



The Celtic Cross

June-July 2014

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Letter from the Co-pastors:

We speak of our congregation being a four-generation congregation. This month, we would like to speak in particularity about two of our generations.

First, on June 8 in worship, we will welcome our confirmands who will profess their faith publicly and confirm the promises made on their behalf at their baptisms. **Payton Barcus, Devon Biesecker, Holly Bostwick, Melissa Drago, Rusty Drowne, Rielly Dugan, Gabriel Francis, Cameron Hofmann, Sara Kisela, Lauren Lewis, Kira Livezey, Makena Lurie, Julianna Roseo, Thomas Schiele, Cecilia Stacks, Julian Weber, Hannah Weller, Alex Ziemba**—we hope these names are familiar to you from being in your prayers this year. These young people do not come to this day glibly or carelessly. They have been preparing for it for a long time — in Sunday School classes, worship, Vacation Bible School, Mission Mornings, youth groups, and through conversations at home with their parents.

But since last September, they have been preparing for it earnestly in confirmation classes learning and reflecting on what it means to be created “in the image of God” and yet also be sinners, what it means to say that Jesus was both “fully God and fully human,” and what it means to say that we want be one of his followers. They have heard about the covenant people who have gone before them; they have visited the ministries of covenant people in the Presbytery of Philadelphia; they have shared in the service of this congregation through ministry projects with their shepherds; and they have contributed to the kingdom of God through their stewardship projects. (Their reports will be on display on June 8). On May 16-17, they went on retreat with their shepherds and took the time to put into words their own statements of faith. And on Wednesday, May 21, they met with the Session and said what it means to them to believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior Christ and be his disciple.

We hope that you will join us on June 8 when they profess their faith. Please pray that they may continue to grow in faith, hope and love. They are not just the future of our church—they are also part of our present, in both senses of the word!

Second, we want to thank you for all of your cards, notes, and prayers following my/Carter's dad's death. It meant a lot to be on the receiving end of all of your love and support! We also want to share with you something that we hope that all of you will do—but especially those of you with adult children. One of the ways that Bill Lester loved us was to complete a medical directive, which was a great blessing when we had to make a decision for him regarding surgery when he was unconscious. Another way he loved us was by answering “12 Questions to Ask Your Aging Parents” which someone had provided to him. **(cont. p. 9)**

Worship Matters

- June 1, 10:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day and Celebration of the Lord's Supper
Recognition of Choirs
Reception to honor Diane Land follows worship
- June 8 10:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day.
Confirmation Sunday
Celtic and Cherub Choirs sing
Recognition of high school graduates
Recognition for outstanding Sunday School
Strawberry Fest follows worship
- June 15, 9:30 a.m.** **Summer worship schedule begins**, Service of the Lord's Day
Rev. Jeff Fox-Kline preaching
- June 22, 9:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day
- June 29, 9:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day
Sacrament of Holy Baptism
- July 6, 9:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day and Celebration of the Lord's Supper
- July 13, 9:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day
Commission of Workcampers traveling to Lewes, DE
- July 20, 9:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day. Worship led by the Workcamp participants
Sacrament of Holy Baptism
- July 27, 9:30 a.m.** Service of the Lord's Day
Rev. Jeff Fox-Kline preaching
-

Worship in the World

I (Kerry) am wondering if we are being called to expand our opportunities to worship in different settings, at different times, with different styles, yet in keeping with our Reformed tradition, and to provide ways for taking our worship out of the building into the neighborhood and community. Studies show that some of the most formative experiences in people's spiritual lives are outdoor worship experiences. It would be a joy to work with an interested crew to see where the Holy Spirit might lead us in expanding our worship life to include more experiences, such as the sunrise service, or the Blessing of the Animals? What would it look like to offer a blessing for children and teachers on the first day of school, or a remembrance of our neighbors who are 'out in the cold' on the opening night of the shelter ministry season? Where might God be calling us to offer such worship? If you would like to discern and explore with me, contact Kerry kplester@fpcpottstown.org

Community Room Renovations This Summer

This summer, renovations will be made to the Community Room to make it more serviceable and attractive for its many uses: worship services, classes, meetings, and funeral viewings. More information will be available on the bulletin board. The work is being supervised by Amy Shutt and the Administrative Committee and all funds for the project come from the Capital Improvement fund.

Upcoming Events

End of the Year Parent/Seeker Advisor Appreciation Picnic, June 1 6:00-7:30 p.m.

We will thank our advisors, say goodbye to our Seniors and goodbye and hello to our rising 9th graders. Please sign up by e-mailing Jeff (jfoxkline@fpcpottstown.org) or on the church bulletin board or by calling the church office.

MANDATORY Workcamp Meeting following the Picnic, 7:30-8:15

Parents please come at the beginning or end to sign the necessary paperwork and parents of "first timers" are encouraged to join us for the entire meeting.

The picnic officially ends at 7:30, but feel free to stick around and sit around the fire with us!

Strawberry Fest, Sunday, June 8 after 10:30 a.m. worship



Yum!

Sunday, June 9th
Immediately following the Worship Service,
join us in Fellowship Hall
Great food and fellowship to celebrate
the beginning of the Summer Schedule
Sign up on the bulletin board or on the bulletin insert or call
Peggy in the church office.
Don't miss the fun!

Backyard Blessings: An exploration of God's creation right here in our backyard!

Join other individuals and families of all ages as we take our faith out into the world and discover blessings in our own backyard, including each other.

Thursday evenings from July 10 to August 14
6:00 to 8:00

at different locations such as the Pottstown Airport, Fairview Cemetery, the Steel River Playhouse and the Blessing of the Animals at the church.

We'll end up with an overnight at the Elmwood Park Zoo on Friday August 15!

Brochure and registration materials available at the church

An Evening in the Breeze: Mothers of Young Children

Come sit for a spell on Kerry's porch with other moms, share conversation and a glass of something cold to drink. We'll take time to catch up, and then discuss a requested topic: "Women and Social Media: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly." June 19, 7:00 RSVP kplester@fpcpottstown.org

Spiritual Formation Opportunities for Adults

Adult Education Opportunities on Sunday Morning—Ends June 9

- **Forum (Community Room)**
June 1: “Your Way Home” - Wendy Gaynor
 Hear about a new, innovative program being administered by the Cluster Outreach Center to find permanent shelter for homeless individuals and families in Pottstown and how we can help.
- **June 8: South Africa, Yesterday and Today—Elizabeth Lester**
 Come see and hear about Elizabeth’s recent study trip to South Africa in which she toured the country and met with various government and former anti-apartheid leaders, including Desmond Tutu, as part of a special college travel study program.
- **Men’s Sunday Mornings (Pastors’ Conference Room)**
Topic: “The Gospel of Matthew” Teachers: Paul Lepard, Carter Lester, Tim Peckham, and Gary James.
- **Sacred Space for Women (Mary Ann Yost Room—110)**
Topic: “Feasting on the Word” Teacher: Amy Shutt
- **Faith and Relationships (Library) Topic: “The Gospel According to Pixar”**
 Teachers: Sharon Trevoy and Rob Wade

Weekday Adult Opportunities

- **Sisters of the Way:** Last meeting before the summer is a brunch: June 5 at Donna Hutchison’s house at 9:30 a.m. Those who want to carpool will meet at the church at 9 a.m.
- **Lectio Divina Group (praying the Scriptures):** Tuesday, June 3, at 7:30 p.m.
 Teacher: Kerry (last gathering before the summer)
- **Next Week’s Sermon** Restarts in September. Teacher: Carter
- **Theology Reading Group:** Will meet in August at Carter’s house to discuss our summer reading—which has not yet been chosen.. To find out what we will be reading, contact Carter.

Tending Gardens: Can you help us keep First Presbyterian beautiful?

Volunteers are needed to help maintain our church gardens by weeding and watering throughout the summer. This could be a good family service project as the chores are done on your own schedule within the two-week time slot that you sign-up for. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or call the church office today. Questions? Call Doreen Duncan, 610-473-2495.

Children and Youth

Sunday, June 8 is “Moving Up” Sunday in Sunday School, recognition of graduating Seniors and attendance awards!

Another year has passed and the children with all of their new knowledge and growth in faith are ready to move on up to the next class. Students will get to meet their new teachers and find out about some of things they will get to learn over the next year! The seniors in the congregation will also be recognized at this time, receiving a gift on behalf of the congregation and the Spiritual Formation Committee. **During Sunday School on June 8, we will also recognize those with perfect and outstanding attendance.**

Seekers Summer News

The Summer for Seekers is not a time off, but a time to celebrate!

Senior Seekers (this includes you, rising eighth graders!) can look forward to a pool party coming up in the early weeks of the summer! Keep your eye on your Facebooks/e-mails/instagrams for more information on this!

Thursdays over the summer: This summer I will be in my office on Thursdays starting at 1:00 for open office hours. If you are feeling bored and looking for someone to hang out with, stop by the church. Want to play Frisbee, but don't know who to call? Want to walk to Rita's, but don't want to go it alone? Stop by after 1:00 on Thursdays!

July 13-19: This is the big one! Workcamp! The Senior Seekers are going to Workcamp in Lewes Delaware. Look forward to a week filled with faithful work as we serve God and God's people! Look forward to a week filled with meaningful conversation on what it is to serve and love God! Look forward to a week of incredible fellowship with some of the most wonderful people you will ever meet!

August 11-15: Junior Seekers Mission Mornings! Learn what it is to serve and gather together as friends and children of God. We will be going to various places in the area for the day, followed by a Bible study centered around what it is to serve God. The final day will have us enjoying the sun at a pool party!

A note from Jeff Fox-Kline

As this year draws to a close I can only look around and thank God for all that I have been given. This has been a blessed year and a beautiful opportunity to grow closer to God and God's people. A special thank you to the Seeker advisors, the Sunday School teachers, and Spiritual Formation Committee. You have blessed me with your service and these young people in the congregation could not ask for better, more loving and more dedicated individuals. I look forward to continuing down this path of ministry together!

Thank you to this congregation for the stoles that I received for both my ordination and my installation. I am truly blessed by the love and generosity of this congregation. Thanks be to God for you all!

Faith and Nature Group

I am happy to report that all three of our Spring migration bird walks and hikes were quite productive and enjoyable. We saw a combined total of at least 55 species of birds on our walks at Binky Lee Preserve, Warwick County Park, and the Auburn Overlook. Highlights included scarlet tanager, indigo bunting, cerulean warbler, and magnolia warbler. We were also graced with a bald eagle flying over our vehicle on the return home as we passed Lake Ontelaunee. But the highlight of the season was getting a rare view of a very uncommon bird, the red headed woodpecker. An endangered species, it is seldom seen except in small colonies in pockets across the eastern United States. I heard the bird calling, knew what it was, but could not see it in the thick woods at Binky Lee Preserve. We waited and waited until almost an hour went by, and finally I spotted it and we all got a good look at him. Chip DePrefontaine and Laura Hazeltine deserve merit badges for their patience and dedication for waiting this bird out with me.

Our last walk of the Spring will be on Sunday June 8th. We will be going to the Reading Museum gardens and Wyomissing Park. This will be an easy, flat walk that will cover a little over 2 miles. If you would prefer to just stroll around the grounds of the museum gardens or just sit and enjoy the serenity of the park, you are encouraged to do so. **We will meet at the church @ 1:30 pm.**

The date has also been set for our **second annual Presbyterian Paddle at Marsh Creek State Park.** We had a great turnout last year, so be sure to mark your calendar for this afternoon of fun on the water. The date will be **Sunday, August 10th at 2:00 pm.** Rental canoes and kayaks are available. See the Faith and Nature bulletin board for more details and signup list.

-Mike Deegan

Church Family News

Please keep in your prayers the following members who have been ill or hospitalized recently, or who are undergoing tests or treatment: John Davis, Jean Hollenbach, Arnold and Brenda Hatfield, Kathy Hazeltine, Tom Schiele, Faye Bush, Betty Rissell, Tom Craver, Sarah Boyer, Cecelia Roseo, Lorraine Reidenauer, and Sue Gittings.

We send condolences to Carter and Kerry and family upon the passing of Carter's father, Bill Lester, in Atlanta on May 5, and to Patty Picardi upon the passing of her mother, Cathy Miller.

Congratulations to our high school graduates: Abigail Rose-Craver, Alee DeRenzo, Virginia Lee Dugan and Thomas Kisela.

Congratulations to recent college and graduate school graduates: Tunde Oladipo, Elizabeth Lester, Elizabeth Remelius, Elisha Rios, Ryan Bittle, Katie Burkhart and Kyrie Kontostathis. **If you know of anyone else, please let us know.**

Online Giving Soon to be an Option

Going away on vacation? Do you want to make your contribution to the church in the same way you pay your other bills? Coming sometime in June, you will be able to make contributions online. Just click on the tab on our webpage. In worship, you can use one of the new pew cards to symbolically make your offering physically in worship.

Music Notes

Sometimes in life we have to do things we really don't want to. So it is with a heavy heart that I made my decision to leave the position as Director of Music. This job appeared just when I needed it most and has fulfilled my creative, musical desires. Unfortunately, my Chronic Fatigue Syndrome which is an immune dysfunction disorder, has won out, and I find I can no longer keep up. Many of you have asked, and no, sadly, I won't be able to sing in the choir. Singing, surprisingly, is an aerobic activity and it exhausts my body. SO this is the time for those of you who should be singing in the choir to get involved! Enough said.

We will open June with the delightful, "Wherever You Go," by Lantz. On June 8th, our last Sunday of the choir season, we will sing the lovely, "The Plans I Have For You," by Adams. Also on that busy Confirmation Sunday, the men's chorus will open the service with "This Little Light of Mine," as it is also Pentecost that day. Amy Schreffler will be at the organ that morning, as both Deb and Scott are away. Randy and son Harrison will also be here, so don't miss greeting them.

We have filled most of the summer solo spots but there are still a few openings. If you are interested please get in touch with me soon. I would like to thank the Men's chorus for singing in May, Jesse Shutt and Beth Ann Straub for their solos (imbedded in anthems) and the Celtic Choir for joining the adults in song. Thanks to our Handbell choir (my ding-dongs) whose faces have changed over the years, but their quality of musicianship and dedication have not. Many thanks to our Chancel Choir for their years of hard work, hours of practice, hilarious jokes, and for not giving me too much grief about my musical crush on Craig Courtney! A special thanks to Scott Sample, my right hand, my husband Rob, my left hand, who has set up handbell tables and handbells, filed music and put up with my musicians temperament, and Deb Voytko who made beautiful music for us and always made me laugh at inappropriate times! We have all had a blast! I will miss it and each of you deeply. (Yes- I am happy to substitute direct when needed).

With love,

Diane Land, Director of Music

With Joyful Hearts: Cluster and Vegetable Garden

Cluster Signature Page: For the fourth year, the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities is promoting a Signature Page in *The Mercury*. In the past three years, the Cluster raised \$41,000. All of the donations go to support Pottstown residents in need. If you would like to share your signature for \$10 (individual), \$25 (business name), or \$50 (business logo) see Sharon Holloway at a table in Fellowship Hall after worship.

Cluster Golf Fundraiser: Congratulations to Andy Lane and team who won the recent golf fundraiser and thanks to all who made this fundraiser such a success!

Vegetable Garden at the Church: We have a hidden gem in our church that not many people are aware of—a vegetable garden located in the HENS playground! This garden was constructed several years ago by Phil Albright (Barb Peckham's son) as part of his Eagle project. The Mission Committee has overseen the garden since that time, with the abundant vegetables grown there every summer being distributed to either the Cluster or the Salvation Army. Our eternal thanks go to Horace Fletcher who has planted and cared for the garden for many years. This year, "'Fletch" has planted broccoli, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, and beans to be shared with our Pottstown community. Thanks to Dave and Sandy Allebach who roto-tilled the garden again!

Session Digest

At its May meeting, the Session:

- Welcomed new elders Sharon Trevoy, Dave Allebach, and Sue Moyer and shared joys and concerns.
- Welcomed confirmands, shepherds, and parents, and heard the inspiring professions of faith of the confirmands. The confirmands also reported what they did with the \$50 invested with each of them by the Mission committee to further the Kingdom of God.
- Approved Kerry and Carter taking study leave August 18-24.
- Approved celebration of the Lord's Supper on the confirmation retreat.
- Approved initiation of online giving following a trial period.
- Received the Treasurers' Report from Michelle Thompson, the church treasurer. Voted to transfer the monthly allocation to the Mission fund.
- Approved spending up to \$4500 from the Capital Improvement fund to repair curbing and sidewalks.
- Received a report from the May 20 Presbytery meeting and elected Barb Longstreth and Marlene Wrigley to serve as commissioners for the regional meeting on May 28.
- Received written and/or oral reports from the Deacons and Mission, Spiritual Formation, Worship, and Personnel Committees.
- Please keep in your prayers:
 - our Honduras trip participants;
 - thanksgiving for Sharon Sgriccia's leadership of the Fun and Fellowship committee.
 - thanksgiving for our music program and Diane's leadership;
 - thanksgiving for the children and youth's generous Sunday School offering.
 - for wisdom for our Endowment Committee;
 - for wisdom for the search for a new music director;
 - that our newest members will feel welcomed as they take their place among us;
 - for our new moderator of Deacons, Sandy Allebach;
 - for guidance for the Community Room renovations;
 - thanksgiving for our confirmands.

Financial Report

Budgeted income for the year:	566,947	Budgeted expenses for the year:	589,270
Budgeted income through April 30:	188,982	Budgeted expenses thru Apr 30:	196,423
Actual income through April 30:	184,268	Actual expenses thru Apr 30:	177,973
Income this time last year:	176,826	Expenses this time last year:	154,546

Deficit to date (after Mission allocation paid) :	\$372
Surplus this time last year:	\$16,257 (reflected unfilled staff pos.)

Counters Corner for June and July—Thank you!!

June: Captain: Jane Neiss Counters: Joel Neiss, Ruth Ann DeRenzo Horace Fletcher III

July: Captains: Patty Picardi (6,20) Tom Zeigler (13, 27)

Counters: Tim & Barb Peckham and Scott Sample

Letter from the Co-pastors, cont.

Please consider answering these 12 questions for your own children, or ask them of your parents:

1. Where are your life, health, and property insurance policies kept?
2. Do you have a will? Where is it? Who will be the executor?
3. Have you granted someone a durable power of attorney and who is it?
4. Do you have a living will?!
5. Have you written a power of attorney for health care? If so, who has the power and where is the document located? What are the names and telephone numbers of your doctors?
6. Do you have a safe deposit box? Where is the key? Do you have a list of the contents? Where is the box located?
7. If you have a retirement program, is there a death benefit for survivors?
8. Where do you keep your essential personal papers—birth and marriage documents, Social Security and military service records?
9. Have you made a list of investments? What are the account nos. and mailing addresses of the institutions that have the investments?
10. Do you have a list of the personal and real property that you own? Where is the title to the house, mortgage documents, property deed, title to the car, and any loan documents?
11. Who are your financial advisors (if any) and how do we contact them?
12. Have you written a letter of last instructions that includes your wishes for burial arrangements and worship service?

We cannot control when our deaths will happen but we can make life easier for those we love by answering these questions. And we can continue to face death knowing that Christ is risen: in life and death, we belong to God!

Grace and peace,
Carter and Kerry

General Assembly meets June 14-21 in Detroit

Every other year, for more than 300 years, representatives from all of the presbyteries in the U.S. meet for an annual General Assembly. Representatives to the General Assembly are not permanent delegates but are chosen by a lottery-like system with half elders and half clergy. We Presbyterians trust that the Holy Spirit can work through such an assembly of Christians.

It is a wonderful week of worship, electing a moderator for a two-year term, commissioning of missionaries, hearing reports from around the church and around the world, and tending the business of the church. Most of the business is routine, but sometimes the commissioners have to take up controversial issues where the church does not speak with one voice. In such cases, we understand that the General Assembly speaks to the church, not for it. Our congregation is not bound by a change to the constitution until the Presbyteries have had a chance to vote on the decision in the subsequent year.

So please pray for our commissioners that week—they are folks just like us, from all over the country trying to do what God wants. And please take with a grain of salt all accounts of the meetings by secular media who really do not understand how we do things. If there is a decision that bothers you, we will have a chance to discuss it later this summer. And as always, we will worry more about choosing Christ and each other than choosing sides. —Carter/Kerry

June 2014

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communion Choir Recog Reception for Diane Parent/Youth Picnic 6 p.m. Covenant Mtg. 7:30	HENS Sum- mer Program all week Porter- Broward TF mtg at 7	Lectio 7:30	Music/Rec 4:30 Prayer 7:15 Committees 7:30	Sisters of the Way Bible Study Brunch @ Donna's 9:30 Comm. Meal 5 Choir Picnic 6:30		Prime Timers Dinner 6 p.m. Music Man play 8 p.m.
8 Confirmation Class joins H.S. Grads Recog. Strawberry Fest Senior Seekers Bible Study 5	9 HENS Sum- mer Program all week	10	11 Deacon's Meet- ing 7:30	12 Meal 5	13	14
15 9:30 Worship	16 HENS Board Meeting 7:30	17	18 Session Meeting 7:30	19 Community Meal 5 p.m. "Evening Breeze" 7:00 @ Lesters'	20	21
22 9:30 Worship	23	24 Meals on Wheel Set up.	25 Meals on Wheels Luncheon 11 a.m.	26 Community Meal 5 p.m.	27	28 Hartman Vow Renewal
29 9:30 Worship Temple Bap- tism	30					

July 2014

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		1	2	3 Community Meal 5	4	5
6 Worship 9:30 a.m. Communion	7	8	9	10 Community Meal 5 p.m. Backyard Blessings, 6-8	11	12
13 Worship, 9:30 a.m. Workcamp leaves for Lewes, DE	14	15	16	17 Community Meal 5 p.m. Backyard Blessings 6-8	18	19 Workcampers return
20 Worship 9:30 a.m.	21	22	23	24 Community Meal 5 p.m. Backyard Blessings 6-8	25	26
27 Worship, 9:30 a.m.	28	29	30 12 Endowment Committee to Glenmede	31 Community Meal 5 Backyard Blessings, 6-8		

