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The newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
May 2024



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APRIL SHOWERS
Bring
MAY FLOWERS

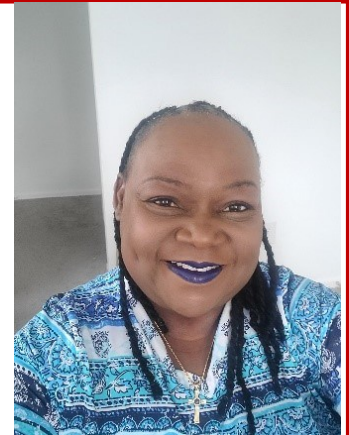
Items for the June issue of *Windows* are due on May 15, 2024.

Send to

Communications
@fpcgermantown.org

From the Pastor

Beloved, I am excited about everything that May will bring. I'm looking forward to our celebration on the 5th as I officially become your called and installed designated pastor. The service will begin at 2 pm and will be followed by a Cinco de Mayo themed reception. What a privilege to shepherd this loving and generous congregation!



Immediately following this event, I leave for Salt Lake City, Utah to work with others who serve on the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA). Our tasks will include preparing for the General Assembly and accommodations for attendees for this year's event. Through this work, and representing COGA on the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (CEIR) are the ways in which your pastor contributes to the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church, USA. Your prayers for this work and the upcoming General Assembly would be greatly appreciated.

Mother's Day, May 12th, affords us the opportunity to thank the women who have played important roles in our lives: our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, sisters, daughters, teachers, doctors, pastors and friends. We also give thanks for the women who are not mothers and still have the grace to nurture us. We thank God for the Holy Spirit, who in the Bible has feminine attributes; in Hebrew, the Spirit is (רוּחַ ruah), and the ending makes her female. We are not wrong when we pray to our Mothering God (Deuteronomy 32:18, Luke 13:34).

The month comes to a close with Memorial Day, when we honor those who, while in active military service, gave up their lives for our freedom. Have a happy May, everyone!

Blessings,

Pastor Cheni



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Sundays at 10 a.m.

Everyone is invited to worship, study and enjoy friendships at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. There are service, outreach and fellowship opportunities in abundance. In addition to weekly and monthly scheduled services and activities, visit www.fpcgermantown.org and click on Special Events web pages for more information.

To learn more, please email office@fpcgermantown.org or call the church office at 215-843-8811.

Windows is a publication of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. For questions regarding the information published here or to submit content, please call the church office at 215-843-8811 or email: office@fpcgermantown.org

Contributors:

Cherese Akers
Property Committee
Christian Heyer-Rivera
Eileen Jones
Rev. Dr. Cheni Khonje
Jim Thompson

May Birthday's

May 1	Mary Lundy
May 4	Shiloh Canty
May 5	Rudolphro Sutton
May 7	Rose Slater
May 7	Kamille Gibson
May 8	Taneisha Gibbs
May 9	Danielle Ohemeng
May 12	James Thompson
May 22	Christopher Torrence
May 23	Kristina Ohemeng
May 24	Glenna Hazeltine
May 25	Maurice Horne
May 26	Aaron Bass
May 27	Madison Lundy
May 31	Jerelyn Lagunsad

Music News

As we look towards spring and summer, our Oratorio Choir will be gearing up for its final performance of the season, J.S. Bach's monumental Magnificat on Sunday, June 9 at 3pm. This piece is one of Bach's greatest pieces for choir, and it sets one of the Bible's most remarkable prayers- the song that Mary sings as she joyfully shares the news of God's coming into the world with her cousin Elizabeth. In this prayer, Mary celebrates God's kingdom, where worldly power becomes meaningless, and the weak and disenfranchised are lifted up. This message, set viscerally to music by Bach, speaks across time and especially to us today in FPCG's mission to magnify God's word and lift up all people in our community.

Oratorio Choir is open to anyone who loves to sing without an audition. Rehearsals are held in the choir room on Tuesday nights at 7:15pm, starting April 30. I hope you will come join us to sing, come to the concert, or help spread the word to music lovers in the community.



Farewell message from Cherese Akers

Dear FPCG family and friends. It's hard to believe that this will be the last newsletter that I publish at FPCG! These past five years have been a blessing. I've met so many wonderful people and I will forever be grateful for the personal and professional development here.

January 14, 2024, my sister and I opened a café in Horsham, PA called Sister's Gym Café. This amazing opportunity is consuming a lot of my time, which is why I have decided to leave my position in efforts to give my new business my undivided attention. It wasn't an easy decision and I contemplated back and forth for months, but ultimately I had

to do what is best for myself and my family. Feel free to stop in and visit. 400 Horsham Road, Horsham, PA 19044 (located inside Horsham Athletic Club). Hours: (Mon-Tues) 9am-8pm (Wed-Thurs) 9am-6pm (Friday) 12-6pm. It has been my pleasure being the Communications Manager. Thank you all and God Bless!

~ Cherese A. Akers

Spring Clean-Up, Thank You

Thank you to everyone who supported our Community Spring Cleanup on Saturday April 20, 2024. Trash bags, brooms, rakes and shovels were provided by CLIP (Community Life Improvement Program). Clip is a city program committed to revitalizing Philadelphia neighborhoods by removing blight. FPCG volunteers made a difference as they cleaned the unit block of Cheltenham Avenue. Thanks to everyone who came out to help.



May Challenge Offering: Anesthesiology Training program within Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons



It is well-documented that 5 out of 7 billion people in the world lack access to safe, affordable, and timely surgical care. In addition, the greatest areas of unmet need include Sub-Saharan Africa where 9 out of 10 people do not have access to safe surgery and anesthesia. The rate limiting step in providing surgery is often the availability of anesthesia providers and safe anesthesia care.

Anesthesiologists are physicians that care directly for patients during surgery and ensure their safety during surgery and other life-threatening illnesses. In ten countries in Africa, there are currently NO physician anesthesiology training programs.

Beginning in July 2018, a group of anesthesiologists from around the world worked to investigate the possibility of starting anesthesiology training under the auspices of the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS). PAACS was started in 1996 as a rural-based surgical training program in African Christian hospitals, directed by experienced board-certified surgeons. PAACS partners with established mission and faith-based hospitals to provide training in surgery to African physicians.

I led the Anesthesiology Investigative Task Force which culminated in a presentation at the PAACS Annual Commission meeting outlining the rationale for anesthesiology training within PAACS. The commission voted to accept the proposal and the first group of physician anesthesiologists began training through PAACS in Kijabe Kenya in January 2022. The primary goal is to prepare physicians to practice at the highest level of evidence-based medicine in anesthesiology and to return to their home country to work as anesthesiologists. Additional training is provided in spiritual and leadership development. There are currently 6 African physicians in training from Kenya, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo and additional physicians will be added in 2025. The training program takes 4 years and costs approximately \$25,000 USD per physician per year. The ultimate goal is to have graduates of the program assume leadership roles in the training program and to expand this training to other hospitals in Africa.

Additional information about PAACS is available here: <https://paacs.net/welcome.html>
PAACS Anesthesiology program: www.paacs.net/anesthesiology.html.

First Quarter 2024 Property Committee Report

For we are co-workers in God's service... we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (I Corinthians 3:9a; Ephesians 2:10)

It has been a while since we have provided an update on our activities. Carolyn, Frank, Ingrid, Jim, Marc, Pete, Tim and I are grateful for the opportunity to serve this congregation. Sadly, our fellow member Joe Leube is no longer with us. Joe has served faithfully on this committee for decades. His hard work, commitment and care for our beautiful building and the souls who occupy it is an example to us all. This first quarter report is dedicated to our friend Joe. May we all be as faithful and hard working as he was in our commitment to this, our "Church at the Crossroads."

This first quarter has been a little busier than usual. Members of the Property Committee have been serving as part time interim building managers working closely with the sextons. We have seen first-hand their dedication and love for this church.

Parking Lots

- East Parking Lot – For the safety of our seniors and those of us who have mobility issues we made several temporary leveling repairs to reduce any tripping hazards due to uneven surfaces.
- Also, the gate operator failed to work due to broken underground electrical conductors. It was necessary to run new conduit and electrical feeders to this equipment.
- West Parking Lot – Additional asphalt repairs were done to alleviate ice accumulation at the entrance. Also, several repair attempts have been made to correct the intermittent failures of the gate operator. As of the last week in March, the unit failed completely and must be replaced.
- Our rubbish removal company damaged the retaining wall and coping stone last month. We have several persons who witnessed the incident. We have filed a claim with the hauler and are in discussions regarding resolution.

Ventilation

- Sanctuary ventilation system has been adjusted for efficiency. This is the third and most likely final adjustment based upon current occupancy since the Covid-19 outbreak. We will remain in excess of current code ventilation requirements.
- Adjustments will be made for events in which occupancy exceeds 200 people.

HVAC

While the new boiler system has been operational since last October, we are wrapping up the final punch list items.

Additionally, there was a steam leak in the piping feeding one of the radiators in the Jennings Room. This, in addition to another piping issue, resulted in the need to have extensive asbestos abatement work performed in the basement.

Plumbing

While replacing a sewer pipe serving the pastor's suite asbestos was discovered. This resulted in a relatively minor repairs becoming a much more extensive project.

Asbestos Abatement

Some of you may recall the videos we posted on the church's Facebook Page. Between the steam pipe repair and the plumbing repair, we had asbestos abatement work occurring in three different locations in our building. This involved coordinating/managing work between the contractors, an industrial hygienist, an asbestos removal company and the City of Philadelphia.

First Quarter 2024 Property Committee Report contined

Gymnasium

Due to heavy rain and an elevated flood table, the gym flooded on two occasions. Because of the dewatering system the Property Committee installed about 8-9 years ago, the flooding was not catastrophic. It does however remain problematic. We are investing in a permanent solution.

Power Outage

Due to work on Cheltenham Avenue performed by the Philadelphia Water Department, an underground high voltage cable was damaged by one of the contractors. Gratefully, no one was injured. This incident resulted in our power being interrupted for about eighteen hours. PECO arrived and we were instructed to switch off our 13.2KVA switchgear. To compound matters, it was raining that day, the water table was high and there was no power to our main dewatering pumps or the small electric sump pumps. We used an old gas-powered emergency trash pump to keep the entire basement from flooding. Tony, Robert, Kevin and Christian are to be commended for "manning" the emergency pump. Christian finally got to go home around 1:00 am.

Roofing

- Roof leak in the sanctuary was repaired.
- Damaged louvers in the east tower were repaired.
- Broken northside rain water leader was repaired.

Interior

- Choir robing room was cleaned up and painted.
- The Property Committee is making a concerted effort to make our facility neater and lessen the clutter. Decluttering of all areas are underway. You may have noticed that Longstreth (NE corner and stage) is more orderly. We will continue our efforts to minimize clutter in and around the church.
- Sanctuary flooring and other areas throughout the building have been refinished.

Leasing

After several months of negotiations, we have finalized a lease with Safe Place Church (Germantown Congregation). Safe Place is a wonderful partner and we are delighted that our relationship with them has become much more permanent. They worshiped with us during the Maundy Thursday service at East Falls Presbyterian Church. Pastor Julie Hoke was one of the readers and we broke bread at our table with some of her members. So that SPC and FPCG will share our spaces most efficiently, we will be issuing space sharing guidelines for our two congregations.

From Pastor Julie:

"As a worshipping community centered on Jesus, for now we simply call ourselves a Germantown congregation. We meet on Sundays at 3pm for worship, with a potluck meal and community meeting on the first Sunday of every month. With roots in peacemaking, justice and simplicity of the anabaptist tradition, we are committed to LGBTQIA+ affirmation and celebration and to antiracism in the way of Jesus. Children are a valued part of our community. Contact Julie Hoke, pastor at julie@germantowncongregation.org"

We remain, Your fellow laborers in Christ.

The Property Committee



Baile de Tehuantepec, Diego Rivera

*The Presbytery of Philadelphia
and the Session and Congregation of
The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
joyfully request the honor of your presence at the
Service of Installation of*

Rev. Dr. Chenyangu (Cheni) Khonje

as

*Senior Pastor at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
35 West Chelton Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19144*

*On the 5th of May 2024
at 2 o'clock in the afternoon*

A reception will immediately follow in Longstreth Auditorium





THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN GERMANTOWN

35 West Cheltenham Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19144
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