



The Celtic Cross

Summer 2015

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*Nowhere in this country, from sea to shining sea,
does nature comfort us with such assurance of plenty,
such rich and tranquil beauty as in those unsung,
unpainted hills of Pennsylvania.*

(Rebecca Harding Davis)

Dear Friends,

Yesterday, we took Kerry's mother for a drive. We went to get peaches from a local orchard, and since the orchard's roadside fruit stand had been closed down years ago, we made our way to the ramshackle, rusty, unmarked warehouse at the intersection of Honeysuckle and Apple Orchard roads. It wasn't a long drive, but in a span of minutes the roads rose to the tops of corn-crested hills and fell quickly into valleys of dappled woods with gurgling streams. Out in the sun, the breeze tickled the tassels on the head-high stalks of corn, while in the shade the 'timbered choir' of birds sang with no thought of us as we passed by. And on the air came the smell ('scent' being too delicate a word) of fresh-mown hay.

As we wound our way on narrow roads, Kerry's mother asked "what are we looking for?" and Kerry answered, "beauty." We didn't have to go far to find it. And we thought, "We get to do this." We get to put our money in an unlocked lock-box and bite into the juicy flesh of a plum which only hours before had dangled from a tree branch. We get to pause at the crest of a hill and gaze upon rippling hills that stretch as far as the eye can see. We get to feast on the fruits of the labors of leather-skinned farmers who are in the fields when the forehead of the sun appears on the horizon. We get to listen to the cicadas' buzz as summer deepens into August, and witness the mating dance of fireflies as the day deepens into night. We get to do this...

because we live in Pennsylvania. We get to do this because we live in what must surely be one of the prettiest parts of this planet. We know God did a good job on other places in this world, and we enjoy wandering off to see the charms of places far and wide. But when we return to Pennsylvania, we are glad that day by day we get to live surrounded by its gentle beauty, and we understand what Peter Jenkins wrote in his book A Walk Across America:

As the life-long days passed I began to notice a profound cleansing taking place in myself as we were immersed in the peaceful Pennsylvania farm valleys. The streams and cotton-clean clouds washed my soul and I felt myself opening up to the world.

And we promise (again) to try to notice, to appreciate, to give thanks, and to care for this beautiful place in which we've been planted. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
—Kerry and Carter

P.S. On the insert you will see the new brochure for our parish nurse ministry, which is fully funded by a grant from the Broward County Foundation.

Worship Matters

Worship in the summer is at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, August 2 — Service of the Lord's Day
Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Sunday, August 9 — Service of the Lord's Day

Sunday, August 16 — Service of the Lord's Day

Sunday, August 23 — Service of the Lord's Day
Rev. Tim Bathurst preaching

Sunday, August 30 — Service of the Lord's Day
Blessing of the Backpacks

Service of Thanksgiving and Caring for Creation

With a Blessing of the Animals

Thursday, August 6, 7 p.m. in the Peace Garden

You don't need to bring an animal to come but all God's creatures, great and small, are welcome—as long as they are on a leash, or in a carrier. Bring a blanket or folding chair. Lemonade, cookie, and kibbles 'n bits, following. Families and friends welcome! **This is a *fair weather* event. In case of rain, check the website or call the church office.**

Blessing of the Backpacks, Sunday, August 30 in Worship

As we turn towards a new school year, we invite children to bring their backpacks to worship on August 30. We'll ask God's blessing upon those who carry them as they do the work of learning throughout the year.

Lectionary Readings

Aug. 2-9: 2 Samuel 18: 5-9, Psalm 130, Ephesians 4: 25—5: 2, John 6: 35

Aug. 10-16: 1 Kings 2: 10-12, Psalm 111, Ephesians 5: 15-20, John 6: 51-58

Aug. 17 to 23: 2 Kings 8: 22-30, Psalm 84, Ephesians 6: 10-20, John 6: 56-69

Aug. 24-30: Song of Solomon 2: 8-13, Psalm 45: 1-9, James 1: 17-27, Mark 7: 1-8

Blood Drive, Tuesday, August 11, 3:30—7 p.m.

Sign up online or contact the church office or Jeannette Feroe. Walk-ins are also possible.

Family Bible School: Backyard Blessings in August All ages welcome!

Thursday, August 6: 6:30-8 p.m., Blessing of the Animals

Join Backyard Blessings at the church! Meet at the church at 6:30 with your furriest (scaliest, slitheriest) friend to get to know each other before the worship service. Worship starts at 7:00 to celebrate the lives of our little (or not so little) friends

Friday, August 14th 5:00 PM—Saturday August 15th at 9:00 AM: Zoo Snooze at the Elmwood Park Zoo!

Camp out in a tent at the Elmwood Park Zoo! A flashlight tour of the zoo! A special feeding of the animals! S'mores and a movie! Don't miss this unique opportunity to spend the night with God's animals and God's family!

Mission Mornings for Junior High Seekers, August 3-5

Those who have signed up should have received a mailing with all of the details. This year, our rising sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will work and serve, play and have fun together at five "mission sites." The whole week culminates with a pool party at the Grims! The days start at 9 a.m. with pick up varying day by day. If you have not signed up yet, or need further information, contact Jeff Fox-Kline at (248) 953-4702 or jfoxkline@fpcpottstown.org. Don't think it's too late to sign up! If you can be there for one day or all of them, we'll be glad to have you!

Presbyterian Paddle, August 30

Join us for Presbyterian Paddle III on Sunday August 30th at Marsh Creek State Park. It is truly a great day outdoors as we explore the abundant beauty of this lake. Eagles, herons, kingfishers, and many other birds can be viewed, as well as other wildlife including butterflies, dragonflies, frogs, turtles, and deer. This is a great family event as rentals of all types of canoes, kayaks, and paddle boats are available. Kayak rentals start at \$25/hour, but there are deals on Groupon.com for less. This is a wonderful way to get to know other members of our church family while getting a little fresh air and being surrounded by nature. There is nothing quite like enjoying an easy paddle on a scenic lake. Feel free to come and go as you like. Meet at church to caravan at 1:30 pm or meet us at the park office at 2:00 pm. Please sign up on the bulletin board. Contact Mike Deegan if you have any questions at: mdeeg16@aol.com or call 484-524-8072.



Annual Church Picnic

Sunday, September 13

4:00 – 7:00 p.m

Good friends and fellowship

Great food (and lots of it!)

And stay tuned for a surprise...

Session Digest:

At its June meeting, the Session:

- Heard the joys and concerns of the congregation.
- Approved the baptism of Donna Bonnell Poorman on May 22, 2015 at Manor Care under extraordinary circumstances.
- Received with joy Jack Orgill, and Dennis, Robin, and Elena Lambert as new members contingent upon their profession of faith in worship..
- Approved Jon Allen to serve as Financial Secretary, succeeding Don Trevoy at a time convenient to both. Expressed gratitude for Don's faithful service.
- Approved requested vacation for Jeff.
- Reviewed the Treasurers' Report through May 31 and approved all allocations owed to the Mission and Capital Improvement Funds.
- Approved the recommendations of the Porter-Broward Grant Taskforce (see p. 5)
- Approved \$10,850 from the Capital Improvement Fund for emergency structural repairs to one of the stained glass windows.
- Learned that thanks to Sharon Trevoy's efforts we have received a \$3500 grant from Living Waters for the World to install a second water filter system on our next trip to Honduras.
- Received an update from the repairs caused by the broken pipes last month. Insurance will cover subject to our deductible.
- Please keep in your prayers the following prayer requests:
Admin. Committee: for completion of repairs; Spiritual Formation: for Rally Day plans and Backyard Blessings; Worship: thanksgiving for our music ministry; Hospitality: for our newest members; Mission: thanksgiving for our Living Waters grant and prayers for our garden and upcoming workcamp; Endowment: wisdom for the July meeting; Personnel: for refreshing and safe vacations for our staff.

Financial Report (through May 31)

Budgeted income for the year:	573,590
Budgeted income through May 31:	238,996
Actual income through May 31:	241,961
Income this time last year:	224,784

Budgeted expenses for the year:	592,132
Budgeted expenses through May 31:	246,722
Actual expenses through May 31:	241,457
Expenses this time last year:	229,256

Deficit after Mission and Cap. Improvement allocations paid:	(\$12,456)
Deficit this time last year:	(\$15,503)

Please remember the church with your giving this summer

We hope you are having a wonderful and relaxing summer. Please remember the church this summer by keeping up your giving as you are able, because our expenses do not stop for this summer. You can make your contribution either on Sunday in the plate—or online.

Recommendations of the Porter-Broward Taskforce

The Taskforce as approved by Session consists of Kris Barcus, Dave DeLong, Tom Hudson, Sharon Holloway, Donna Force, Patty Picardi, Rusty Spears, Rob Wade, and Missy Weber. The pastors served ex-officio. The Taskforce reviewed the criteria adopted by Session, reviewed the ideas for use of the money submitted by members of the congregation following announcements appearing in the Sunday worship bulletin and the *Celtic Cross* and brainstormed other potential uses for the money. Assignments were then made to research the various options. The Taskforce unanimously adopted these recommendations which were, in turn, unanimously approved by the Session. The recommendations are grouped under the three areas of the "Guidelines" adopted by the Session for use of the Foundation grant.

Enhancement of Current Ministries:

1. Parish Nurse position \$25,000

This allocation will not only fund the parish nurse, but also include money for insurance, required continuing education fees, mileage, and one-time purchase of office supplies and start-up equipment.

2. Background checks and clearances for church staff and volunteers \$2000

A new Pennsylvania law requires additional clearances and background checks for all staff and for volunteers "regularly" working with children. While the law and therefore costs are in flux, this money is budgeted for a "worst case" scenario and so our volunteers do not have to bear the expense. Any unused money can be reallocated at the end of the year.

3. Science and Faith Community Forum on November 8-9, 2015 \$1000

Representatives of our congregation (Carter and the Theology Reading group) and the Hill School have successfully recruited Dr. Jennifer Wiseman to come to Pottstown and speak at our church and to the community at the Hill School. Dr. Wiseman a NASA astrophysicist and is Director of the American Academy of Science Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion. She will be able to tell us about some of the fascinating discoveries her team has made about space and share her reflections on the relationship of faith and scientist,

Building and Grounds Improvements

1. Repair and preservation of the stained glass windows \$60,000

This amount would be combined with \$21,300 set aside from the 2014 Porter-Broward grant to cover virtually all of the approximate \$82,000 cost.

Mission and Community Needs

1. Steel River Playhouse \$4000

This money would be used to provide free admission and subsidize travel costs so that students from the four Pottstown elementary schools could attend the 2015 Theater for Youth production.

2. Operation Backpack \$3562

Operation Backpack is a 501(c)(3) organization providing food to students in our community who would go without over the weekend. This grant will be used to help Operation Backpack replace its computer and purchase needed supplies for administering and publicizing the program.

3. Camp Kirkwood scholarships and supplemental staff position \$5800

This grant will be used to send up to eight Pottstown children identified by the Cluster or Rickett Center to Camp Kirkwood to experience a week of Christian camping. \$1800 would be used to fund an extra staff position

4. Pottstown School District Foundation \$5000

This grant will support two students for one year of courses at Montgomery County Community College. The scholarships enable a good student with limited financial means to graduate from high school with one year of college credits.

5. Rickett's Center (Olivet Boys and Girls' Club) \$2600

The Olivet Boys and Girls Club operates a number of after-school and summer programs for at-risk children and youth in the Pottstown-Reading area including one at the Rickett's Center. **See p.**

Porter-Broward Grants—cont. from p. 5

This money would be used for one-time purchases for the Center which will support the various programs of the Center (tables, chairs, dolly, lockers, etc.).

6. Habitat for Humanity \$5000

This grant will help Habitat for Humanity to take on its tenth home in Pottstown. While Habitat uses volunteer labor it solicits funds (from businesses, churches, and individuals) to pay for materials and professional contractors' costs (electricity, plumbing, HVAC).

7. Carousel at Pottstown Exhibition Center \$2200

The Carousel at Pottstown is restoring a 1905 Philadelphia Toboggan Company carousel, which is to open in the near future. With this grant, the church will take the last "rounding board" for sponsors. The name and an artist-drawn picture of the church will appear on the panel.

8. Operation Inspiration Clearances \$1200

Operation Inspiration is a start up non-profit which will provide tutoring and mentorship for at-risk high school students. The grant would cover the first round of clearance fees for their volunteers.

9. Women's Center of Montgomery County Domestic Violence Program \$5000

The Women's Center's Domestic Violence program addresses the problem of family/interpersonal violence and serves more than 4400 victims a year. Our grant would be directed toward moving costs and emergency hotel accommodations for those victims in the greater Pottstown area.

10. Colebrookdale Railroad \$2200

The Colebrookdale Railroad Trust is a non-profit organization that operates the tourist Colebrookdale Railroad, an exciting project with great potential for spurring Pottstown's and Boyertown's growth and development.

11. YWCA Tri-County Area Adult Literacy Center \$2650

This grant would enable the Center to acquire textbooks and workbook materials for classroom use only (and thus they could be reused) for the English Language/Civics classes.

12. ArtFusion 19464 \$800

The mission of ArtFusion 19464, a non-profit community arts center located on High Street, is to enrich the lives of the residents in the greater Pottstown area through the visual arts, regardless of ethnicity and economic situations. This grant would be used as seed money to start a "Stretch, Read and Create" class for young children and parents to inspire healthy living, literacy, arts, and bonding between preschool child and parent/guardian.

Total Recommendations: \$128,012 (unallocated amount: \$323.52 to be used for tools for Tool Mission trailer)

Church Family News

Please keep in your prayers the following people who have been ill, hospitalized or in special need of prayers recently: Jane Roberts, Dottie Melchiorre, Jim Bathurst, Eleanor Fletcher, Frank Evans, Polly Gower, Betty Hagmann, Sara Grim.

Condolences to the family of Flossie Schumacher who departed this life in June.

Elaine Siever and family wish to thank everyone for their kindness shown during the recent passing of husband and father, Herman Siever. The many cards, visits, and prayers were a great comfort to us. Also, a special thank you to Liz Genther and her co-workers who served the luncheon.

August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
August 30 9:30 Worship Blessing of Backpacks 1:30/2:00 Presbyterian Paddle	31					1 Backyard Blessings to Kirkwood 9-4
2 9:30 Worship-Communion	3 Mission Mornings 9-1	4 Mission Mornings to Ephrata 9-3	5 Mission Mornings to Pottstown Training Center 9-1	6 Mission Mornings to Kirkwood Camp 9-4 Community Meal 5 p.m 7 Blessing of the Animals	7 Mission Mornings in church building & Grim's Pool	8
9 9:30 Worship	10	11 Miller-Keystone Bloodmobile 3:30-7 p.m. Walk-Ins Welcome	12 Prime Timers to Valley Forge Bell Concert 4:30 p.m. Relay Meeting 6 p.m.	13 5 p.m. Community Meals	14 Zoo Snooze @ Elmwood Zoo 3 p.m.	15 9 a.m. leave Elmwood Zoo
16 9:30 a.m. Rev. Jeff Fox-Kline preaching	17	18	19	20 5 p.m. Community Meals	21	22
23 9:30 Worship Rev. Tim Bathurst Preaching	24	25	26	27 5 p.m. Community Meals	28	29

