



FBC • First Baptist Church

FAMILY BY CHOICE all are welcome...really!

VISIONS

June 2019

“All are welcome... really!”

On Sunday, May 19th by unanimous vote of all members present, FBC voted to become a Welcoming and Affirming congregation. While we welcome *all* who would choose to share our worship and witness, after years of preparation and prayer, opportunities for learning, reflection and conversation, members voted to be explicit in their welcome of people who are part of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. This was a historic moment in the life of this congregation as well as a sacred moment.

It was historic as we recognized with gratitude all of those whose faith and witness opened our hearts and minds to the broad nature of God's welcome, evidenced in the redemptive love of Jesus, who restricted none from participation in God's reign. It was sacred as we recognized that we felt called and directed by God's Spirit to take this action, and that by doing so, we were both taking a risk and providing an opportunity to accompany and provide a safe place for people who have not found welcome in other faith communities.

So where do we go from here? We continue to expand our welcome! We will be applying to join the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, a cooperative resource of other like-minded Baptist folks who also affirm the wideness of God's realm. We will intentionally extend the scope of our advertising and begin to build connections with other individuals and groups that reach people who

have been marginalized because of their sexual orientation. But that's not all!

We will continue to push ourselves to intentionally include and invite ALL people as we listen to God's invitation to serve our community and those in need. To that end, we are planning to worship on the first Sundays of the summer in our church yard, so we can be more visible. We are planning a **Community Summer Fest** on Sunday, Aug 11 from 1-4 pm as a way to engage both our partners (Steel River, CCLU, NA, Cluster and YWCA) and our neighbors. We hope you will plan to be a part of these and other opportunities to worship and play together over the summer months. Read the rest of our newsletter and the emails that will come your way to find out how you can let others know that at FBC, “all are welcome...really!”

----Marcia

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

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www.FBCPottstown.org

301 King St | Pottstown PA 19464

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! Listen to live Gospel music and 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!



FBC Plays Together!

Keep reading to learn of the fun things we've got planned for the next few months as we enjoy each other's company and refresh our spirits together!

- **“Swinging through the Ages” a Steel River Concert, June 28th, 7:30 pm**
Join the PA Philharmonic Big Band celebrating the best of the Swing era with all-time favorites from Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Bobby Darin plus hits from Chicago, Earth Wind & Fire and more! Tickets cost \$29.00 and benefit Steel River Playhouse. Tickets can be purchased in advance on the Steel River website, or tickets can be purchased at the Steel River Box Office on June 28th. Call the church office if interested, and the group will meet

at the Box Office at 7:00pm on June 28th to find seats together.

- **FBC Pool Party! Aug 4th at 11am at the Forrest's**
On Sunday, Aug 4th we will worship in the Forrest's lovely yard before we are invited to swim and picnic into the afternoon. This all-church event will be a great time to relax and catch up with one another, invite a friend, watch folks swim and to enjoy some delicious food! We'll be asking you in July to think about what you'd like to bring to add to our communal table; mark your calendars now!
- **October 6 Afternoon at Steel River: “The Mystery of Edwin Drood”**
One of the benefits of partnering with Steel River is that we can get discounted group tickets to a play! So we are planning for a matinee on Oct 6th, the **humorous musical** based on a play by Charles Dickens during which the audience votes to determine the shows' end! Tickets will be \$3.00 off if we get 8 or more; please mark your calendars and stay tuned for details and deadlines.

A Legacy of Love

Recently, Rick Unruh presented FBC with a \$14,000 surprise gift from the estate of member Al Jacoby. Rick, the executor of the estate, learned last summer of additional funds that had been discovered in addition to the generous gift Al had originally left to the church. Al's love for FBC and Rick's friendship with and care for Al, resulted in this significant act of kindness. We once again celebrate Al's faithfulness to our community and his legacy to the ministry of FBC.

May Congregational Meeting

On Sunday, May 19, in addition to unanimously passing our Welcoming and Affirming statement, FBC voted to affirm the hiring of Kristi Pless as our new Administrative Assistant, voted Joel Dugan and Marcia Bailey as FBC American Baptist Churches Biennial Meeting delegates, and elected new

officers and Board chairs for one year terms ending July 1, 2020.

Moderators: Myra Forrest, Laura Alden, Debra Brauner

Treasurer: Charles Golden

Financial Secretary: Jeanne Petrosky

Church Clerk: Nancy Unruh

Board Chairs: Christian Ed: Nancy Unruh

Diaconate: Debra Brauner

Trustees: John Forrest and Rick Unruh, Co-chairs

Worship and Music: TBD

Joel Dugan was voted to serve on the Board of Christian Education.

The following statement passed unanimously:

Welcoming and Affirming Statement

"Where ALL are welcome... really!" First Baptist Church (FBC) of Pottstown is a Welcoming and Affirming congregation. We embrace this stance as an expression of faith in the Good News of Jesus, when He called on us to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves - without equivocation or expectations for sexual orientation and gender identity, or household composition. We invite all to participate equally and fully in the responsibilities and duties of life, ministry, fellowship, worship, and leadership in our church. God's blessings are for everyone. Diversity gives us strength and helps to grow our faith in God and Jesus Christ. Whoever you are, as God's beloved, you are worthy and welcome!

Do You Know What CCLU Stands For?

"CCLU"! You see it every week in our bulletin and monthly in our newsletter! This active group has been serving the community for more than twenty years in our building...*but do you know that those initials stand for and what they actually do?*

Find out in worship in Sunday, June 9th as we hear from Executive Director Rita Paez about the important ministry CCLU has in the Pottstown community. Rita will be speaking after the sermon and there will be time for Q & A. Getting to know our building partners is one of the priorities we identified at our Feb Reboot Retreat. Be sure to support our

efforts in reaching out *and* our relationship with Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos!

A Thank You from Doris

Doris Stutzman: Thank you so much for the gift, the gift card to Red Lobster, and the membership to the Tricounty Active Adult Center. I really do love Red Lobster! I will still be active at First Baptist Church and have been available to Kristi for all the details of the job. Thank you again for everything.

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



The Amazing Raise Day of Giving in Pottstown is **Tuesday, October 15, 2019**. The raising of money by TriCounty Network (TCN) for non-profit organizations is in many ways, taking the place of the United Way which no longer has a strong presence in our area. First Baptist Church belongs to TriCounty Network and is enrolled in The Amazing Raise Day of Giving.

TCN began The Amazing Raise in 2017 and raised \$104,000 to divide among their non-profit members. In 2018, \$335,000 was raised to divide among their non-profit members. The goal for The Amazing Raise in 2019 is \$500,000. The money is raised by TriCounty Network through non-profit giving, corporate giving, Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, Pottstown Hospital, personal gifts, and other donors.

Pledges to the Amazing Raise for First Baptist Church can be given **now**, or **any time through October 15**. The pledge money will not be billed to your credit card until October 15, 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 15.*** 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. The website is tcnetwork.org
TriCounty Network is located at 2151 East High Street, #C, Pottstown, PA.

Respectfully,
Dr. Myra Forrest

Christian Education

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

We welcome Joel to the CE Board and look forward to his fresh ideas. Although Deb moved over to the Diaconate, she will still be sharing her thoughts with us as well.

Our thanks to Sue Heinz for being an outstanding Sunday School Superintendent. We hope she has a wonderful break, and we're looking forward to her return!

The Youth Group met last month to make our own pizzas (can't go wrong with pizza) and participate in a service project by preparing Birthday Party Bags to be delivered to two social service agencies. So far we're prepared about 29 bags!

This month the adventure continues as the Youth Group will be meeting to play mini golf at Manatawny Green (71 W. High St. in Pottstown) at 3:00 PM on Sunday, June 2nd. All kids/youth of our church and their friends are invited to join us.

Plans are being made for **Community Summer Fest on August 11th**. Come grow our relationships with groups in our community while enjoying food, fun, and games, and meet some of our community heroes, too. Please contact Nancy Unruh or Dennis Landon to volunteer for this great event.

Bring the Basics - Cluster

Ruth Chonka

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 June goal to collect 31 sets of bath towels! They are looking for clean, gently used or new towels.



In order to serve our community, the Cluster also needs volunteers in the food service program and in the outreach center. Call 610-970-5995 and ask for Samantha.

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.

Diaconate

Chairperson: Debra Brauner
Board members: Ruth Chonka & Jane Gruen

The Diaconate Board is grateful for the past leadership of Joel Dugan and the continued commitment of Ruth Chonka and Jane Gruen. We are thankful that those members have agreed to continue member visitations, to schedule worship leaders, and to obtain and prepare communion elements.

The Diaconate met to review the responsibilities of the board (mainly for the benefit of the new chairperson) and to prioritize tasks for the upcoming year. Our primary focus will be to update the current church directory. We hope to accomplish this over the summer months. A second area of emphasis will be to reach out to members who are not actively participating in church life. The Board also discussed the possibility of working more closely with the Worship and Music Board.

You do not need to be a member of the Diaconate Board to help with member visitations, serve as a worship leader, serve communion

elements, or any other task listed above! If you have a desire to serve in any of these capacities, please contact any Board member to make your interest known. We welcome your participation!

Offering Reminder: The Communion envelope found in your box for the first Sunday of the month is used for the Fellowship Fund on the even months. The Fellowship Fund is to help our members in financial need. On the odd numbered months, the Fellowship Fund is used for Missions.

---Deb Brauner

Board of Worship & Music

Chairperson: TBD

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

The Board of Worship & Music is seeking a Chairperson. Please contact one of the Moderators if you are interested.

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.

Trustees

Co-Chairpersons: Richard Unruh & John Forrest

The Trustees are happy to report that 14 cracked windows were replaced in May, and Hutt Glass plans to assess if more need to be replaced. If you notice any repairs needed around the building, please contact John Forrest or Rick Unruh.

We would also like to thank everyone who participated in our last Work Day on May 11th.

Missions

Kathy Purington

Committee members: Jane Gruen & Ruth Chonka

In May, \$175 was collected for the God's Precious Children Offering.



We also received a letter of thanks from Operation Backpack for our support of their program. Our donations provided the resources to fill approximately 1 Backpack.

Constitution Committee

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.

The committee has identified several areas of the Constitution they think no longer work for FBC as it is today. These include the board and committee structure, the annual meeting schedule, and the provisions regarding a quorum for conducting business meetings. The committee will make a proposal in the near future determining what a quorum should mean at FBC. The committee has begun reviewing Constitutions from other churches for ideas that other congregations have instituted. The committee continues to meet and expects to make recommendations to the Ministry Coordination Team so they can be presented at the May business meeting.

Time for an Update!

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

June Birthdays

- 4 Lynn Ranieri
Karen Golden
- 6 Christina Forrest Osoyo
Matthew Kurtz
- 7 Ruth Endy
Kathy Purington
- 8 Braylon Kuhn
John Shilling
- 14 Maggie Kurtz
- 15 Jeff Reid
- 16 Ada Miller
- 18 Doris Stutzman
- 19 Sarie Kurtz
- 22 Jackie Oberg Cahill
- 23 Bamise Ogundipe
Jennifer Purington
- 26 Andrew James Cahill

June Anniversaries

- 1 Randy & Sari Kurtz
- 11 Larry & Pam Wolfgang
- 17 Charles & Yun Washington
- 23 John & Myra Forrest

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



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