



FBC · First Baptist Church

FAMILY BY CHOICE all are welcome...really!



May - Visions

Affirming Our Welcome

For many years FBC has been projecting a welcoming image on our website, signage and in print materials in an attempt to reflect the welcoming spirit that is found within the congregation itself. Who are we “welcoming”? Well, everyone, but in recent years we have been earnest in widening our inclusion of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities in response to God’s radically inclusive love for us all. This has not always been our position, nor has it been a position that many churches have been willing to take, even now. While societal norms are indeed shifting, many people of faith still draw lines to privilege some reflections of God’s image over others, going so far as to condemn and exclude those whose gender/sexual orientation does not mirror their own. Many at FBC have heard God’s invitation to publicly declare our welcome to *all* of God’s people, particularly the LGBT communities. We recognize that we may not all agree, which is why we take the time to listen and hear one another.

On **Sunday, May 5 after worship**, the **Extending Our Welcome Action Group** is inviting the entire congregation to remain for a light lunch and to read, discuss, consider and pray about our welcoming and affirming statement. This is a time of dialogue as well as questions and answers. We seek to discern God's invitation to us and to others through this statement which we project we will bring to a congregational vote on May 19th. Please invest your time, energy and spirit in considering this with one another. Our goal is not to divide but to unite; not to separate but to include. Pray that each one of us might model the value and spirit of welcome that we seek to offer to our community and wider world.

Another reason to worship with us on May 5th is that another of our Worship in Actions groups, **Building Relationships with Our Neighbors**, has invited the Executive Director of the YWCA to present an overview of their work and mission in our community during worship. This begins to fulfill our commitment, made at our Feb ReBoot Retreat, to get to know our neighborhood and community better, beginning with those groups who share our space. We will have the opportunity to hear about the YW's work in the surrounding communities and their vision for the future. We will be celebrating communion this day as well.

----Marcia

May 19 Congregational Meeting

Our next congregational meeting will be held on **May 19th** after worship for the purpose of electing new Officers and some Board members. You will remember that a year ago, we voted to temporarily suspend the term requirements of our constitution in order to fill leadership vacancies. Those leaders agreed to one-year terms which are coming to an end. So we will meet to elect new leaders, to endorse ABCUSA Biennial representatives, to confirm the appointment of our new Administrative Assistant, and to hear an update from the Constitution Revision Committee. Other updates as appropriate will be offered. Lunch will be served.

Proposed Slate of Officers/Board Members to Be Elected May 19

Terms expire July 1, 2020

Officers

Moderators: Debra Brauner, Laura Alden, Dr. Myra Forrest

Treasurer: Charles Golden

Financial Secretary: Jeanne Petrosky

Church Clerk: Nancy Unruh

Board Chairs

Christian Education: Nancy Unruh

Diaconate: Debra Brauner

Trustees: Rick Unruh and John Forrest, Co-Chairs

Worship and Music: TBA

New board member

Joel Dugan: Christian Education

2019 ABCUSA Biennial Delegates

Joel Dugan

Marcia Bailey

Welcome Our New Administrative Assistant!

We are pleased to introduce you to our new Administrative Assistant, Ms. Kristi Pless. Kristi began work with us on April 24th, working with Doris Stutzman, who retired April 30, to ease our transition. We had over 100 responses to our advertisement on Indeed, and after interviewing several candidates it was clear to us that Kristi was the most outstanding candidate!

Kristi has a rich background on which to draw as our office administrator. She has a Masters in Organic Chemistry from Northwestern University, extensive experience in both teaching and learning, has worked in volunteer organizations, and most recently was an Administrative Assistant with an organization that coordinated educational services and evaluations for clients with learning differences. She has been involved in fundraising, was responsible for billing and record keeping, and took leadership of organization and management of various projects.

About herself Kristi says, “The ability to learn new tasks and procedures quickly is my greatest strength. I approach problems systematically, and I value teamwork and collaboration. Empathy and kindness are characteristics I value highly in myself and in others....” We were impressed by Kristi’s genuineness, her high energy, and her ability to be resourceful in working with technology and with people.

Until the end of the school year, **Kristi will be in the office Tuesday-Friday, 11 am-2 pm**. Please stop by and introduce yourself and welcome her to our FBC family!

Our New Office Routine

As we transition from one office administrator to another and from one season to another, please note these changes in our office routines. **Doris is retired!** That means that she will *not* be in the office on Sunday morning to find what we are looking for or answer questions or make a copy. All those things we will need to do for ourselves or plan to ask for Kristi’s help during her regular office hours. **Kristi will be in the office Tuesday-Friday 11am-2 pm**; once school is out, she will change her schedule slightly. We will update you on that.

With the close of the academic year, **Marcia will be changing her office hours from Friday to Tuesday**, with additional days as needed to aid in the administrative transition. She will return to Friday office hours when classes resume in the fall.

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. They will meet again on April 28th. 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 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 9th!

Electronic Giving Comes to FBC

Last month we told you that you may now give electronically to FBC; it's easy to do! Go to our website fbcpottstown.org and click on the "donate" tab in the upper right side of the Home page. The directions are easy to follow and set up takes less than ten minutes! You can choose to give one time, or repeatedly--

weekly, biweekly or monthly. You can designate your giving to our general budget or missions or special offerings. You can pay from your savings or checking account, or from your credit card. It's convenient and simple way to begin or continue to express your faithfulness to God and your commitment to FBC's life and ministry. If you have questions or need help in setting up your online giving, please call the church office or Jeanne Petrosky at 610-405-8574.

Save the Date! August 11 for our first-ever FBC Block Party!

As part of our increased interest in and commitment to getting to know our community, FBC is inviting our neighbors to a block party on Sunday afternoon, Aug 11. Organized by the Board of Christian Education, this replaces our VBS efforts of previous years with a fresh take on how to engage our community. There are lots of ideas in the works and plans are being made; please save the date now and ask how you can help! This effort will require "all hands on deck"! There will a way everyone can contribute and be part of the fun. Volunteer now and get in on the planning! It's going to be a great day!

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)*

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

The Easter Egg Hunt was a success! Mother Nature didn't cooperate with us, but we all had a wonderful time. Echo Hall was rolling in over 1300 hundred eggs. Matter-of-fact, keep looking for eggs in the Sanctuary! The older Youth and the Adult Egg Hunt was in the Sanctuary, and finding the Golden Eggs was a treat and a challenge for the Adults. Thank you to Deb Brauner, Jeanne Patrosky, Kathy Purington, and Nancy Unruh for donating all the prizes. Thank you to Jeanne for revising and printing up the Starfish Poem/FBC info. cards that went in each child's Easter goodie bags. Thank you to Deb for the little prizes in the goodie bags. Thank you to all the candy donators. Thank you everyone who helped set up, take down, and clean up. Most of all we couldn't have done it without our Easter Bunny! Even as Hoppy was standing outside waving to passersby, parents and grandparents came back with their children! Some children just didn't want to see Hoppy go! THANK YOU, EASTER BUNNY, SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

Our next big event will be the first ever FBC Block Party on **August 11th**. God has blessed us to be on the corner of King and Charlotte Streets to do His work. We along with our Community Hero's will provide a fun filled day. If you are intrigued with what is going to happen and would love to help plan, let Nancy know. She just might be seeking you out!

After Memorial Day, our SS teachers will be taking a well-deserved break. Thank you for your dedication and love of teaching our children. Thank you, Sue Heinz for giving of your time and talents as SS Superintendent. Sue and Mike will be on a sabbatical. Blessings to you both.

Youth Group The Adventure Continues

Our group of three youth grew to four when a friend joined the fun on April 5th for dinner and scavenger hunt and a movie! (If you drove past the church that Friday night, you may have noticed lights on all over the building. That's because we used the entire three floors for the scavenger hunt!) We later settled in with popcorn and snacks to enjoy a movie together. Thanks, Brittany, for providing the movie! And thank you everyone for

your contribution of snacks and goodies! No one went home hungry that night!

The adventure continues when we meet again on **Saturday, May 4th at 5:00 PM** to make our own pizzas (can't go wrong with pizza), participate in a service project by preparing Birthday Party Bags to be delivered to two social service agencies, and close with evening devotions.

All kids/youth of our church and their friends are invited to join us. Youths can bring their favorite ice cream topping for our dessert! Please RSVP via email to Pastor Marcia or Deb Brauner so we have a head count. (marciabbailey@gmail.com or debrauner@comcast.net)

Birthday Party Bags

Our youth will be preparing Birthday Party Bags as a service project to benefit families who may not otherwise be able to afford the items that make a child's birthday special. We have been gifted with many themed birthday party items like plates, napkins, favors, etc., but we need your help to make the bags complete! If you are able to contribute any of these items, please bring them to the church office labeled "Birthday Party Bags". All of these items are needed to for each bag. With your help, we can make a child's birthday special and give a family a chance to celebrate together!

- boxed cake mix
- canned icing
- drink mix
- a box of birthday candles
- large gift bag (big enough to accommodate plates, napkins, favors, invitations, balloons, etc.)

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

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

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. Trustees will need two new members come the summer of 2019. Anyone interested should contact Michael Heinz.
2. The Trustees are currently having some minor difficulty getting the broken windows repaired. We are currently looking into other companies to have the work done.
3. In addition, we'd like to remind you that if you see a maintenance task that needs to be done, please email either Jeanne Petrosky or Mike Heinz so that it can be added to the list of jobs that need doing.
4. We plan on having a big spring work day on **May 11th**, and everyone is invited to come and help. We will try to address as many jobs as possible that day.

Missions

Kathy Purington

Committee members: Jane Gruen & Ruth Chonka

In March, \$235 was collected for the America for Christ Offering. On April 7th, FBC assembled 24 Easter Baskets that the Cluster distributed to area children. That same afternoon, we also filled over 1,200 plastic eggs with candy for the FBC Easter Egg Hunt. Thanks to all for the donations and help with the baskets and eggs.

Mother's Day Offering

This year's Mother's Day Offering will be again given to God's Precious Children. This organization helps the children of Liberia have an education. We will present our offering, and hear more about this organization, when founders Deb and Gary Winters join us for worship June 23rd.

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.

On the Move!

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.

May Birthdays

- 1 Jody Bender
- 2 Michael Heinz, Jr.
- 5 Estelle Bagiraneza
- 6 Liliane (Ziherambere)
Tyson
- 7 Eli Grohoski
Lisa Heffner
- 10 Tom Creswell
- 11 Jacob Cahill
Ruth Chonka
- 12 Nancy Unruh
- 17 John Forrest

- 24 Karen Dolhanczyk
- 25 Mary Heinz
- 27 Bola Ogundipe
Larry Wolfgang

May Anniversaries

- 3 Tom & Sue Creswell
- 8 Jon & Jackie Purington
- 19 Charles & Karen Golden

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

What to Look for in May

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, May 1, 6:30 pm | Prayer meeting at Joel & Jane's |
| Saturday May 4, 5:00 pm | Youth Group Meeting |
| Sunday May 5, 10:45 am | Worship & Communion Service |
| | Special Speaker from YWCA |
| | Discussion of Affirmation Statement |
| | Worship and Music Board Meeting |
| Thursday, May 9, 7 pm | Ministry Coordination Team |
| Saturday, May 11, 9 am | Special Workday |
| Sunday, May 12, 10:45 am | Worship Service |
| | Board of C.E. & Trustee Meetings |
| Monday, May 13, 12 noon | Elderberry Luncheon |
| Sunday, May 19, 10:45 am | Worship in Action |
| | Congregational Meeting |
| Sunday, May 26, 10:45 am | Worship Service |
| | Diaconate Meeting |

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