



**FBC First Baptist Church**

Family By Choice all are welcome...really!

# VISIONS September 2019

## Exploring God's Call in a New Season



Every season is a "new" season I suppose, but as we turn the page on another summer I want to invite you to recommit to explore God's call in your own life and in the life of our congregation in the days and months to come.

We have had a very vital and active summer at FBC! We have walked in our neighborhood, getting a closeup look at who and what is around us. We have planned and presented our first "Summerfest" event, interacting with our neighbors and community businesses in new and exciting ways. We have deepened our relationships with one another, through shared work and fun, laughter and tears. We have worshipped faithfully, even when our numbers were few.

We begin the fall with some changes. Those who had been worshipping this summer, along with the Ministry Coordination Team, suggested we continue to worship at 10am for the remainder of the year; this provides some who have afternoon activities an earlier worship time and allows us to have Learning Community (formerly Sunday School) after worship, with meetings to follow at noon as necessary. We

are hoping for an increase in adult attendance as we nurture our spiritual lives beyond worship.

We are sharing our entire education building with the YWCA this fall which has meant a significant change in the use of our resources but also additional income to offset our expenses. We continue to pursue the possibility of entering into a mutually beneficial agreement with the Y regarding the use and potential sale of our education building to them. We will continue to discern this possibility and seek your collective wisdom in this matter.

We are participating for the first time in The Amazing Raise, an opportunity afforded to non-profits in the Pottstown area to fund raise collectively. You will hear and see more about this matching-funds effort, which could benefit us significantly if we can work together to make it effective.

We are planning for our future. We are beginning our envisioning for next year earlier and thinking about all the resources at our disposal for the work of ministry in our community. We value everyone's input and gifts as we seek God's direction for our life together.

And to that end, I once again, in earnest, invite you to be prayerfully discerning God's call to you and to our community of faith as we seek to reflect the life and values of Jesus in these tumultuous times. More than ever those on the margins of our society need to be supported and empowered. More than ever we need to create space for those people to speak their own truth and to experience respectful understanding. We have tremendous opportunities ahead if we dare to seize them. May God give us the courage to risk who we have been for who we are yet to be!

--Marcia

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[www.FBCPottstown.org](http://www.FBCPottstown.org)

301 King St | Pottstown PA 19464

## Small But Mighty!



Well, I've said it before, and I'll say it again, "We are small, but we are mighty!"

FBC Community Summer Fest was a huge success! Thank you, Dennis Landon, for being my Co-Chair. Everything was free, which was the amazing part. We had 14 community businesses donate gift cards and one anonymous donor which made the total 27 gift cards. Hot dogs, popcorn, drinks, games and activities, and Kona shaved ice were free to all to enjoy. We even had a "Scotty Potty"!

The games were awesome, and we had tattoo artists, Ruth Chonka and Barb Mackewicz, giving us temporary body art. (I got a fairy tattoo!) Dr. Myra Forrest was our amazing announcer, calling a lucky winner every 15 minutes. Our community partners, the Cluster, Steel River, and the Montgomery Department of Health & Human Services, attended with information and give-aways. FBC gave away party supplies, and they were a big hit with our neighbors. We had visitors volunteering their time with games, Hector Villaveitia and Lydia Lopez. I saw adults playing Rockum Sockum Robots! A neighborhood gentleman donated cookies to the food table as well. The Fire Truck was fantastic fun for adults and children alike.

A giant thank-you to everyone who donated for items to make this an FBC success! We achieved our goal of sharing ourselves and being a positive presence in our Pottstown community. Thank you also to all the volunteers who tended to the games and food, acted as greeters, performed as runners to pick up gift cards, and helped organize all of the chaos. Thank you to Rick Unruh and Chief Groff of the Phillies Fire Co. for allowing us to have Engine 4 present at our event. Also, thank you to Pottstown

Borough and Fire Chief Hand for allowing us to close King St. to hold our Event.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank FBC's Amazing Administrative Assistant Kristi Pless for all her help with advertising as well as making flyers, calls, and thank-you letters. What would have taken me hours if not days, she did in minutes! Did I say, she is amazing?

I could go on and on, but you can tell I'm so excited that it was a success. The CE Board is even talking plans for next year to go Bigger and Better!

-Nancy Unruh for the Board of Christian Ed

## To Our Loving FBC Family

Rick, Scott, Trevor, Tyler, Trent, Jessica and I would like to thank you All for the care, cards, calls, hugs and kisses you have given and still give us during this horrific time in our lives. You are *all amazing* and have touched our hearts and have a special place in our hearts forever. God has truly blessed us with your presence in our lives.

In Christ's Love,  
Hugs & Kisses Back,  
The Unruh Family

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



FBC is a member of TriCounty Community Network (TCN), an organization that resources nonprofits in our community with opportunities to collaborate, learn and share in order to promote both their own and community wellness. One of the things they do is an event called The Amazing Raise.

The Amazing Raise allows us to partner with others to raise money for our individual organizations while sharing in the benefits of generous donations made to TriCounty Network. It works like this: Donations to FBC through the Amazing Raise website on **October 15<sup>th</sup> will be matched by TCN!** So, your October offering, for example, if given through the Amazing Raise

website on October 15<sup>th</sup>, will be worth much more than if you gave it on October 16<sup>th</sup>!

**You can go online *right now* and make a donation to FBC using your credit card, and that donation will be matched on October 15<sup>th</sup>! How cool is that!** Use the link below:

<https://www.amazingraisetricounty.org/FirstBaptistChurchPottstown>

We will be talking more about this as the date gets closer, so begin thinking now about whether you can give in October what you might give as an extra gift. Instead of waiting until December, give it on October 15<sup>th</sup>! That way your gift will grow!

Stay tuned for much more about The Amazing Raise! Your gifts will be multiplied if you participate this year!

## Official AWAB Members!



On August 27<sup>th</sup>, FBC received the news from AWAB's Acting National Coordinator Rev. Brian Henderson. The AWAB Board enthusiastically affirmed FBC's membership application at its last meeting.

## Mark Your Calendar!



- **Labor Day Worship at Shenkel UCC**  
1580 Shenkel Road  
Pottstown, PA 19465

This Labor Day weekend, Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, we will once again join other churches in our community to worship at Shenkel UCC. Worship will begin at 10:00am. This is a wonderful time of sharing with others; please plan to join us!

- **Sunday Schedule Changes**

We are making some changes in our Sunday schedule this fall! **Worship will continue to begin at 10:00am, and it will be followed by Learning Communities (aka Sunday School) for both kids and adults from 11:15am-12:00pm. This schedule will begin Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.**

- **Worship In Action: Interfaith Cluster**



We are taking our worship service on the road **Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>** when we worship **at the Interfaith Cluster building, just down the block from our church.** Those who want to can drive right there (57 North Franklin St, Pottstown 19464) and others can meet at the church at 9:50 and walk together to the Cluster. We will be worshipping as we learn about the resources offered as well as adding our blessing to both the workers and those who seek assistance. Join us for this creative, meaningful worship in action!

## CCLU's Annual Festival

Riverfront Park 12:00pm-5:00pm

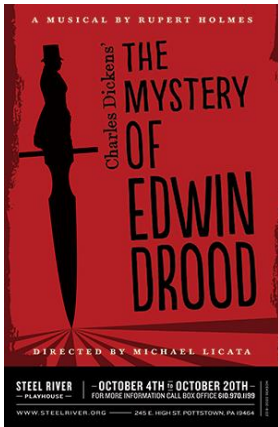


On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos, Inc. (CCLU) will hold their 4<sup>th</sup> annual Latin Festival! Admission is free and includes live music and performances by a mariachis group as well as kayaking and biking. Come enjoy authentic cuisine, visit the merchandise vendors and enjoy activities for the whole family.

FBC will also have a table at this event. If you would like to volunteer to help with our table, contact Pastor Marcia.



## The Mystery of Edwin Drood



Join us for an afternoon of intrigue **Sunday, October 6th at 2:00pm**. Musical murder mystery meets its match when the audience chooses the ending. Whodunnit? Could be any of the clever, crazy characters – you decide. The winner of five Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Drood is set on London’s rustic, yet regal, stage of “The Music Hall Royale”. This musical is bound to keep you on your toes. So, kick off your boots, loosen your corsets...and enjoy Steel River’s season opener! Call the church office to add your name or talk with Ruth Chonka. Invite a friend!

## Under Construction



The Membership Directory is still under construction! Doris Stutzman, Kristi Pless, and Pastor Marcia have been assisting the Diaconate Board in updating and revising the directory. This group will be meeting again on Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, to continue its work. If you know that there need to be changes/additions to your phone number, address, email, or cell phone numbers, please help us by calling or emailing the church

office with your updated information! Send information to [office@fbcpottstown.org](mailto:office@fbcpottstown.org).

The Board will also be drafting letters to invite and encourage participation in worship and the life of our congregation, to members we have not seen in the past year or more. You can help in extending the welcome by calling or emailing members and friends that you noticed have not attended recently. It is important for all of us to remember that church membership asks for presence and participation in the life of a people who believe they have a purpose together in serving God.

In addition to offering an opportunity to members and friends to attend the October 6<sup>th</sup> performance of “Edwin Drood” at Steel River Playhouse, the Diaconate Board is exploring other ideas for promoting fellowship that extends beyond worship. If you have suggestions, please feel free to offer them to any of the members of the Board. We would love to hear from you!

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

## Holy Currencies: An Adult Learning Community Sundays at 11:15am in the church office



Eric Law’s, *Holy Currencies: 6 Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries*, will open our eyes and hearts to the resources God has placed around, as well as within, us. While it is easy to see scarcity and limits all around us, this book invites us to instead see that same reality as a source of blessings and abundance! Together we will explore the six “currencies” that we already have and explore ways these can be exchanged for new life and vitality in our church and community. Reading the book will deepen your experience, but it’s not a requirement for participation. This class will be co-taught by Laura Alden, Dennis Landon and Marcia Bailey.

## Small But Mighty!

Summer Fest was a success, and the CE Board is even talking plans for next year to go bigger and better!



In other news, September 8<sup>th</sup> begins our Learning Community, aka Sunday School. Adult class will meet in the Office. Youth & Children will meet in Echo Hall. Plans are also in motion for a Sundae Sunday and Trunk or Treat in October.

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: Nancy Unruh

Board members: Lauren Emmell, Dennis Landon, Kathy Purington, Joel Dugan

## What's Your Bag?



For the Cluster, the signature page, which was printed in the Pottstown Mercury, was a success with donations totaling close to \$15,000. The Cluster thanks all who so generously donated to that cause.

This summer FBC has donated 8 sets of towels, several cleaning buckets, and a set of silverware to the Cluster's Bring the Basics campaign. The Cluster is very appreciative of all the donations we give to help those in need.

In September, the Cluster has a goal of 30 packages of bags. "What types of bags?" you ask! The Cluster needs:

- One-gallon Food Storage Bags
- Quart Food Storage Bags
- Perforated Produce Bags

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.

-from Cluster delegate Ruth Chonka

## Raise Your Voice



During August, the Board of Worship & Music invited Ms. Jane Forry to play the organ during one of our Sunday services, and comments afterwards were positive. Ms. Forry will be playing for us again soon!

Choir rehearsals will begin this month. The choir will rehearse on Sunday mornings at 9:00am starting on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Please, if you can, join us on Sunday mornings for a joyous way to praise our God – and just to have fun, too.

We are also still urging those who can sing or play an instrument to reach out about opportunities to participate in worship services this fall.

- from the Board of Worship & Music  
Chairperson: Corinne Griffiths  
Board members: Kathy Ballein, Tim Raub,  
Teri Hoffman & Dr. Myra Forrest

## Light in the Dark



The Trustees are happy to report that the outdoor lights were updated last month, and now they will turn on and off automatically.

In addition to the outdoor lights, we reviewed our lighting system in New Fellowship Hall with our electrician, and he is going to give us a quote to update the system so that all the lights work properly.

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

## Blanket and Tool Sunday

September 22, 2019



This Church World Service Offering is used to provide blankets, tools, tents and medical supplies to meet emergency needs across our globe due to natural and man-made disasters. In addition, the offering is used to fund long term demands of recovery and rehabilitation by providing care for traumatized children, rebuilding homes and schools, and rebuilding food security by providing seeds, tools, fishing equipment and training.

Giving to Tool / Blanket Offering permits an opportunity for us to Joyfully Build up others and

Blanket the world with our love. Our giving goal is \$250; giving envelopes can be found in the pew racks.

- Our Missions

Chairperson: Kathy Purington

Committee members: Jane Gruen & Ruth Chonka

## Outreach Opportunities



We have two opportunities to represent FBC and to engage our community this September. We are invited to host a table at the Pottstown Memorial Hospital Community Day Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, and CCLU is hosting the Latino Festival, Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Please let Marcia know if you will be willing to staff our table for all or part of either/both of these two events. Plan on attending so you can meet others in our community too!

## Lunch and Learn with PBA's James E. McJunkin Jr

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, FBC will host the executive minister of the Philadelphia Baptist Association (PBA), Rev. Dr. James E. McJunkin, Jr. during morning worship and for a lunch discussion afterwards. The lunch discussion will serve as the learning experience for the day.

Dr. Marcia Bailey will lead worship. Dr. McJunkin will preach and has also agreed to sing! Those of us who know Dr. McJunkin know that both his preaching and his singing are worth hearing. Lunch is provided but please do sign up on the sheet in Echo Hall by September 16<sup>th</sup>.

FBC is hosting Dr. McJunkin to get to know him better and to learn more about PBA, one of 33 American Baptist geographic and non-geographic regions.\* While First Baptist Church has been associated with the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware (ABCOPAD) for many

years, we have the option of associating with PBA if we choose to do so.

American Baptist congregations associate with other congregations, unions and regions on a voluntary basis for support of common mission and ministry.

PBA consists of 124 American Baptist congregations that worship and serve God together in a five-county area in southern Pennsylvania and Delaware. With more than 60,000 members from African-American, Burmese, Cantonese, Chinese, European, Latin@, Latvian and Liberian cultural and linguistic backgrounds, PBA is one of the most diverse regions of ABC.

The Rev. Dr. James McJunkin actively participates with churches in congregational transformation and in co-creating opportunities to live out their call to mission in their communities, nation and world. Prior to his current position, McJunkin led social concerns ministries related to issues of homelessness, environmental justice, immigration policies, intercultural relationships and HIV/AIDS ministries. Ordained in 1983, he has a D.Min. degree from the New York Theological Seminary, a M.Div. from Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH, and a B.A. from Livingston College, Salisbury, NC.

\*Non-geographic ABC regions were created in 2005 to allow congregations to join another region. Such moves most often involve AWAB churches.

## September Birthdays

- 1 Gayle Hall  
Randy Kurtz
- 3 Robert Kelly
- 5 Jane Gruen  
Ronald Ranieri
- 9 Aubrey Jolley
- 11 Drew Kurtz
- 18 Katie Heffner
- 24 Lois Hayer
- 28 Joshua Purington
- 29 Charles Rivenburg

## September Anniversaries

- 5 Jacqueline & James Cahill
- 18 Marvin & Terry Marsh
- 21 Rick & Nancy Unruh
- 22 Jim & Rosalie Norman McNaney
- 25 Kelli & John Yeager

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



FAMILY BY CHOICE