



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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February - Visions

Embracing a New Season

Without a doubt it has been a cold and wet winter so far and already I hear folks longing for spring. It's a bit early for that, but the weather does force us to be intentional about our activities and energy use. We turn the heat up or down, according to how we feel and what our budget will allow. We decide whether to go out or stay in according to forecasts or perhaps just how we feel. It's amazing how the season can dictate our actions: the other morning I had to really push myself to go for a run rather than stay in my jammies and work under the covers. As it turned out, forcing myself to do what I wasn't sure I wanted to do resulted in meeting new neighbors, an invigorating exploration of my surroundings, a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction and a renewed sense of energy, both physical and mental, with which to face the day! Sometimes we need to embrace the season and see what it might offer to us.

We are experiencing a new season here at First Baptist Church! We are intentionally pushing ourselves out of the comfort zones of the past and daring ourselves to trust as God leads us into the future. It is likely that by the time you read this, we will have had our "FBC Reboot" (Feb 2), our all-day retreat for church members and friends. As I write this 25 adults and youth have committed to spending the day exploring scripture, sharing ideas, and shaping plans for the next six months of our life together; it's a new season for us as we discern new purpose and mission for the days ahead! I am excited by the energy and level of participation; we need everyone listening so that together we can hear and see God!

While the priorities identified at Reboot will give direction to our life together this year, other changes are happening as well. Look around and notice that time and energy has been given to reorganizing much of our communal space so that it is more inviting and communicates a wide welcome. Another way we are being intentional about being welcoming is that we are wearing

name tags on Sunday mornings; when you come, there is one for you! Name tags help us to greet each other personally and help us enter into the shared humanity we celebrate. (More details about this are found elsewhere in this newsletter)

You will see new faces around our building as we have welcomed Steel River Playhouse to share our space; they are utilizing a classroom on the second floor of our education building. You'll find our first-floor classrooms looking fresh and inviting as we share them with the YWCA's early education program. Narcotics Anonymous is making great use of New Fellowship Hall four times each week and CCLU is expanding its program as it uses the King Street side of Old Fellowship Hall to serve Pottstown's Latino/a population. There's a lot going on here on any given day, and we are working on developing intentional partnerships with these groups so that together, we are serving our wider community.

A new season lies ahead for us; when you are tempted to hunker down in the past, be encouraged to risk following the Light and Hope of a bright future! God is leading us to new adventures in relationship and service. Let's dare to be faithful followers.

----Marcia

I Know You!

We have recently begun wearing name tags on Sunday mornings, to the delight of some and the dismay of others. "I've been a member here forever; everyone knows my name," has been one response. Well, that's not actually true! You may have been here a long time but that doesn't mean people know who you are. You might ask yourself, "Do I know everyone else's name?"

Knowing names is important. Each semester as I teach at Temple University, I learn approximately 100 new names. I tell my students that it will take me about two weeks to get to know a class of 28 but I'll do it because it's important to me, and it's important to them. Our names are connected to our sense of identity; when someone calls us by name, we feel recognized and valued. It affirms a sense of relationship. When we can call someone by their name, that person knows that we see them, that we are interested in them, and it initiates a sense of care

that invites them to know us as well.

As we move into a new season in our life together, wearing name tags is one way we will seek to offer God's welcome to both friend and stranger alike. Your name tag is waiting for you in your mailbox in Echo Hall; if you are a visitor, you can make your own name tag until we have one prepared for you. You can choose one of three ways to wear your tag: on a lanyard around your neck or pinned or clipped to your clothing. When you are ready to leave, we will remind each other to leave our name tags in our mailboxes so that they are waiting for us when we come again. If you were asked, on any Sunday morning, to name everyone in church, could you do it? Maybe, or maybe not! Let's work together to learn each other's names and affirm our relationships with each other.

You've Got Mail

Did you know you have a mail box at FBC? Have you looked in it lately?! Some work has been done to make our mailboxes easier to use: dividers have been removed to make each one bigger, and your name has been written on your box so you can find it more easily. What might be in there? Your name tag, for one! And maybe offering envelopes if you didn't pick them up. You might have minutes from a Board meeting you attended, or you might even have a note from a friend! You'll never know until you look!

Praying Together

Each week we pray together for the needs of those we care about, for our community and for the world but we know that the power of prayer, of mindfully invoking God's presence, compassion, justice and wisdom, it is most transforming when we engage in the regular practice of prayer. Some of us have an active prayer life and some of us need encouragement. Your own experience—both "success" and struggle—can help another as we grow our lives of prayer together.

To that end, you are invited to join with members and friends of FBC on the **first Wednesday** of every month at **6:30 pm at the home of Jane Gruen and Joel Dugan**, 299 Diamond Street, Pottstown, 19464. We will use this time to share our concerns

and to pray together, for each other, our community, our church and its ministry, and the world. Please join us. **Our first gathering is Feb 6.**

Who's Interested in a "Play Group"?

I bet it's been a while since you were invited to join a play group! So here you go! FBC has entered into a new relationship with Steel River Playhouse, located right around the corner from the church on East High Street in Pottstown. One of the things we envision is forming a group of folks who would like to go to a play/plays, with the possibility having dinner together before or a snack together after (or maybe both!) Check out Steel River's website or take a look at their offerings this season on the bulletin board outside the church office to see if you are interested. Upcoming plays include "Nunsence" (Feb!), "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Fisherman and His Wife," "Constellations" and "Beauty and the Beast." We can negotiate very good group rates if we know you are interested so please let Marcia or Myra know if you would like to join the FBC "play group" and once we have some interested folks, we can get more details. (Remember: it's a new season at FBC; here's something fun and new for us to do!) Adults, kids, friends, family, all welcome!

<https://www.steelriver-playhouse.org/>

Celebrating Ruth Endy, our Building Coordinator

The Ministry Coordination Team regretfully accepted the resignation of Ruth Endy, effective January 31, 2019 from the position of Building Coordinator. Over the last several months, Ruth has supported FBC by being the person who interfaces with those who use our building regularly or for special events. Ruth also makes regular walk throughs of our spaces to ensure things are operating normally and things and people are safe. And weekly, she changed the sermon title on the sign outside. We will miss Ruth's faithful efforts on our behalf and celebrate her knowledge and care for our space and the ministry's that reside here. Blessings and gratitude, Ruth!

Next Sunday, February 10th, we welcome our own Rev. Dennis Landon to the pulpit. Marcia will be away for the weekend.

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)*

Christian Education along with Missions participated in the Cluster food drive held at the Pottstown Redner's Market, on Martin Luther King Day.

MLK Day of Service – January 21, 2019 **Deb Brauner**

It was a cold day, but there were lots of warm smiles as FBC members greeted shoppers and received donations for Pottstown Cluster Food Pantry. In the lobby of Redner's Warehouse Market on North Charlotte Street, FBC members met shoppers, giving them a list of Cluster needs and received the donations in the waiting shopping carts as customers exited the market.

Thanks to the generosity of Redner's shoppers, FBC volunteers received donations of food and personal care items that tipped the scales at about 500 lbs.! In addition, \$60 in cash donations were also received for the Pottstown Cluster!

Thank you, Redner's Market and donors! And special thanks to FBC members who solicited and received the donations: Charles Golden, Rev. Marcia Bailey, Jeanne Petrosky, Maricarmen and Tyler Trexler, Nancy Unruh, Hannah Emmell, Ruth Chonka, Brittany Endy, and Deb Brauner.

(Did I mention there was pizza for lunch that day?)

Reboot Retreat – The Young Folks of FBC will also be participating and giving their input in this exciting and envisioning Day on February 2nd. Check in next month to see what Deb Brauner planned for them!

Children's Conversation – If you haven't had the opportunity

yet to share your faith with our FBC Youth, "Now Is Your Time"! The Children love when we share our Christian Faith through OUR stories. See Nancy Unruh to be a part of teaching our children God's Love.

A Valentine Social is being planned for Sunday, February 10 immediately following the church service, in Echo Hall. Please make plans to stay for Food, Fun and Fellowship.

April isn't that far away! Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be coming up! Stay tuned for more information.

Keep Warm

Nancy Unruh, C.E. chair

Sunday School- The adult class is meeting at 9:15 am in the library. The children's Sunday School meets during the Worship service at 10:45 am.

Cards- 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.

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

The Secret Place- 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.

Next Meeting- The next meeting of the CE Board will be on Sunday, February 10th. If you are interested sharing some of your ideas, please feel free to join us.

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 and 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.

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 & Myra Forrest

New Hymnals “RENEW” have come in. 60 have been donated already. They will be dedicated February 17th during worship.

We are adding Praise songs to the beginning of our worship service. Your input would be appreciated!

We are always welcoming new choir members! The choir rehearses in Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:39am.

Trustees

Michael Heinz, Chairperson

Board members: Richard Unruh & John Forrest

Trustees Updates

1. The kitchen windows have been replaced.
2. Arrangements have been made for snow removal.
3. Light bulbs have been replaced in New Fellowship Hall.
4. 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

Souper Bowl Sunday - 2/3/2019

We are collecting soup which will be donated to the Cluster. We have a generous pledge from Susan Heinz that she will match the first 150 cans of soup. So, if everyone else brings a total of 150 cans, Sue will donate 150 for a total of 300 cans of soup!!

Thanks - Cluster

Christmas Items for the Cluster - FBC collected 249 cans of gravy for the Holiday Christmas boxes and gave 5 HUGE bags of toys for the Cluster Toy Give Away. Thanks to all for spreading Holiday Cheer!!

RMMO

In January, we collected for the RMMO Offering. This American Baptist Churches Offering for "Retired Ministers and Missionaries" is a means of thanking and assisting over 3,000 American Baptist ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses for their many years of Christian service. RMMO provides a tangible means by which we can thank those who have faithfully served others; including ourselves. Gifts to the RMMO can be given in February as well.

Change of address:

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.

Ministry Coordination Team

As we begin a new year, we invite you to consider where you would like to serve in the days to come. Everyone is welcome and needed to serve God!

Co-Moderators: Laura Alden, Deb Brauner, Myra Forrest

Financial Secretary: Jeanne Petrosky

Church Clerk: Nancy Unruh

Treasurer: Suzanne Grace

February Birthdays

- 1 Tayo Ogundipe
- 2 Lisa Kemmerer
- 3 Trudy Arters
- 6 Tomisin Ogundipe
John Hessler
- 9 Annie Heffner

- 11 John Jolley
- 17 Joelle Morris
- 21 Grayson Reid
- 22 Charles Hayer
- 23 David Kurtz
Rosalie Norman-
McNaney
- 25 Peggy DeWysockie
- 26 Jack Heffner
- 28 Folu Ogundipe

February Anniversaries

- 14 Glenn & Sue Bradshaw

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

We Get Letters

Dear First Baptist Congregation,

On behalf of the staff and board of directors of **Operation Backpack** we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of this amazing program.

We are passionate about what we do and are humbled by others who share the same passion. Your thoughtful contribution has been put to immediate use in mobilizing the mission of **OBP**.
Sincerely,

Lisa Heverly, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous contribution to help strengthen communities worldwide.

Through your support of Church World Service, you are helping to fight the connected challenges of hunger, lack of access to safe water and improved sanitation and extreme poverty.
May God bless you for your support.

Rev. John L. McCullough, President & CEO, Church World Service

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your contribution of \$200.00. At International Ministries, we are praying with you that God will use this financial gift to accomplish more than we can ask or imagine. (Ephesians 3: 20-21)

Sharon Koh

Executive Director/ CEO International Ministries, ABCUSA

What to Look for in February

- Saturday, Feb. 2, 8:30 to 3pm "Reboot"
- Sunday Feb. 3, 10:45 am Worship & Communion Service
- Worship & Music Board meeting
- Monday, Feb. 4, 11:45 am Community meal at Christ Episcopal
- Wednesday Feb. 6, 6:30 pm Prayer meeting at Joel & Jane's
- Sunday, Feb. 10, 10:45 am Worship with Rev. Dennis Landon
- Board of C.E. & Trustee meetings
- Monday, Feb. 11, 12 noon Elderberry Luncheon
- Thursday, Feb. 14, 7 pm Ministry Coordination Team
- Saturday, Feb. 16, 10 am All Church work day
- Sunday, Feb. 17, 10:45 am Worship Service
- Dedication of "Renew!" hymnals
- Sunday, Feb. 24, 10:45 am Worship Service
- Diaconate meeting