p.m. "Undecorate" 7:00 Committees 7:45-ish	8 Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30	9	10 .
11 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 SS Attendance Recog Jr. Seekers Pool Party @ YMCA 12 Noon Sr. Seekers B.S. 4:30	12 Cub Scouts 7 HENS Board 7:30	13 Staff Meeting 3 Boy Scouts 7 Fireside Chat 7:30 Next Week's Sermon 7:30	14 M/R 4:30 Deacons 7:30	15 Sisters of the Way. 9:15 Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30	16	17 Men's Breakfast 8 a.m. (T. Zei- gler cooking)
18 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30	19 Church Of- fice Closed MLK Day	20 Staff Meeting 3 Shawl Meeting 7 Praying the Scriptures 7:30 p.m.	21 M/R 4:30 Admin Budg- et Meeting 7:30	22 Sisters of the Way 9:15 Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30	23	24 9-3 Officers' Retreat @ Camp Innabah
25 Sun. Sch. 9:15 Worship 10:30 Sr. Seekers Broom- ball 3 p.m. Jr. Seekers 6:30	26 Cub Scouts 7	27 Staff 10 Presbytery @ Lower Prov. 3 Boy Scouts 7 Next Week's Sermon 7:30	28 M/R. 4:30 Session 7:30	29 Bible Study 9:15 Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30	30	31

