

The Celtic Cross

April 2012

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"When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father forgive them; for they do no know what they are doing." —Luke 23:33-34

Dearly Beloved:

Letter from the Co-Pastors

Brennan Manning, an American spiritual writer, tells the story of an old man who used to meditate early every morning under a big tree on the bank of the Ganges River in India. One morning, after he finished his meditation, the old man saw a scorpion floating by helplessly in the river. The old man climbed out on one of the big tree roots and reached out into the water to rescue the scorpion—but the scorpion stung him. Instinctively, the man withdrew his hand. He regained his balance on the root and reached out again to rescue the scorpion. Once again the scorpion stung him so badly with its poisonous tail that the man's hand became swollen and bloody. Clearly, he was in pain.

Another man happened to travel past the old man under the tree just at that moment. When he saw the old man stretched out on the tree roots struggling with the scorpion, the passerby shouted: "Hey, stupid old man, what's wrong with you? Only a fool would risk his life for the sake of such an ugly, evil creature. Don't you know you could kill yourself trying to save that ungrateful scorpion?"

The old man turned his head. Looking into the stranger's eyes, he said calmly: "My Friend, just because it is the scorpion's nature to sting, that does not change my nature to save."

We may not want to admit it, but there is at least a little of that scorpion in each one of us. Sometimes we turn away from those who are trying to help us. Sometimes we even hurt those we do not want to hurt. Sometimes we are ungrateful despite what others have done. And sometimes we can even be mean or cruel. Fortunately for us, in Jesus Christ, we encounter God reaching out to us in love no matter how stinging our response is. Fortunately for us, it is Jesus' nature to save, and his power to save is greater than our power to sin.

"When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

This year, will you join us on the journey that leads us to that wondrous cross and to that glorious Easter?

> Grace and peace, Carter and Kerry

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Worship Matters

Upcoming in Worship

April I	Palm Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. Cherub and Celtic Choirs Sing Celebration of the Lord's Supper
April 8	Sunrise service in the Peace Garden, 6:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast, 7 a.m. Service of Celebration of the Resurrection, 10:30 a.m. Cherub and Celtic Choirs sing Easter Egg Hunt One Great Hour of Sharing offering received.
April 15	Service for the Lord's Day 10:30 a.m. Reception of New Members Sacrament of Holy Baptism

- April 22 Service for the Lord's Day 10:30 a.m. Sacrament of Holy Baptism
- April 29 Service for the Lord's Day 10:30 a.m. Ordination and Installation of New Officers

Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper and Service of Shadows

Prayer Vigil, 9:00 p.m.—12:00 noon, April 5-6

We will keep watch in the sanctuary as we remember Jesus' last night.

Good Friday Cross Walk, 10:30—11:45, April 6 (downtown)

Meet on the green between Zion's UCC and Emmanuel Lutheran on Hanover Street as we walk with other Christians to remember Jesus' walk to the cross and to pray for our neighbors. Families with children are encouraged to attend. Kerry will begin the walk with a time for children to explain Good Friday and the processional. If it rains, we will "walk" inside Zion's UCC church building.

Easter Sunday, April 8

6:	:30 a.m.	Sunrise service in the Peace Garden

- 7:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall
- **10:30 a.m.** Worship in the Sanctuary
- Our choirs and instrumentalists will lead us as we sing the good news of Easter that "Jesus Christ is risen indeed!"
- **11:45 a.m.** Fellowship Time and Easter Egg Hunt on the Lawn (bring your own basket!)

Upcoming Fellowship Events

"GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER" SAT., APRIL 14 CELEBRATE "SOUTHERN NIGHTS" WITH YOUR CHURCH

Do you long for the comfort soul food of the Southern United States, or do the spicy flavors of Tex-mex foods inspire you? Do you yearn to immerse yourself in the cuisine of Southwest France, or do you prefer the intense flavor of South American foods? Whatever your desire may be, don't feel limited in expressing your culinary tastes and talents!

We are looking for volunteers to host dinners in their houses—and guests to join them there! If you have a table that seats at least six people, you qualify as a host home. The host home is asked to provide the main "Southern Nights" meal. One guest will bring salad and bread to complete the meal. The remaining guests will provide hors d'oeuvres or desserts. We will gather together at church for appetizers, travel to homes for dinner, and come back to the church for dessert and a

white elephant exchange. Childcare will be provided at the church this year!

Sign up on the Sunday bulletin insert, on the church bulletin board or by calling the church office by April 2.

BIRDWATCHING, NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY OR SIMPLY A NICE WALK IN THE COUNTRY— SUN., APRIL 29

Join others on a nature walk at Hay Creek Reservoir on Sunday April 29. Cars will leave from the church at 2:30 and the walk will begin at 3:00 and will be led by our own Mike Deegan. Bring good walking shoes and water—and a camera if you would like to get some good pictures. All ages welcome. Sign up on the church bulletin board or by calling the church office.

Want to know what to expect? Here is Mike's description of the area: "This area is also part of the Hopewell Big Woods, one of the largest protected and preserved forests in Pennsylvania. The actual resevoir itself is stunningly beautiful. It is a small lake nestled in a grove of Norway spruce,

pine, and evergreens. It is a great place just to stop and meditate and listen to nature speak. Although the birds probably won't be easy to see during an afternoon walk, we should be able to hear several species that many folks may not be familiar with. Also the area is adjacent to Trap Rock Quarry which has become home to nesting cliff swallows and they should be active and visible during late April. Ravens are also a possibility. I am certain that we also see many raptors flying over head. Perhaps even a bald eagle, as a pair is known to be residing along the Schuylkill River not far from the Haycreek Watershed. This time of year should also provide many wildflowers and early butterflies."

DEACONS' BLOOD DRIVE

The Keystone-Miller Bloodmobile will next be in the church parking lot on Wednesday, May 2 5from 4 to 8 p.m. Please sign up for an appointment (which keeps the waiting time down!).

Spiritual Formation Opportunities

Adult Education Opportunities (no Sunday School on Easter Sunday)

<u>Forum (Community Room)</u>

April I: Report of the Adult Mission Trip to Nashville Join us for pictures and stories from this year's rebuilding efforts in Nashville. April 15: "Amazing Grace"

Join us for this award-winning documentary led by Bill Moyer about the great spiritual, "Amazing Grace." .

April 22: Global Mission: Lights of Life Mission in Africa

April 29: Global Mission: The Moyers' Ministry in Haiti New members Rev. Barry Moyer and his wife, Kass Moyer, share their experiences from their decade of ministry in Haiti.

• Faith and Relationships Class (Library) Leaders: Sharon Trevoy and Rob Wade

Topic: "God in America: How Religious Liberty Shaped America"

• Men's Sunday Mornings (Pastor's Conference Room) Teacher: Bernarr Rhoades

Topic: Does God Speak to Us?.

• Sacred Space (Mary Ann Yost Room—110)

Teacher: Amy Shutt Topic: "Entering Christ's Prayer"

This series uses selected readings from Luke's Gospel to focus on Christ's life of prayer and His oneness with the Father. Discover an image of Christ, not born into glory or crucified in bloodied defeat, but rather more like us, developing a union with God through constant prayer, contemplation and service.

Weekday Opportunities for Christian Growth

- Thursday Ladies' Bible Study: Meets April 19 from 9:30–10:30. Teachers: Max Creswell
 and Ron Gower
- **"Sisters in the Way" Bible Study:** 9:15-10:45 a.m. every Thursday except April 21. Teacher: Kerry
- Evening Bible Study: 7:30—8:30 PM on Tuesday, April 10 and 24. Teacher: Carter.
- **Praying the Scriptures Group (Lectio Divina)** 7:30—8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17. Teacher: Kerry
- **Moms' Time-Out:** Wednesday, April 25 at 9:30 at Jen Drago's house. Teacher: Kerry. Children always welcome.
- **Theology Reading Group:** Will meet on Monday, April 30 at 7:30 at Carter's house to discuss the Presbyterian "Declaration of Faith. To get your copy or if you have questions—contact Carter.

Confirmation

April 1st– 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

April 15th. <u>Time change.</u> Confirmation will meet at **4:00 p.m.** To coincide with the Seekers' event.

Stock Sales are underway! Get yours today!

Junior Seekers, Grades 6-8

Sunday, April 15th -Picnic and hiking on the Perkiomen Trail—after church til 4 p.m. Bring a bag lunch and comfy shoes! For confirmands, confirmation will start at 4:00 p.m. RSVP Seth

Sunday April 29th- Rock Climbing at Reading Rocks! 2:30-6:30 Note time change! \$20 a person. Scholarships available! RSVP Lipsky

Friday, April 6th – Cross Walk prayer processional– 10:30 a.m. Meet at Emmanuel Lutheran Church on Hanover St. We will be walking as a group, joining people from around Pottstown to pray for our community . RSVP Lipsky

Advisors: Mike and Mindy Lipsky (610-323-5616;) Seth Rios (610-440-4036) Liv

Senior Seekers—Grades 9-12

Sunday, April 1st– Easter Follies 6:30-8:00 p.m. RSVP Macdonald Sunday, April 29th– Rock Climbing at Reading Rocks! 2:30-6:30 Note time change! \$20 a person. Scholarships available! RSVP Allen

Advisors: Chris and John Macdonald (610-987-0529), Donna and Gary Rhoadarmer (610 -327-8157), Gwen and Tim Allen (484-947-8299) and Scott and Liv Robertson (352-255-7802)

<u>A Peek at Summer</u>

(for Seekers, soon to be Seekers, and awesome little people)

Camp Kirkwood– Applications are available...it's going to be a great summer with new classes, new cabins, your favorite counselors and old and new friends. The mission committee wants to support your camp experience and will pay one-half of all camp tuition. Talk to Liv for more info.

Mission Mornings— August 6th—10th Keep an eye out for a flyer!

Vacation Bible School 2012– Save the date! July30th—August 3rd

Fellowship—See also p. 3

PRIME TIMERS

Wednesday, April 25, 2012, Trip to "America on Wheels"

We will carpool from the church parking lot at 10:15 a.m. to tour "America on Wheels" museum in Allentown. Cost is \$14 (includes admission, tour and lunch in the Hubcap 1950s Café. Reservation deadline is Wednesday, April 11. Sign up on the church bulletin board or by calling the church office.

MEN'S BREAKFAST—Saturday, April 14, 8 a.m.-9 a.m.

Tom Zeigler is our chef. Join Carter and the guys for food and fellowship.

YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP GROUP—Next meeting date to be determined after the *Celtic Cross* deadline. We gather about every six weeks for movie discussion, potluck supper, and fellowship. For the next meeting date and place, see Carter or Kerry.

Church Family News

Please keep in your prayers the following members who have been ill, injured, or hospitalized recently: John Davis, Kathleen O'Hara, Kathi Lurie, Mary Ann Hudson, Trystian Hernandez, Lu Gaut, Paul Hughes, Ginnie Ludwick, Anna Chilton, Fred Winter and Walter Desiderio Eleanor Fletcher, and Nancy Bicksler.

We send our condolences to the family of Marge Langdon who died recently.

Thank you to Will Shutt, who built needed storage shelving in the attic for his Eagle project.

Thank you to the following groups serving Lenten Suppers: Seekers, Choir, Deacons, Session and the Men's Breakfast group!

Thank you to all who helped with the Children and Youth tracks! John Livezey, Leanne Campbell, John Macdonald, Stephanie Adamski, and Girl Scouts Lizzie and Missy and their leader Roxanne Galamba.

Thank you to our drama troupe who helped to bring Jesus' parables to life: Jaylee Ferreri, Tim Allen, Connor Ferreri, Leanne Campbell, Abigail Campbell, Julianna Roseo, Debbie Remelius, Caroline Remelius, Seth Rios, and Rob Wade. Thanks also to those who made cameo appearances: Barbara Lisi, Paul Lepard, Rusty Spears, Betsy McKissic, and Patty Picardi. And a very special thanks to our director, Marlene Wrigley!

GUESS WHO'S 100?

Flossie Schumacher will be 100 years old on April 16. To celebrate her family will be having an open house on Sunday, April 15 from 2 to 4 p.m in the Community Room. Please stop by for some refreshment and fellowship.

Salt and Light

A monthly look behind the scenes at the mission and ministry of FPC This month: <u>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</u>

Over 25% of our Mission budget supports **Presbyterian Unified Giving**. This money is shared by our local Presbytery (Philadelphia), our Synod (Trinity), and by our national Presbyterian church (PCUSA). A portion of the national donation supports Presbyterian Disaster Assistance ("PDA") and its work around the nation and the world. A great example of the work of PDA was the response it coordinated in response to Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast and in New Orleans. Our first adult mission team traveled to Mississippi just six months after the hurricane struck, and were housed by a local Presbyterian church in Gautier. PDA was prepared to stay in the area for several years in order to provide disaster assistance over the long haul. Five years later our adult group was still able to help the victims of Katrina through PDA. The Presbyterian Volunteer Village known as Olive Tree, provided a home for our team as we reached out to the residents of New Orleans.

PDA provides the organization and funding for materials that have allowed over 50,000 volunteer missions to respond to national disasters since 2005. Under the outstanding leadership of Tom Zeigler, First Presbyterian has sent 65 people from our congregation to Mississippi, New Orleans, Lynchburg, and Nashville for the past seven years. Trips per person range from one to seven years, for a grand total of 154 volunteers over that time.

When we see news report of lives torn apart, we naturally ask, "What can I do?" For many years now, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has given us answers, and ways to step forward and be part of the solution. We can volunteer, we can pack hygiene kits, and we can give of our time, our talent and our treasure. The **One Great Hour of Sharing** is another opportunity to support PDA, as well as the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self Development of People. Our donations to OGHS allow PDA to be prepared and equipped to effectively minister and to bring a comforting touch, a healing hand, and the love of God when a disaster strikes.

Branches of the Vine: Special Lenten Offerings



Bring your fish banks, special envelopes, and checks marked "OGHS" on Palm Sunday or Easter.

PLEASE HELP RESTOCK THE CLUSTER PANTRY !

Throughout the Lenten season, we will be collecting food donations for the Cluster. As an added bonus, any food donated to the Cluster between March I and April 30 counts toward its share of the \$1 million Feinstein challenge.

Our goal as a congregation is to collect at least 1000 pounds! Food items especially needed include tuna, canned meat, oatmeal, canned vegetables and fruit, spaghetti sauce, canned soup, canned pasta, and real fruit juice. The Cluster is also in need of clean plastic bags for food distribution. Please bring your food donations into the church.

Session Digest

At its regular March meeting, the Session:

- Shared joys and concerns.
- Approved the baptisms of Gabriel Michael Erickson and Ava Jean Erickson, children of God and the son and daughter of Jacob and Tara Erickson on Sunday, April 15, 2012, and the baptism of Evan Michael Deegan, child of God and the son of Michael and Jane Deegan, on April 22, 2012.
- Approved Carter and Kerry taking vacation leave May 20-24 to attend their nephew's graduation and that Rev. Barry Moyer be extended an invitation to preach and lead worship on Sunday, May 20.
- Received the report of Michelle Thompson, church treasurer, and approved the monthly mission and capital improvement allocations.
- Approved the 2011 statistical report.
- Approved the plans of the Spiritual Formation Committee to install a stained glass door window of a cardinal in memory of Tierra Dobry.
- Agreed to a clarification of the Endowment policy that the church will follow Glenmede's filtering formula when determining if companies are considered alcohol, gaming, tobacco, or weapons companies, in which the church does not hold individual stocks.
- Agreed to the Endowment Committee's recommendation to join the Presbyterian Endowment Education and Resource (PEER) Network, a network of Presbyterian congregations with endowments.
- Elected Gina James and Ron Gower to attend the Presbytery meetings.
- Received reports from Carter and Kerry, Liv, and Deacons, as well as the Admin., Worship, Fun and Fellowship, Spiritual Formation, Endowment, Hospitality, and Mission Committees.
- Please keep in your prayers:
 - Hospitality: for our next Inquirers' class;
 - Fun and Fellowship: for strong participation in our congregations' fellowship activities; Worship: for a special Holy Week journey to the glory of Easter;
 - Administrative: thanksgiving for Will Shutt's Eagle project;
 - Endowment: that more people might accept the challenge to be "Acorns of Faith"
 - Spiritual Formation: thanksgiving for the great activities supported by our staff, committee, and able volunteers;
 - Mission: for Camp Kirkwood;
 - Personnel: thanksgiving for the leadership provided by our staff.

Major Repairs to Stained Glass Windows

The stained glass windows were leaking when it rained. The amount of leakage depended on the volume of rain and wind direction. At times there was so much water that the carpet in front of the windows got wet. Mezalick Design Studio was hired to correct the problems. They made some repairs and did painting on the inside. They made a stop gap on the panels that were bowing. On the outside all areas were sealed, sanding and painting were done as needed. Seams were cut where the panels sit on top of each other and then sealed. Some areas had to have fabricated materials to get a better seal. The repairs were paid from money in the Capital Improvement fund. The primary source of money for the Capital Improvement fund is our endowment.

April 2012

Financial Report for the General Fund

Budgeted income for the year:	538,905
Budgeted income through Feb 29:	89,818
Actual income through Feb 29:	86,551
Income this time last year:	83,011
Budged expenses for the year:	538,905
Budgeted expenses through Feb 29:	89,817
Actual expenses through Feb 29:	71,280
Expenses this time last year:	78,243

Surplus to date (after mission and capital improvement allocations paid): \$3871 Deficit this time last year (after mission allocation paid): (\$982)

Acorns of Faith

Who are the "Acorns of Faith?" Anyone who has indicated that they plan to make a gift of any



size to First Presbyterian's Endowment Fund. Anyone can join! The "price" of membership is simply loving this church and its Godcentered mission, along with a deep concern to provide for generations to come.

Prior to making any gift, you are encouraged to consult with your attorney or tax advisor and your loved ones. Members of the Endowment Committee are also willing to meet with you to answer any questions you might have. Let us hear from you!

____ I (we) are happy to participate in "Acorns of Faith" having included First Presbyterian Church of Pottstown in my (our) will, insurance policy, annuity, trust, or by an outright gift. (Please circle method used)

Note: If you would like your gift to be anonymous, please indicate here _____

____ I (we) would like to speak to someone to get further information about the Endowment Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone/E-mail

Members of the Endowment Committee: Dick Clark, Dave Duncan, Kurt Holloway, Patty Picardi (chair), Chad Stacks, Al Wrigley, and Barbara Winter.

Look for an opportunity in June to meet with representatives of Glenmede, the Philadelphia financial firm that manages our Endowment.

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Lectionary Readings

For the week of March 26-April 1: Mark 11: 1-11, Psalm 118: 1-2, Mark 15: 1-39

For the week of April 2-8: Acrts 10: 34-43, Psalm 118: 1-2, 1 Cor, 15: 1-11, Mark 16: 1-8

For the week of April 9-15: Acts 4: 32-35, Psalm 133, I John 11: 1-2, John 20: 19-31

For the week of April 16-22: Acts 3: 12-19, Psalm 4, I John 3: 1-7, Luke 24: 36-38

For the week of April 23-29: Acts 4: 5-12, Psalm 21, 1 John 3: 16-24, John 10: 11-18

Music Notes-from Diane Land, Music Director

Spring arrived early this year with an abundance of blooms for April. Palm Sunday opens the month on the first as the choir presents Mark Hayes' exciting anthem, "Hosanna, Sing a Loud Hosanna." That morning the Handbell choir will play the well loved, "The Palms." On Maunday Thursday, the choir will sing the stunning "Thy Will Be Done," by Courtney, and John Genther will once again sing "Were You There." Easter morning will open with Gary James and others, trumpet, and Jo Ann Bathurst, soprano, providing music at the sunrise service. The brass, including our own Dan Foust, tuba, and Gary James, trumpet, will accompany the choir on our anthem, "Crown Him with Many Crowns," by Courtney. They will also accompany you, the congregation, on the hymns as well as the annual "Hallelujah Chorus" sing-along.

On April 15th the choir will wake you up with the delightful "Risen Up!" by Lantz. The following Sunday they will sing the charming, "Love Came Down," written by Harlan. Our fifth and final Sunday in April will showcase the well-loved, "Sheep May Safely Graze," by Bach.

I would like to thank Leanne Campbell , flute, Beth Ann Straub, Cindy Foust, Chip De Prefontaine and Jesse Shutt for their gift of music at the Lent Service for Wholeness. A special thanks to Cindy for covering for me this past month . It is comforting to know the choir has so much talent in its ranks! Also a special thanks to the Chancel Choir for their many hours of practice learning and perfecting our Lenten music. Their faithfulness and hard work make me proud. Hallelujah!!

—Diane Land, Director of Music

<u>Counters Corner</u> The Counters for April are: Head: April 1, 22, 29: Sharon Trevoy, Head April 15, Dave Duncan—Regular counters, Barb & Tim Peckham, Jeannette Feroe. Easter offering will be counted April 9 by Sharon Trevoy, Kathy Benning, Donna Hutchison, Jennie Watts.

April 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
I 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Palm Sun- day Worship 5 Confirmation 6:30 Sr. Seekers	2	3	4 Music/Rec 4:30	5 Community Meal 5 Maundy Thurs. Worship 7:30 Prayer Vigil 9 p.m.	6 Crosswalk 10:30 a.m.	7
8 6:30 Easter Sunrise 7:00 Breakfast 10:30 Wor- ship 11:45 Egg Hunt	9 Church office closed	10 Girl Scouts 7 Shawl 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30	II Endowment 8:30 a.m. Music and Rec 4:30 Prayer 7:15 Committees 7:30	12 Sisters Bible Study 9:15 Meal 5:00 PM Bells 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Choir 7:30	13	14 Men's Breakfast 8 a.m. Girl Scouts Progressive Dinner 5:30
15 9:15 Sun Sch 9:45 Session 10:30 Worship- Baptisms 12 Jr. Seekers Hiking 3:30 Seekers B.S. 4 Confirmation	I 6 Cubs 7 PM	I7 Girl Scouts 7 Lectio 7:30	18 Music/Rec 4:30 Deacons 7:30	19 Sisters Bible Study 9:15 Ladies Bible 9:30 Meal 5:00 PM Bells 6:30 Scouts 7 Choir 7:30	20	21
22 9:15 SS 10:30 Worship Baptism Seekers Bible 3:30	23 Cubs 7 PM	24 Bible Study 7:30	25 9:30 a.m. Mom's Time Out Prime Timers to Allentown 10:15 Music/Rec 4:30 Session 7:30 Exam. of new officers	26 Sisters Bible Study 9:15 Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30	27 Wedding Re- hearsal 5 p.m.	28 Spirko/Miller Wedding 3 p.m.
29 9:15 SS 10:30 Worship Ord/Ins. Offi- cers Jr./Sr. Seekers 2:30 p.m.	30 Cubs 7 p.m. Theology Book Group 7:30 p.m. @ Lesters'					•





