



FBC • First Baptist Church

FAMILY BY CHOICE all are welcome...really!

VISIONS

July 2019

FBC is "Out" and "About"

FBC is out! At the American Baptist Churches Biennial Meeting in Virginia Beach, Joel Dugan and I attended the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists (AWAB) meeting held in the convention center in "prime time" on Sat. afternoon (I remember the years that we were banished to a distant local church and not allowed to exhibit in the Hall; more on that below) There we were celebrated as the newest church to apply for AWAB membership and welcomed into the family. Ten churches have joined AWAB since the last Biennial and more are stepping forward!

AWAB's booth was located at the *center* of the exhibit hall! This is BIG! As mentioned above, for years AWAB was not allowed in the Hall at all and when they eventually were, they were given a spot off in the corner in hopes that no one would find them. This year, to the surprise of all, AWAB was assigned a spot directly in the center of the entire Hall! Joel volunteered to greet people at the booth, a place of welcome and inclusion for all.

While not all ABC churches are welcoming, many of them join us in seeking to be revitalized by God's Spirit, and to that end I had intentional conversations about how we continue to move forward with folks who have experience and learning to share about just this sort of thing. A key learning that was confirmed for me is this: **context is everything!** Our responsibility is to minister to those where we find ourselves and most importantly, we need to understand where and what that is.

When I moved to Colleeville last winter, I began to walk/run in my neighborhood. I decided it

was the best way to get to see and understand where I was; I discovered much: lovely homes, wooded parks, a community garden, a labyrinth. So, I've decided to do the same here in Pottstown. Many of us, like me, drive in and around and out again but because we do not actually live in the Borough or in the neighborhood, we don't have firsthand knowledge of what's going on. Back in February, we named all the things we *didn't know* about our neighborhood and we have begun to gain more knowledge by inviting others *in* to tell us what's going on. **I think it's time to go out!**

I invite you to join me to walk in our neighborhood this summer. I am planning to thoughtfully walk our neighborhood on **Wednesday mornings at 10 am July 3, 10 and 17.** You may join me for any or all of these times. I will leave from the church office, choosing an intention for the walk (paying attention to people or housing or sounds or smells or what's present or what's missing, etc). With this intention and God's Spirit in mind, I plan to walk several blocks, returning to reflect on what I learned from the neighborhood and from God. You could plan on this taking about an hour. Wear comfortable shoes and an open spirit!

We are "out" and we need to be "out and about". Let's walk and pray together, here in Pottstown and around your own neighborhood, inviting others to God's welcome!

----Marcia



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www.FBCPottstown.org

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*Association of Welcoming and
Affirming Churches*

Special Offering July 14th and 21st



FBC has applied to the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, a national organization of a variety of kinds of Baptists who share their welcome and inclusion of sexual minority persons. Here's how they describe themselves:

"As the only organization solely devoted to building the Welcoming and Affirming movement within the Baptist traditions, AWAB has a unique call to be The National Voice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Allied Baptists in the US.

Since 1993 AWAB has been supporting churches in being and becoming Welcoming and Affirming of all people regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. We work as individuals, congregations, regional groupings and as a national body to advance the Radical Welcome and Love of God in Jesus Christ through being the Ministry of Reconciliation and building up the Beloved Community where all will be one." (from their website: <http://www.awab.org/>)

To support our application, we will take a special offering these two Sundays. Please give generously as we look to a new relationship with other like-minded Baptists. **Our goal for this offering is \$300.00.**

Celebrating Our FBC Graduates

Amanda Endy

Congratulations to Amanda Endy on her graduation from Pottstown High School. Amanda plans to attend college in the fall at Cedar Crest College, and she has been awarded several scholarships. The future looks bright, Amanda! Way to go!



Mary Heinz

Congratulations to Mary Heinz on her graduation from Goucher College! Mary is currently working at a bakery as she prepares to enter the AmeriCorps NCCC program in October. AmeriCorps NCCC enlists young people from around the country in national community service in a one-year commitment. Mary's home base will be Denver, Colorado and she will be serving in various communities in a multi-state region with a team of other young adults. AmeriCorps is a wonderful opportunity to meet others, to do meaningful work in communities around our country and to learn and grow. Way to go, Mary!



Joel Dugan

Congratulations to Joel Dugan on the completion of the American Baptist Churches of PA and DE Academy of Christian Training and Service Diploma of Lay Ministry Studies. Joel has been attending classes and studying for several years. We celebrate Joel's commitment to this program and his growing sense of ministry here in our church and in the wider community.

Ridiculously Good Ideas

M & M's! Who doesn't like M & M's? You may be dreaming about M & M's the CONFECTION, but we are creating M & M's the CONNECTION! What are we talking about? Coming soon to a phone near you, you will hear a familiar, friendly voice on the other end of the line greeting you and connecting with you, "**M**ember to **M**ember." It's our sweet way of strengthening the relationships that make us "Family By Choice." It may take us a while to get through the directory (which we will be updating soon), so join us and volunteer to make some calls and help us connect, "Member to Member".

LET'S CONNECT! (Are you sensing a theme here?) We want to know, "What's your passion?" Outside of the big red doors of the sanctuary, where do your interests lie? What sparks your interest, creativity and gets you going? Is there a cause that you connect with and draws you in? Is it supporting animal rescue shelters, raising funds for Relay for Life, or some other important cause that generates a positive impact on your community or beyond? We want to know! Beginning in August, we will publish an article in "Visions" each month featuring one of our members who finds fulfillment in meaningful and exceptional ways. You may read an article and say, "Hey! I do that too!" Or, "I'd really like to know more. Now I know who to CONNECT with!" Got something you'd like to share? Contact one of the members of the Diaconate Board. Who knows, you could be featured in a future article!

– from the Diaconate Board
Debra Brauner, Chairperson
Board members – Jane Gruen, Ruth Chonka

First Sunday Summer Worship in our Courtyard

This summer we will worship on the first Sunday of in June and July in the courtyard on King Street. We want to enjoy the shade, sun, and beauty of God's natural world, make our presence visible in our community, invite others to join us and to celebrate communion in this special setting. Join us, weather permitting, outside for these special events! We begin at 10 am! (If it rains or is too hot, we will worship inside).



Community Summer Fest Sunday, Aug 11th 1-4 pm

Ask now how you can be a part of the planning and fun for our first ever Community Summer Fest! There are lots of great ideas in the works! A fire truck that sprays water! A real ambulance to check out! Learn how to make healthy snacks with the Cluster; enjoy games with great prizes with your friends! Indulge in delicious snacks as you meet the neighbors, chat with friends, and catch up with others at this major event. Nancy Unruh and Dennis Landon will be heading up with effort, and we hope you will make their job easier by offering to help out. Mark your calendars and join the fun!

Worship is a Splash!



Save the date: on **Sunday, August 4** we will celebrate Gods' presence in worship at the home of Myra and John Forrest, 2475 Rosenberry Road, Gilbertsville 19525. We will gather at 11 am in their backyard for worship, followed by a potluck picnic and an afternoon of swimming and games! It's no accident that our biblical summer story that day is Jonah! Come and have some fun! Bring your bathing suit and towel, a lawn chair, and a dish to pass! Invite a friend!

\$\$\$The Amazing Raise\$\$\$



The Amazing Raise Day of Giving in Pottstown is **Tuesday, October 15, 2019.**

Pledges to the Amazing Raise for First Baptist Church can be given **now**, or **any time through October 15th**. The pledge money will not be billed to your credit card until October 15th, even though you pledge ahead of time. **The money given to First Baptist and all other non-profits will be matched at a 75% rate if it is given through a pledge or on Tuesday, October 15th**. This is an opportunity for First Baptist to grow our bank account with very little effort!

The money needs to be given online. FBC will have a help desk on Tuesday, October 15th at the church for anyone who needs assistance with online giving.

Respectfully,
Dr. Myra Forrest

Have you tried E-giving?

Do you pay your electric or phone bill online? Does the money get automatically removed from your account, so you don't have to think about it? You can now pay your pledge or make a donation to FBC using the same technology!

Getting involved with this method of payment is literally three easy steps! The process is very intuitive, but for those of us who need to see it written out, instructions are located on the website under the "DONATE" category and a hard copy is on the desk in the Church Office.

1. Go to our website www.FBCPottstown.org and click on the far-right category "DONATE".
2. Create your own profile so you can keep track of all of your giving.
3. Add your donations, frequency and method of payment.

Additional Special Donations and/or changes can be made at any time along the year. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jeanne 610-405-8574 artgal32@gmail.com

Busy Behind the Scenes



Although Sunday School is not meeting for the Summer, the CE Board is still busy. We are planning for our **August 11th Community Summer Fest**. It will be a day filled with fun activities for all. Time to get to know our neighbors, partner with community groups, learn fire safety and EMS safety, enjoy food, and much more! Plan to attend and help where you can. If you have any ideas for activities, please share them with Nancy Unruh or Dennis Landon.

The Fall will bring new curriculum to Youth Sunday School. If you have any ideas for Adult Sunday School curriculum, please share them with Joel Dugan.

The Youth Group met at Manatawny Green for a time of fun and fellowship in June with 13 in attendance. Plans are in the works for upcoming meetings. All Youth are welcome to come and bring a friend for fun activities, great food, and friendly fellowship.

Don't forget to keep collecting those Redner's Save-A-Tapes. Please place your tapes in the box on the shelves or in the CE mailbox.

-from the Board of Christian Education
Chairperson of the Board: Nancy Unruh
Sunday School Superintendent: Susan Heinz
Board members: Lauren Emmell, Dennis Landon,
Kathy Purington, Joel Dugan

Let's be Bucket Fillers!

The Cluster wants to **Bring the Basics** to their personal care pantry to help local friends and neighbors in need! They will announce **a new item and goal every month**.

The Cluster has set a July goal to collect 31 house cleaning buckets! They are looking for cleaning products, sponges, etc.



The Cluster also has the following current needs:

- One-gallon Food Storage Bags
- Half-gallon Food Storage Bags
- Sandwich Bags
- Plastic Bags
- One-inch brown Masking Tape

All donations can be placed on the shelves in Echo Hall.

Cluster Fundraisers: Professional Pharmacy register tapes (includes prescriptions). Place in Ruth Chonka's mailbox.

Pamphlets are available on the tables in Echo Hall and the Sanctuary to help explain the services available at the Cluster in Pottstown.

FBC's Got Talent

Corinne Griffiths has graciously agreed to be the chairperson for the Board of Worship & Music.

As the choir takes a break over the summer, we're looking for special music to include in our worship service. If you sing or play an instrument and would like to perform the special music during a service this summer, please contact Teri Hoffman.

- from the Board of Worship & Music

Chairperson: Corinne Griffiths

Board members: Kathy Ballein, Tim Raub
& Dr. Myra Forrest

Caring for Our Building



The Trustees would like to report that additional cracked windows were replaced in June by Hutt Glass. The committee is also looking into security cameras for the church. If you notice any repairs needed around the building, please contact John Forrest or Rick Unruh.

- from the Trustees

Co-Chairpersons: Richard Unruh & John Forrest



Reaching Beyond Our Walls

In June, \$275 was collected so far for the One Great Hour of Sharing. Look for updates on this offering in the August Visions.

We were also delighted to hear an update from Rev. Dr. Deborah and Gary Winters about the work and ministry of God's Precious Children on June 23rd.

- Our Missions

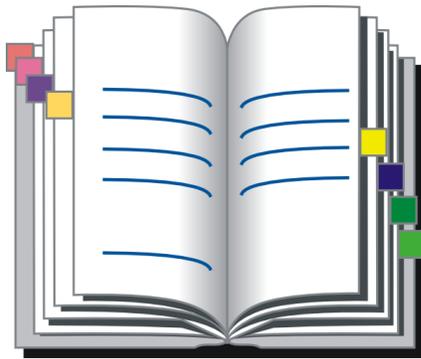
Chairperson: Kathy Purington

Committee members: Jane Gruen & Ruth Chonka

Looking Ahead for FBC

A committee comprised of John Forrest, Kathy Purington, and Barry Sawtelle have met twice with further meetings planned in the future. Their task is to make recommendations for revisions to the FBC Constitution to bring the procedural aspects of the Constitution into better alignment with the current size of the congregation and its' capabilities.

- from the Constitution Committee
John Forrest, Kathy Purington,
& Barry Sawtelle



Are you up to date?

Over the summer we intend to work on updating our church directory. If you know that there need to be changes/additions to your phone number, address, email, or cell phone numbers, please help us get a head start by calling or emailing the church office with your updated information! Send information to office@fbcpottstown.org

July Birthdays

- 11 Sue Creswell
- 16 Leanne Ziherambere
- 26 Alexa Osoyo
- 28 Lori English
Dorothy Miller
- 30 Horace Fox

July Anniversaries

- 1 Teri & Lloyd Hoffman
- 10 Joyce & Will Bagiraneza
- 24 Kristen & John Jolley

Are we missing your name? Send us your birthday so we can invite others to celebrate with you!



FAMILY BY CHOICE