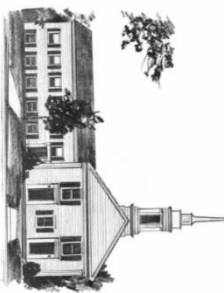


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Volume 74 7/8

July/August 2021

From the Pastor's Desk

Greetings in the Name of Christ!

Summer is upon us! My heart is filled with joy: seeing the beauty in the green leaves that fill the sky lines and provide shade in our yards, the colors of flowers landscaping houses and roadways, and seeing more folks out and about walking neighborhoods and play areas. Here at FCC, we are back gathering outside under the shade of the large maple tree for Sunday worship at 10 AM. As we worship, one can hear running water in the background, watch and hear birds in their natural environment, sing our hearts out about God's amazing love and grace, and listen to the prayers and sermon.

Leading worship, especially preaching a sermon, is often a tricky balance. The pastor's role is complicated. Pastors are not here simply to make everyone happy but to challenge each to become the best person they were created to be. Pastors are called to be scriptural and show how the Word applies to our lives' situations. Pastors in their preaching are called to teach, shepherd, and challenge.

As teachers, we share how Jesus lived, the culture of his time (Bible study offers more in depth about this), what he taught, and how he calls his disciples to live out in their day-to-day living. We come to church to be reminded of the ways of Jesus, admit where we have failed (for many of us: AGAIN), and be challenged to live out our love in actions of spiritual disciplines: Bible study, fasting, private devotions, prayer groups, serving and mission work. We leave worship knowing that we are loved by God and a community, forgiven and restored to begin anew.

As shepherds, Pastors preach and lift each person who comes to worship. It is a difficult world we live in. There are many demands in our personal lives, violence that invades our streets, stresses of illness, loneliness, money, divorce, and more. It is easy to feel defeated and alone. For those who come to worship, Pastors lift them up, reminding each that they are a Beloved child of God. No one is too far gone, too bad a sinner (whatever the sin might be) for Jesus to forgive and restore. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leaves the flock and searches for the one who is lost. (John 10) Parishioners leave the service filled with joy, hope, and love. We are built up. We feel the Pastor has done a good job.

These first two roles of preaching are easy for Pastors to preach. They make everyone feel good. Worshippers leave the service happy. However, the Pastor is called by God to challenge and have a prophetic voice also. The late Reinhold Niebuhr, theologian, ethicist, author, professor, and more, has a famous quote regarding pastors' preaching roles: "*comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.*"* The Pastor is called to challenge the folks in the pew (or those who listen on TV or social media). Disciples of Christ are called to be active in social justice issues: to be educated about them and to be challenged into working to make God's Kin-dom come here on earth. Many of us do not like to be challenged. But it is the call of God to the Pastor to look at what is happening in our world and point out injustices as we strive to make the world a better place for all. When you hear a sermon that makes you feel upset, one should not lash out at the Pastor, but first discern in prayer exactly what is making you upset. In prayer, journaling, or discussion, one can learn more about differences regarding various issues, about one's own thoughts and beliefs, and strive to hear what God is saying and where Jesus might stand on the matter. Growing in knowledge and understanding is key to maturing as a disciple. Another quote by Niebuhr is: "*Ultimately evil is done not so much by evil people, but by good people who do not know themselves and who do not probe deeply.*"* So, let us grow in Christ by learning, thinking, reflection, and discussion.

In Christ's Light and Love, *Pastor Pat*

*https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/31146.Reinhold_Niebuhr

From the Deacons' Bench

THE CREATION STORY.....Challenged

"Gardening develops self-reliant habits
Except among the woodchuck, 'coon and rabbits.

Why one bothers every spring
To plow and seed and do everything
Required to put a garden in.

Every year I'm none the wiser....
Spreading lime and fertilizer....
Working ground and weeding too,
Brightening hopes of feeding a few
From our garden patch.

Peas in early, should come soon
With the weather late in June.
Beans look good and so does corn....
Even blooming marigolds adorn
The garden edge....
A defensive hedge
To keep the bugs from getting in.

Dread. July is here....
And it's sheer madness to have a garden any year.!
Clandestine harvests in the night
Confirms again that I was right....
Corn bent low and cabbage munched
Unwelcomed guests must have lunched
Sumptuously!

Every year it's just the same
And every year I'll try again.
(This I know.)
When winter comes with whitened ways
We often dream of warmer days
Of working ground and planting seed....
Must be something basic that we need
To put the balance back in life."

May it be so.....David Spencer



July- August Birthdays

Birthday Greetings to the following members
of our church who celebrate birthdays in July
& August.



Joshua Hummel	07/01	Logan Paradis	08/06
James Brant	07/03	Anthony Rogers	08/07
Theodore Zebert	07/05	Kimberly Luthgren	08/07
Nolan Fonda	07/07	Marion Cilley	08/11
Teresa Kennedy	07/08	Robert Schoolcraft	08/11
Linda Hornig	07/09	Shirley Facey	08/11
Mary Howell	07/09	Cameron Regnier	08/13
Frances Brown	07/10	Brandan Parry	08/15
Nancy Zebert	07/11	Nathaniel Wyman	08/15
Richard DeSanti	07/12	John Spear	08/17
Michael Stone	07/13	Jessica Quill	08/18
Paige Fonda	07/13	Nicole Hiersch	08/18
Philip Stoddard	07/13	Debra Anderson	08/21
Keith Lemelin-Bliss	07/13	Rebecca Varney	08/22
Amelia Gardner	07/14	Kristi Tessier	08/22
Aiden Gardner	07/14	Janet Libby	08/24
Heather Webb	07/14	Patricia Baker	08/25
Nicole Gray	07/14	Wayne Miller Fernandes	08/26
Bruce Libby	07/15	Debra Doyle	08/26
Ashley Stoddard	07/16	Dana Ramponi	08/26
Priscilla Kibbe	07/18	Cody Nunes	08/27
Nancy Ryan	07/19	Laurie Bliss	08/29
Janet Brehaut	07/24	Phyllis Watson	08/30
Christopher Fonda	07/25		
Allen Schoolcraft	07/27		
Kathleen Hutchison	07/27		
Yvonne Godek	07/29		
Sandra Wilk	07/30		
Elaine Evans	07/31		
Frank Watson	08/02		

Wedding Anniversaries

David & Geraldine Kruger	07/06
Dennis & Marilyn Connor	07/12
Beverly & Wayne Burnell	07/14
Mark & Linda Casey	07/21
Paul & Nancy Willoughby	07/24
William & Ruth Haley	07/27
Gregory & Heather Webb	07/28
Phyllis & Kenneth Hultstrom	08/15
Frank & Phyllis Watson	08/17
Glenn & Brenda Olesuk	08/18
Jeffrey & Annemarie Sias	08/19
Kimberly & Dave Cummins	08/24
William & Lynn Cunningham	08/26
Otto & Clara Kern	08/30

Congratulations



Rebecca Varney has graduated from Arizona State University with a Master's degree in Community Resources and Development. She has recently taken a job as the Community Relations Coordinator at the Valley of the Sun YMCA in Phoenix.

Kristi Tessier was awarded scholarships to pursue a career in the Health & Wellness field at BayPath University. Kristi received scholarships awarded in memory of the Thresher, Gerrish, Yola & Larson funds.

Janet Modlish was awarded scholarships to become a certified Wisdom Coach for children. The program uses stories to build self-esteem, confidence, resilience, and self-leadership. This will support our "*Connecting in the Spirit*" vision. Janet received scholarships from the Gerrish, Yola, and Larson funds.



Prayer Corner



Evie Meacham
Winnie
Joyce Brooks
Audrey Burger
John (Jack) Bennett
Janet Brehaut
Lynn Cunningham
Mary Lou Black
Fran Brown
Frank Watson
Bob Green
Ann Leger
Phyllis Watson
Sandra Gibson
Edith
Donald Ryan

Bonnie Watson
Beverly Burnell
Carol Darnley (cancer)
Judy
Lelum
Jackie Prior
Dennis Connor
Marilyn Connor
Jeffrey Howe
Christopher
Josh G. & Family
Ed, Amy & Gretchen Warner
Don Ogonowski
Elaine Selfridge
Mary

For those traveling
For those impacted by the tragedy in Surfside, FL
For shut-ins and those who are isolated
For first responders & healthcare workers
For the homeless
For our country
For all world leaders
For Asians & Blacks & all who are persecuted for
simply being how God created them
For those impacted by changing weather disasters
For World Peace

Sympathy to...

*Shirley Facey & family in the death of **Don Facey**, who passed away on June 3rd, 2021.*



Spirit Chat Resumes

Monday mornings

9:30 AM Coffee Social

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Conversation & Prayer



Wednesday Bible Study

10:00 AM Social Hour

10:30 AM Bible Study begins

We will be journeying with the disciples through their early days after the death of Jesus and then with Paul after his transformation from Saul. All this is from the Book of Acts. This is a great study, where questions are welcomed and no question is too silly. Come and join us as we renew and deepen our faith and understanding.

Worship

We will delve into the letter of Ephesians this summer. It is a beautiful letter filled with both reasons why we should follow Jesus and the "How to" follow. Join in as we grow in our

understanding of what is written in the letter and what it means for our lives in year 2021.

Meet and Greet our Neighbors on August 21st *SAVE THE DATE!*

Our neighborhood is changing. Houses recently have sold and new folks have moved in. FCC will be hosting a neighborhood wide "Meet and Greet" to get to know one another. Pamela Rogers is coordinating the event and is in need of help! Please contact her and see how you can assist in this event to support our new vision of "Connecting in the Spirit." Pamela can be reached at 413-566-8081 or progers1@charter.net There are many areas we will need support in: carrying chairs out or putting them away, slicing a vegetable, washing up and keeping areas clean, welcoming our guests, etc. **Together**, we are the body of Christ!

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2

Wonderful Wednesday Worship (WWW)

We will host our light lunch and worship service on the third Wednesday of the month. July 21st and August 18th. Our time begins at **12:30PM**. (Note time change from last month) When I visit folks, I am often asked about other members of the church that they were once friends with; having shared times of serving in a church group or on a church board. Aging, many folks are not able to come to church for Sunday AM worship, for a wide variety of reasons. The WWW is a midweek worship service that allows folks to see one another and catch up. The time gives some a chance to get out of the house and into different surroundings. Each time, we celebrate worship and share in Holy Communion. You are not too old, nor too young to attend. In fact, if you were not able to attend Sunday worship, please join us, regardless of your age. We are the body of Christ **together**. We want to see you and share a time with you. Let us not prepare the food, the worship, or the space and not have YOU show up. It just wouldn't be the same without you! If you need a ride, give the office a call and we will do our best to get you here. **Pastor Pat**

Harvest Gifts

If you have produce to share, please bring it to Sunday Worship or during Monday office hours (9:15 AM – 1:00 PM). We will distribute the gifts of food on Tuesday mornings. We are also accepting non-perishable food items. We are seeking a few folks to divide and deliver the food on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 AM. Speak with Pastor Pat or just show up!

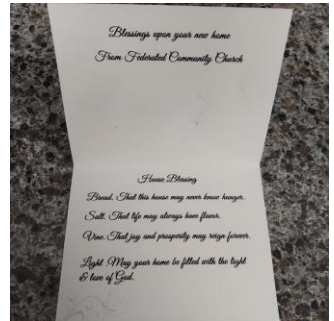


FCC Welcomes New Neighbors with a Blessing



We have gifted *Baskets of Blessings* upon four new neighbors. Plans are in the making to host a neighborhood-wide

meet and greet sometime in August. Stay tuned to weekly Mail Chimp to find out specifics. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet our new neighbors and introduce ourselves. We hope you will make an effort to support the church body as we meet and welcome our neighbors.



Altar Flowers

We have openings for July and August's, flowers on the altar. The dates are July 4th, August 1st and August 29th. If anyone is interested please contact Cheryl Fonda at 413-427-4011.



United Methodist Hosts Open Spirit Task Force Online Gatherings

In this ever-evolving season, as we move into a new and unknown future, the Open Spirit Task Force continues to examine who New England Methodists are and who we are called to be. This summer, we will host a weekly presentation about our work and open conversation about the future of our denomination and Conference. **Please join us for a Conference wide presentation via Zoom each Tuesday beginning at 6:30 pm June 15 through Aug. 31, 2021.** The sessions are an updated version of the District Presentations that were canceled due to the pandemic. [Click the link to register;](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYlcOmvqzgoGdPpq5toN02BshDJIk3A7ThX)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYlcOmvqzgoGdPpq5toN02BshDJIk3A7ThX>

Plan to attend one session, choosing the time most convenient for you.

Connecting in the Spirit Our Church and Our Community

To grow we will be . . .

* Purchasing a new computer and software – Cost \$1,195.00

This is a Capital expense that will be paid for by the Judith and Arthur Gerrish bequeath.

* Ministry Architects is a church consulting company that will be guiding us by 2 contracts, the 1st will provide . . .

Ministry Architects delivers the following results to Federated Community Church

1. A two-day virtual assessment of the children's ministry identifying assets and challenges, resulting in recommendations and a 12-months timeline.
2. A one-year teaching calendar, developing a curriculum plan for the children's ministry.
3. The creation of a Renovation Team which supports the ministry by leading a culture shift, engaging and equipping volunteers, and overseeing implementation of a new one-year teaching calendar.

4. Chairing the Renovation Team for 6-months, which includes ongoing coaching for the Christian education leaders, assuring all recommendations from the first six months of the assessment report have been addressed.

5. A volunteer development plan, resulting in systems for volunteer recruitment and training, volunteer job descriptions for all staff and volunteer positions, and a long-term staffing plan.

6. Executive coaching for the children's ministry leaders for 6-months.

7. Updating or creating the following compliance documents:

- Safe Sanctuary Policies & Procedures
- Children's Ministry Leadership Covenant of Expectations
- Christian Education Background Check and Application

8. A game plan for launching quarterly momentum-building outreach events.

In the option above, Ministry Architects takes full responsibility for leading the Renovation Team, and at the same time, trains the Renovation Team in how to do the work. Coaching is provided throughout the 6 months of the contract to the children's ministry Leaders. Ministry Architects ensures all recommendations for the first 6 months in the assessment report are addressed.

Their 2nd contract is a Volunteer Accelerator

Ministry Architects delivers the Volunteer Accelerator, a customized online tool that will:

1. Help members of the church community identify their skills and passions via a short online questionnaire
2. Use the questionnaire answers to immediately recommend the volunteer positions at Federated Community Church that are the best fit for each individual participant
3. Initiate a conversation between the volunteer and appropriate church leaders about how and where to volunteer
4. Create a database for staff that identifies potential volunteers with specific skills and gifts
5. Provide an easy-to-read overview of the talents and passions that are prevalent at the church
6. Allow for editing over time and retain the church's data privately and securely, year after year With the Volunteer

Accelerator, Ministry Architects works with church staff to complete the following:

- Identify the list of volunteer positions
- Develop a list of characteristics that are important to the success of each position
- Customize the language of a 20 to 25 question online volunteer questionnaire
- Test and fine-tune the custom questionnaire and positions' attributes in order to maximize the tool's matching accuracy
- Launch the system online
- Introduce the process at a congregational event or worship service
- Provide annual re-evaluation and editing of the online tool*

These 2 programs will cost \$8,965.00 and \$1,550.00 = \$10,515.00

This will be paid by:

- Methodist Foundation Grants (#2499)	-\$2200.00
- Together for Tomorrow	-\$2950.00
- Larson Fund	-\$4000.00
- Christian Education Programs (#2520)	-\$3,000.00
- Helen Dickinson Bequest (#1136)	<u>-\$2,365.00</u>

* Bell, Chimes and Mallets! We are very excited about the newly formed bell choir. We were very fortunate to receive our bell set at no cost. The cost for a new set would have cost approximately \$6000.00. What a blessing to have received this gift! Karen has indicated that adding a set of chimes (\$1,285.00) and mallets (\$306.00) to the bell choir would enhance and allow for much richer sounds. Karen has also talked about offering a bell choir program to Green Meadows, which would support our vision of *"Connecting in the Spirit."*

These additions will cost \$1,285.00 and \$306.00 = \$1,591.00. We are in conversation with the Memorial Gifts Committee to see if they will purchase these items.

We are investing in the future of our church! God is not done with FCC yet. Please pray daily for continued blessings and offer your gifts to help us be a blessing to others and to God.

"Connecting in the Spirit": Under Construction!

As we have been discussing, "*Connecting in the Spirit*" is a vision of transformation and spiritual renewal for the future of our church: through this new ministry vision, we seek to open ourselves to God's leading to build upon what best served our mission in the past, to construct a whole-church ministry which is spiritually relevant in the present, and offers opportunities for growth to carry us into the future.

Children, and their families, hold the key to the physical and spiritual growth which shapes a church's future. Twenty years ago, so many families attended worship at FCC that it was hard to find a seat until the children and youth were dismissed to Sunday School. That level of faithfulness, joy, and participation in the life of our church served our mission well, and is worth recapturing and supporting as we go forward. How glad would our hearts be to see and hear the Sanctuary again filled with life, old and young!


We will soon be partnering with Ministry Architects (a team of 90 pastors, teachers, youth and children's pastors, writers, executives, and professors) to both coach and mentor all of us in realizing this vision for an exciting, revitalized Children/Youth Faith Formation Ministry program. This program will help us to "Connect in the Spirit", to serve our Christian mission and our congregants, and invite those beyond our walls to walk along with us in faith. Envision the church bustling with disciples of all ages, gathering in the Sanctuary and in all the church spaces, to joyfully plan and engage in the kingdom-building work we are uniquely equipped to do! And keep listening to hear how God calls you to enter into the upcoming groundwork that will make that vision our reality. Come and support out first hands on opportunity:

Calling ALL FCC Disciples of Christ!

Help us brainstorm for an All Church "*Connecting in the Spirit*" Family Event. We hope to offer the community a time of activities and fun on our church lawn. Games will be based on Biblical stories/themes. This event will need many hands to make it a success! Christ is counting on you and so is FCC.

**Join us to brainstorm games and ideas on
July 22 at 6:30 PM at the church**

July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4  Independence Day 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	5 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	6 7:00 PM Finance	7 10:30 AM Bible Study	8	9	10 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
11 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	12 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	13 6:30 PM BOD	14 10:30 AM Bible Study	15	16	17
18 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	19 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	20	21 10:30 AM Bible Study 12:30 PM WWW+	22 6:30 PM Brainstorm Games & Ideas Event	23	24 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
25 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	26 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	27	28 10:30 AM Bible Study	29	30	31 *WWW= Wonderful Wednesday Worship /Lunch

August 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	2 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	3 7:00 PM Finance	4 10:30 AM Bible Study	5	6	7
8 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	9 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	10	11 10:30 AM Bible Study	12	13	14 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
15 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	16 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	17 6:30 PM BOD	18 10:30 AM Bible Study 12:30 PM WWW =	19	20	21 "Meet & Greet"
22 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	23 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	24	25 10:30 AM Bible Study	26	27	28 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
29 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship	30 9:30 AM Coffee 10:00 AM Spirit Chat	31				*WWW = Wonderful Wednesday Worship /Lunch