



FIRST PRES. PRESS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

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OVER 80 BIRTHDAYS

Each month, we take a moment to acknowledge our over 80 members that have birthdays in the upcoming month. Consider dropping a note, writing a card, or giving a phone call to help celebrate life with these friends. Contact the office at 748-1544 for contact information for our over 80 members.

HOW WE OBSERVE LENT



This year, Ash Wednesday falls early, on February 18, to begin our annual observance of the season of Lent. On that Wednesday, we begin Lent with an ancient tradition, our Agape Supper. This time of preparation begins at 6:00pm with a sacrificial meal of soup, bread, cheese, and fruit. We then continue in an attitude of worship in preparation for partaking of communion. There will be childcare provided after the meal. Tickets are \$3.50 for adults and \$1.00 for children and can be bought on Sunday, Feb. 8, or Sunday, Feb. 15. We will continue our Lenten season with a six-week, church-wide study on doing life missionally (see page 6). Holy Week services will include Palm Sunday on March 29, Maundy Thursday on April 2, and culminate on Easter, April 5.

OVER 80 BIRTHDAYS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

- January 10
Barry Driggs
- January 13
Lans Jones
- January 19
Doris Gerard
- January 21
Betty Wattles

- January 24
Richard Scroton
- January 26
Gertrude Campbell
- February 5
Tassie Resovsky
- February 6
Dot Engstrom

- February 11
Mary Ann Scott
- February 13
Raili Wrenner

PASTORS' PAGE

— JAN AND TIM DEVINE, CO-PASTORS

2015 has arrived. People have transitioned back to their regular routines. The much-anticipated holiday season passed in a blink. Parties, decorations, and gift giving may have created a brief distraction; for a moment we may have been able to set aside the things that weigh heavily upon us . . . but we are back in the real world with its real struggles. We are back in the midst of the unrest that is not just found in far-away places across the globe, but right here in our country, our community, our church, and our own lives as well.

“He grants peace to your borders.” Psalm 147:14

Psalm 147 was likely written after the Jews returned from exile in Babylon. No matter what they had been through, the psalmist's words were intended to remind them that in the same way our sovereign God sustains the cosmos he created, so too he would sustain and care for them.

But what did that mean? Would Jerusalem be a wonderland of genuine community and cooperation among its citizens? Would all conflict, discord, and unrest cease?

Not likely. It's not in keeping with what we know from Scriptures about the post-exilic period in Judah. The problems they faced were no different than those common to all of humanity. Tight-lipped peace was possible not because threats were eliminated, but because they were dealt with by the powerful Persian government that dominated them.

As we think about peace in a personal sense, what does it mean to have peace within the borders of our lives? Anyone who has been around the block a few times knows that problems and threats to our inner peace will keep coming as long as we are on this side of eternity. Peace in this life will not be the eradication of unrest or the elimination of struggles. Turmoil and trouble will continue to show up in old and new ways.

The Hebrew word for peace— *shalom* — does not mean the absence of conflict. It means wholeness in the fullest sense, including spiritual. Paul promised this kind of peace to the Philippians at a time when they were facing turmoil from both within and beyond their borders. He urged them to practice the right attitudes and disciplines that would usher in God's gift of peace that transcends human understanding.

Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Phil. 4:4-7)

May God grant us the gift of peace in our relationship with God and with each other in this new year.

WHAT'S NEW AMONG OUR PEOPLE?

– NATHAN JACOBS

In February, we will begin the season of Lent. I would encourage you to take time during this season of reflection to be intentional about spending more time in prayer. God is ready and willing to listen to his children when they speak; He wants to hear from you! Especially for this time in our church's life, we need to be talking to God and listening in the stillness for his answers.

As you pray, please keep these particular people who have been brought to our attention in your prayers:

- Ron Jennings and family, upon the death of Ron's mother, Marie Elizabeth Jennings.
- Bob Betka, who had cataract surgery on both eyes in Dec.
- Derek Clement, who had surgery to repair a broken knee cap.
- The Beatty family, upon the death of Michelle's grandmother on Dec. 7.
- Janet Cook's daughter-in-law, Cathy, who had complications following surgery.
- Jeff Thomas, who is struggling again with recurring health problems.
- Hemant Tandi and his mother, as he accompanied her back to India.
- John Hinton, who was briefly hospitalized in Dec.
- The family of Fran Ebbers, upon her death on Dec. 7.
- Dawn Weber, who had a second knee replacement.
- Rich Thomas's mother, who underwent a series of steroid injections.
- Rev. Vince Earley, who is receiving palliative care at Ideal.
- The Talley family, as they moved to Delaware.
- Marge McNeely, who returned to Hilltop after a fall.
- Gerry Wilcox, who returned home after rehab in Oxford.
- Arlene Lyon, who will be moving this month.
- The team that travelled to the Dominican Republic to serve there.
- Kim Talley's father, who had surgery.
- Harry and Janet Frederick, upon the passing of Harry's brother.
- Ellen Tokarz, who went on a medical mission trip in Haiti.
- Chris and Marian Loughridge, upon the death of Marian's mother, Jean Hoke.
- The Shafer family, as Laura's mother has entered hospice care.
- Our local church, as we continue the discernment process.
- Our country, that we could begin a new year with less unrest.
- Our world, for all its

brokenness.

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken. How long will you assail a person, will you batter your victim, all of you, as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence? Their only plan is to bring down a person of prominence. They take pleasure in falsehood; they bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

Selah

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

Selah

Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

-Psalm 62

FPC Youth News

FPC Youth Events

CHOOSE FROM MANY OPPORTUNITIES
TO CONNECT

REGULAR EVENTS:

Sunday School

Sundays
10:45-11:45am
@ Monroe House

FPC Youth Nights

Sundays
6:00-8:00pm
Locations TBA

Ignite Bikes

Saturdays
CLOSED FOR THE WINTER
Meet @ The Warehouse

SPECIAL EVENTS:

FPC Youth - Nerf Gun War

Sunday, January 11
6:00-8:00pm
@ The Warehouse

FPC Youth Super Bowl Party

Sunday, February 1
6:00-10:00pm
@ Monroe House
Bring s snack or drink to share

FPC Youth Gaming Night

Sunday, February 8
PS4, XBOX ONE, & Board Games
Food, Fun, & Friends

WinterWeekend2015

March 13-15
@ The Loft Camp, Susquehanna, PA
INVITE FRIENDS
LOCK THIS DATE INTO YOUR CALENDAR



FPC Youth Gaming Night

The new year is here and we plan on having our celebration FPC Youth style - L.A.T.E. It's time for FUN, GAMES, & FOOD.

FPC Youth Gaming Night
Sunday, February 8
5:00-9:00pm

We will have games for ALL. Bring a board or video game from home to share. We will provide:

XBOX ONE, PS4, and Nintendo Wii

We will also provide Pizza. Feel free to bring drinks and snacks to share.

It is going to be a GREAT NIGHT of FUN! Hope to catch you there.

For more details

CONTACT:

Jeremy Finn
607-743.4511
jmfinn@firstpresendicott.org



IGNITE BIKES

CLOSED FOR THE WINTER
Meet at FPC - 10:00am
Return to FPC - 12:30pm



SMALL GROUP

FPC Youth Small Groups
will be relaunching soon.
Contact Jeremy for more information.



WINTER WEEKEND 2015

The Loft Camp - Great Bend, PA
March 13-15
Lock it in and stay tuned for details!

TRUTH
KNOW IT. SPEAK IT. LIVE IT.

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16
6:00 - 9:00PM

**CHILDREN, YOUTH, ELDERS & SMALL GROUP
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17
8:00AM - 2:00PM

This world is a confusing place. Sometimes we don't know what's right, wrong, the best, or worst way to live! This January in children's ministry we are headed to a town where everything is upside down. People living in "Upsidedown Town" don't know left from right, up from down, or how to live the way God designed us to! We will try to figure out the best solution to each week's decisions by digging into the Bible.

Come with us to discover how to live right side up!

— **"UPSIDEDOWN TOWN" MEMORY VERSE** —

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight."

CONNECTING THOUGHTS

— SHARON EARLY

Eleven years ago we had our first church-wide Lenten study with Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life*. Many of us remember the opening sentence, "It's not about you." This is a sobering thought considering American society says, "it IS all about me and my desires/wants, no matter what it means to others." As people seek to understand what their purpose is here on earth, are we willing to search for God's purpose for us even if it does not match up with what we believe our life should look like? While we were visiting family over Christmas, the church we attended said that, "It is in corporate worship that we find our identity." Part of that corporate worship is being in community and struggling together with what God's Scripture means for life and purpose here on earth. Another thought from a book I read recently is, "You were created by a community to exist in community, made in the image of a God who has never known anything except community" (*Crossroads* by Wm. Paul Young). Since FPC does believe we are to be in community together and corporate worship is integral to this, each Lent we choose a study that we do together church-wide through both our worship services and our small groups.

This year, the study we have chosen is *Life on Mission: God's People Finding God's Heart for the World* by Tim Harlow; this study is a call to action for everyone who identifies as a Christ-follower. His common sense, "one step at a time," approach to living out what Jesus describes as our purpose is refreshing and easy for everyone to comprehend. You don't have to be a biblical scholar to live life on mission – you just have to love God, love people, and live that way.



The reality is that God calls some people to travel across the globe to be His hands and feet to the people living in far-off lands. But He calls **all** people to love those in our "Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8)- those people who live down the hall, down the block, and around the corner. We are **all** called to be salt and light to our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and to everyone else He puts in our paths.

The sessions in this study provide us with do-able steps and strategies to CONNECT, SERVE, SHARE, GROW, and PRAY.

Imagine what our communities would be like, and how many of God's prodigals and lost sheep would come home, if we all committed to living this way!

As we approach the Lenten season (Ash Wednesday is February 18), there will be opportunities to join others in small groups to wrestle together with what it means for our lives if we truly lived as though we are on a mission from God!

*"I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."*

Psalm 119: 15-16 (NIV)

JINGLING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS THE FIRST PRES. WAY!

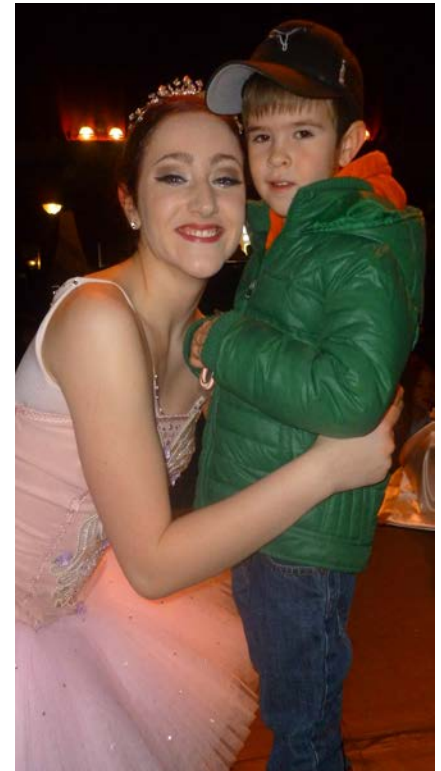
-RONNE SISCO, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Relatives from near and far joined our three and four-year-old students for our annual Holiday Sing-alongs! Hot chocolate, seasonal carols, and story time by the “fire” warmed our hearts as we wound down 2014.



The Endicott Performing Arts Center treated our four year olds to “The Nutcracker” on December 12. Many parents and grandparents joined us for the show after which our students were invited up on stage to meet & greet the cast!



Mrs. Mieczkowski LOVES the holidays and the celebration of various cultures around our world. Above, the study of India’s tradition Diwali enlightened the Farm Suite!



HAPPY NEW YEAR



On behalf of the Nursery School, our hearts are full of gratitude for the time and efforts that were made for this year’s fundraiser. A total of \$8,386 in Gertrude Hawk chocolate sales was made, of which our nursery school receives HALF as profit! That is \$4,193 that will benefit student activities and scholarship assistance. Thank you so much for your generosity and support.

A special thank you to Parent Council Co-Presidents Kat Fledderman and Wendy Bishop for organizing and overseeing this yummy drive!

Happy 2015—may it be extra sweet.

SESSION UPDATE

-JANET FREDERICK, CLERK OF SESSION

It is not only the Session and our congregation engaged in the discernment process. The Presbytery is also doing its part, and on December 3 and January 14, members of the Presbytery Discernment Team met with Session members to further define our relationship, establish some goals and make plans for the future. We are pleased with this relationship so far and believe that all involved are truly committed to trying to determine what God has planned for this congregation and have pledged to do it in a loving, gracious way.

As part of our continuing education during the discernment process, Elders spent time previewing part of the presentation that was presented on the authority of Scripture on December 11. Hermeneutics is defined as a study of the principles of biblical interpretation, and Ed Fiaschi and Jan Devine led the information session for congregation members.

The co-pastors announced that four people would be joining the church as the result of the New Member Class this fall. Elders then met with Jamie and Nathan Jacobs, Jane Kamper, and Josh Luce prior to their being received on December 21. Other important dates were set for the examination of incoming officers (January 14), Ordination/Installation (January 18), and the Annual Meeting (January 25), which will be preceded by a joint worship service at 10:00am.

The Clerk presented a motion to have W. David and Mary Jenkins and Barbara and Karel Simeon removed from the active membership list per their request.

Chair of the House Committee, Dave Youngs, said that the stained glass windows on the north side of the sanctuary would be removed in December and taken to be repaired and returned in the spring. The windows have since been removed. Congregation members are invited to make donations to help cover the cost of these repairs and those to other windows.

As we heard from ministry team leaders and liaisons with staff, we learned about the recent activities of the Christian Education Ministry Team, Mission and Stewardship Committee, Small Group Ministry and the Worship Team Ministry Team. From Treasurer Art Davis, we had our first look at the outside financial review that was recently done, learned about the redistribution of flood relief money and then discussed the establishment of a Special Gift Fund.

AN INVITATION TO PRAY AND FAST

Session members have committed to a 24-hour period of prayer and fasting prior to each monthly Session meeting during the discernment process. We invite all of you to also engage in an intentional time of prayer, Bible study and fasting – this month from Tuesday, January 13, after dinner to Wednesday, January 14, at dinnertime.

DISCERNMENT UPDATE

-JANET FREDERICK, CLERK OF SESSION

Discernment is an ongoing activity, and the Elders have been actively engaged in intentional periods of prayer and fasting and training sessions on some of the key topics you have defined.

You are all encouraged to continue discerning with us. There are information sessions planned, written resources available, and Elders willing to speak at small group gatherings (your formal small groups or informal groups) or even to meet with you individually. Please remember we are all in this for the same reason: to seek God's will for First Pres. and to reach more people and together grow in Christ.

We have also heard from some of you that you would like an opportunity to sit and discuss the issues involved in our discernment in an informal setting – no presentation – just an opportunity to talk with others from various perspectives and connect people in both services to share your questions, convictions, and hopes. We will provide an opportunity to do this on Sunday, January 18, in the Chapel between the two worship services. Although Elders will be present to listen, they will not be leading what we hope will become a monthly opportunity for open discussion.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR FPC IN 2015?

*Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.
Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*

Please be thinking as you come to worship on January 25- What is your prayer as we trust that God is "able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine"? Even in our church right now?

Completed Educational/Informational Sessions

November 16: *ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians*

December 14: *Why we believe what we believe about Scripture*

Ed Fiaschi and Jan Devine led this study about how we understand and interpret Scripture.

If you missed the opportunity to attend either of the first two sessions, you may view a recording of one of these sessions by contacting the office (office@firstpresendicott.org) to obtain either a weblink to view on your computer or a DVD to view on your television. Hard copies of materials distributed at the sessions are available in the office.

Future Educational/Informational Sessions

Future training sessions for the congregation will be presented twice on the Sunday mornings listed: Session 1 from 10:50 – 11:45 and Session 2 from 12:10 – 1:00.

Light refreshments are served prior to Session 2.

Note: Please notice that the dates for the last two sessions have been changed.

February 8: *Why we believe what we believe about women in leadership*

Ruling Elders and Co-pastors Jan and Tim Devine will examine scripture with us on this topic.

March 8: *The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley*

If a dismissal policy is in place by this date, the Elders and our attorney, Steve Atkinson, will be present to review it with the congregation.

TBD: *FPC's perspective on the biblical practice of our sexuality*

COMMUNITY

Thank You

The deacons would like to extend a "Thank you!" to everyone who purchased and/or helped deliver this year's poinsettias. We would also like to thank those that participated in this year's angel tree. Your generosity is appreciated not only by the deacons but those that received the gifts and poinsettias.

Blessings As We Say Goodbye

We say goodbye to both the Talleys and Arlene Lyon as they move on to new areas. We will miss them greatly, but pray blessings upon them as they begin a chapter of life. Their new communities will most certainly be as blessed by their presence as ours was!

FPC Women's Retreat- Save the Date!

IF:GATHERING

IF GOD IS REAL, THEN WE WANT MORE
THAN ANYTHING TO LIVE LIKE IT

IF: Endicott

FEBRUARY 6-7

REGISTER: Contact Jen Hunt for registration info

LOCATION: Monroe House

TIMES: Friday evening and Saturday (times tbd)

— MORE DETAILS —

CONTACT: **Jen Hunt**

EMAIL: jennifer.hunt@gmail.com

PHONE: **607-341-1595**

IFGATHERING.COM/LOCAL

FPP Calendar

February 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth	2 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Membership Team Meeting 7:00 pm Relevant Ministries	3 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper 7:00 pm Deacons	4 6:00 am Men's Group 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Session Breaks Fast 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal 7:00 pm Session	5 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Mary-El Ringers 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	6 Women's Retreat	7 Women's Retreat
8 Women in Leadership Education Session 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth	9 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Relevant Ministries	10 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper	11 6:00 am Men's Group 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	12 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Mary-El Ringers 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	13	14 10:00 am American Guild of Organists Workshop
15 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth	16 1:00 pm Women's Club Board Meeting 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Relevant Ministries	17 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper	18 Ash Wednesday 6:00 am Men's Group 1:00 pm Women's Circle III 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Agape Supper	19 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Mary-El Ringers 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	20	21
22 Communion 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth	23 1:00 pm Women's Club 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:30 pm Parent Council Meeting 7:00 pm Relevant Ministries	24 Nursery School Friendly's Fundraiser 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper	25 6:00 am Men's Group 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	26 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:00 pm Mary-El Ringers 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	27 Nursery School Art Show	28 Presbytery Meeting (Vote)

VISION STATEMENT

(What God wants to do)

We believe God wants to transform our community through the saving love of Jesus Christ and calls us to share that hope with the world. To be an agent of hope, our congregation must work together and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to follow Christ, whatever the cost.¹ This commitment, which is grounded in a deep love of God and neighbor,² sends us out to share the Good News of Christ through our words³ and our actions.⁴

¹ *The Great Commitment*, Matthew 16:24-26

² *The Great Commandment*, Luke 10:27

³ *The Great Commission*, Matthew 28:18-20

⁴ *The Great Compassion*, Matthew 25:31-40

MISSION STATEMENT

(What God wants us to do)

We believe God wants us to share the life-changing power and love of Jesus Christ in such compelling ways that more people become fully devoted followers of Christ.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

(The reason we exist)

To reach more people and together grow in Christ.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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