



FBC • First Baptist Church

FAMILY BY CHOICE all are welcome...really!

Fully Inclusive
Community Friendly
Mission Based

610-326-2273

www.FBCPottstown.org

301 King Street | Pottstown PA 19464

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April - Visions

Transforming the Containers of Our Lives

Over the last few weeks I have been slowly making my way through Richard Rohr's book *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. Rohr views our lives in two distinct parts. He describes the first half as being occupied with the work of "building a strong container or identity" into which we pour our efforts at becoming and establishing ourselves in the world: the work of discovering who we are and what's important to us, creating a home, finding meaningful employment are primary activities that occupy our time and energy. These are necessary things to engage in as we move out of our families of origin and find our place in the world.

The second half of our lives, according to Rohr (and others) is focused on what we *do* with that "container" we created in the first half. Now that we have a "life", how will we live it? If the questions from the first half are "Who am I?", "What will I do?" and "With whom will I do it?" the question of the second half of our lives is perhaps best characterized by Mary Oliver, who asks, "*What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*" Rohr makes the point that building the "container" of our lives is not enough; it only serves us for the extent of our life if we put something in it, if we use that container to hold the psychological and spiritual wealth we are freed up to gain in the later years of our being.

I have been considering this truth for my own life; discovering what is most important in this new season and how to cherish

and use it in service not only to God and others, but to myself seems to be my inward work these days. Internalizing what I have been saying to others (for years!), integrating spirit with mind and body are some of the deeper, more meaningful efforts I am about. Having done the work of creating a home, these days I am more interested in creating community. Having discovered both strengths and limits of my physical body, I want to tend it and allow it to speak to me of God's invigorating, creative life. Having struggled with the biblical texts in service to the needs of others, I am finding increasing spiritual depth in hearing and applying them to my own life in honest, sometimes painful, always life-giving ways.

As I thought about where I find myself, I began to think about where we are as a congregation. Can we move from the "container building" stage of our faith (what do we believe?) to the more challenging, transformative work of discovering meaning, and in turn, discovering ourselves and discovering God? (how do we embody?) To do that I think we need to do something other than the work of planning and doing; we need to do the work of listening and opening, of being present to God and to ourselves and to the invitation of this second half of life as earnestly as we do the rest.

So how do I see this happening? I am discerning that...and **you can help me!** Would you participate in a short-term study, perhaps of Rohr's book, maybe on a weekday or an evening? Would you be interested in being a part of a small group who would covenant to spend time together maybe once a month to focus what how your spiritual life is /isn't taking shape? We can build the "container" and still find it empty. Or we can allow God to transform all that we have poured into that container into the rich joys of deep and enduring faith. Let me know what you think!
---Marcia

Worship in Action Groups Continue

Our three Worship in Action groups met for the second time in a combined worship and meeting experience in March. Our present three groups are Community in Concert, Extending Our Welcome and Building Relationships with our Neighbors; here's what they are doing:

Community in Concert is exploring creative music and art experiences in our community with the intent of eventually

hosting several events throughout the year, including an annual Christmas Concert on Dec 8, 2019!

Extending Our Welcome is currently working on writing a statement which will come to the congregation this spring for a vote which affirms our welcome to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities. It is our hope that the congregation's affirmation of this statement will be our entry into the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. A draft of this statement was presented at the congregational meeting on March 31; look for an invitation to the participate in a conversation/feedback session as we discern God's leading in this direction on **Sunday May, 5th immediately after worship**. Check out Welcoming and Affirming Baptists here: awab.org

Here is the working statement:

"Where ALL are welcome... really!"

First Baptist Church (FBC) of Pottstown is a Welcoming and Affirming congregation. We come to this stance as an expression of faith in the teachings 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 in our church family. 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!***

Building Relationships with our Neighbors has contacted several of our building partners and invited them to share their ministry on a Sunday morning. We will follow this with a conversation about how we can mutually support each other's work both here in our building and in the wider community. Look for the YWCA on May 5th and CCLU on June 9!

Each of these groups continues to need and welcome new ideas and support; you can choose one, two or all! Our youth have their own priorities and vision as well! **Join us for our next Worship in Action Sunday, April 28, 10:45 am.**

Holy Week 2019

Palm Sunday is April 14. Worship with us as we enter into Holy Week asking the question “What Would Take to Sit at the Table and Stand at the Cross?”

Maundy Thursday worship will begin at 7:30 pm. We will remember Jesus’ final meal with his disciples as we share communion.

Good Friday Community “Cross Walk” is a family event beginning at 10:15 am “on the green” between Zions UCC and Emmanuel Lutheran on Hanover Street. We will walk approximately one mile around our community, stopping to pray God’s blessings on various organizations who serve us. **This is an excellent opportunity to show our interest in our neighbors! Join Marcia for this important witness.**

Easter Sunday will invite us to think deeply about “What Would It Take to Live Resurrection?” In many ways we have begun to do just that, but we need to hear God’s call and embody Jesus’ example to let go of our fears of dying so we can embrace real living! Join us for worship!

E-Giving Has Begun!

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; we have e-giving! 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 table in Echo Hall before entering the Sanctuary.

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.

DONE!

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

*"It took me 5 minutes to sign up. If I can do it, it HAS to be easy!"
Deb Brauner*

ABCUSA Biennial Meeting in June

American Baptist Churches USA 2019 Biennial Mission Summit will be held June 21-23, 2019, at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in Virginia Beach, Va. Join us for a "Summit by the Sea" as the Biennial Mission Summit returns to the East Coast for the first time since 2007!

The event will feature an all-new ABCUSA Biennial Academy – offering continuing education and spiritual growth opportunities for both clergy and lay leaders. Many different options will allow for something for everyone, including learning tracks with credit available, bible studies, workshops, and educational seminars. You can get more information: <http://www.abc-usa.org/2018/04/16/save-the-date-for-a-summit-by-the-sea-at-the-2019-biennial-mission-summit/>

Christian Education

Chairperson of the Board, Nancy Unruh

Sunday School Superintendent, Susan Heinz

Board members: Debra Brauner, Lauren Emmell, Dennis Landon, Kathy Purington –

*Mission Statement for the Board of Christian Education:
Our mission is to support each other by providing tools and opportunities for continual growth, regardless of who we are and where we are on our journey to know God. (Revised 1/17/2015)*

Our Youth are having fun and learning bible stories as well as acting the stories out with their “Candy CM” Curriculum. Best part, at the end of the Lesson is a piece of candy! Youth SS meets during the Church Service.

Adult SS under the supervision of Joel Dugan meets in the library @ 9:30.

Look for some exciting news! This year instead of our traditional VBS, we will be having a community heroes block party. Watch and listen for more information.

If you know someone who needs cheering up, the children love making cards to be sent to the shut-ins and long-distance friends. If you know someone that would appreciate a card, please let Kathy, Sue, or Lauren know.

Thank you for your continued support of Christian Education. We receive 1% of the total Redner’s receipts which helps us purchase supplies for Sunday School. Please continue to use your Redner’s Rewards Card whenever you shop.

The Secret Place is available on the table in Echo Hall for your personal devotions. Please consider a contribution to help defray the cost of making this material available. Feel free to pick one up for a friend.

The next meeting of the CE Board will be on Sunday, April 14th. If you are interested sharing some of your ideas, please feel free to join us.

Mark your calendar for April 20th from 10 AM – 11:30 AM for our annual Easter Egg Hunt with snacks, crafts and fun hunting!

Youth Group Beginnings

Three youth and their moms and a few others of us shared pizza and cookies on a March Sunday after worship. We are the beginnings of an **FBC Youth Group** (whose name we haven’t settled on yet) and we have plans to do great things! Our thoughtful, creative youth filled three pages of newsprint with all kinds of wildly fun things to do and invite others to over the next

few months (actually, it might take *years* to do it all!) After playing highly competitive balloon and card games (imagine Hannah and Brittany fending off Jeanne, Marcia elbowing Joel, Tyler flying across the table face first, multiple times) we agreed that the laughter and fun was so worth it we would gather again, this time beginning at **5:30 pm on Friday, April 5 at the church for a dinner we prepare ourselves, a scavenger hunt and a movie, snacks included! All kids/youth of our church, and their friends, are invited!** Please RSVP via email to Marcia or Deb Brauner so we have a head count! (marciabbailey@gmail.com or debrauner@comcast.net)

Cluster Notes

Ruth Chonka

In order to serve our community, **the Cluster has need of the following things:**

- **Volunteers** in the warehouse and pantry, stocking shelves. Call 610-970-5995 and ask for Samantha.
- Gallon size closable plastic bags
- Pots, Pans and cleaning supplies
- Low-Fat, Low-Sugar, or Low-Salt items: canned or boxed food such as soup, meat, stew, pasta, vegetables, fruit, cereal, oatmeal, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, baby food, real juice
- Laundry, cleaning supplies in small containers and cleaning equipment, toilet paper, paper towels
- personal hygiene items, diapers (size 3,4,5), wipes
- sheets and blankets (all sizes)
- Plastic and paper grocery-size bags.
- Egg cartons are **not** needed right now

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

Bi-lingual Persons Needed: The Cluster is seeking persons who can help Spanish-speaking clients who shop at the Cluster. Please contact Victoria Bumstead (610-970-5995) or vbumstead@pottstowncluster.org.

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

Diaconate

Joel Dugan, Chairperson

Board members: Ruth Chonka & Jane Gruen

Community Meal: The Cluster Luncheon is at Christ Episcopal Church on the first Monday of the month. The meal begins at 11:45 am and anyone who can help serve is welcome. We thank all those that have committed to this ministry in Pottstown.

Communion 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.

Board of Worship & Music

Teri Hoffman, Chairperson

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

Worship and Music Committee Report by Dr. Myra Forrest

The music and worship committee is looking into the replacement of the red hymnal. We are looking to find a more inclusive hymnal to meet the needs of our fully inclusive congregation.

Tim Raub formed the FBC strings and we were treated to their first performance on Sunday March 31st. If you play a stringed instrument, dust it off and join the group! Save the date Sunday December 8th, 2019. FBC will present a Holiday Concert. This Concert will be part of the Pottstown Holiday House Tour.

Trustees

Michael Heinz, Chairperson

Board members: Richard Unruh & John Forrest

Trustees Updates

1. Water was found in the upstairs hallway, which dripped down into the first floor hallway. We have not identified any source for this water.
2. Now that we have tenants using the upstairs classrooms, locks have been added to the doors to those classrooms.
3. Trustees will need two new members come the summer of 2019. Anyone interested should contact Michael Heinz.

Please Note: The church is no longer collecting for a building fund. The Church budget and the Building Fund are now considered one fund. Since we ordered the envelopes for 2019 early in 2018, this is not reflected on the giving envelopes. Thank you for making this change.

Missions

Kathy Purington

Committee members: Jane Gruen & Ruth Chonka

Easter Baskets and Candy for FBC's Easter Hunt

After our April 7th worship service, we will assemble Easter baskets, which the Cluster will distribute to area children, and eggs for the egg hunt. If you can stay to help fill the baskets/eggs or have any questions, please see any member of the Mission Committee or Christian Education.

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.

Celebrating Doris Stutzman

After 10 1/2 years of dedicated service in our church office, Doris Stutzman is retiring the end of April. Please join us in sharing our appreciation of Doris Sunday, April 28. We will celebrate her after worship with refreshments and expressions of our gratitude.

On the Move!

Horace Fox is moving to live with son Chris and family. Here's his new phone number and address:

57 Fairfield Road, Havertown Pa 19083
484-363-9217

If your address, phone number, or email has changed since our last directory, please let the church office know so we can update our records.

April Birthdays

- 1 Arline Gohean
- 2 Kelli (Kurtz)Yeager
- 6 Gabrielle Tyson
- 8 Jacqueline Grace
- 9 Ruth Molzen
- 12 Lloyd Hoffman
- 13 Hannah Lynn Emmell
- 17 Eleazar Ziherambere
- 22 Kathy Walk
- Isabella Bagiraneza
- 26 David Ziherambere

29 Jon Purington
Kayla Bowers

31 Alyssa Creswell Mohan
30 Julia Jackson
Harley Kurtz

April Anniversaries

13 Barry & Laura Alden-
Sawtelle

16 Michael & Susan Heinz
22 David & Maricarmen
Trexler

Keith & Yolanda
Grohoski

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

Our Homebound People Say Hello to You:

Arline Gohean
Shirley Holloway
Gladys Miller
Ruth (Polly) Molzen
Darrel Rivenburg
Charles Rivenburg
Mary Louise Sarni

Thanks! May God's Peace Be With You!
Rev. Mary Etta Mest
Pastor, Zion UCC Womelsdorf

What to Look for in April

Monday, April 1, 11:45 am	Community meal at Christ Episcopal
Wednesday, April 3, 6:30 pm	Prayer meeting at Joel & Jane's
Friday, April 5, 5:30 pm	Youth movie & scavenger hunt
Sunday April 7, 10:45 am	Worship & Communion Service Worship & Music Board meeting Preparing Easter baskets
Monday, April 8, 12 noon	Elderberry Luncheon
Thursday, April 11, 7 pm	Ministry Coordination Team
Saturday April 13, 9 am	All Church work day
Sunday, April 14, 10:45 am	Palm Sunday Worship Service Board of C.E. & Trustee meetings
Thursday, April 18, 7:30 pm	Maundy Thursday Service
Friday, April 19, 10:15 am	Good Friday "Cross Walk"
Saturday, April 20, 10 am	Easter Egg Hunt
Sunday, April 21, 10:45 am	Easter Worship Service

Saturday, April 27
Sunday, April 28

NA all day service
Worship in Action Service
Recognition of Doris Stutzman