

INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter
Spring 2021

*May the God of hope
fill you with all*

JOY & PEACE

as you trust in Him.

ROMANS 15:13



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NEWSLETTER

If you would like to make submissions to the newsletter, or if you have any questions contact, Jennifer Johnson at jjohnson@sewickleypresby.org.

VISITATION

If you or a member of your family are in the hospital or are in need of prayer, please call the church office to let us know.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Find us on
Facebook



Instagram

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ALWAYS MORE TO LEARN

By Rev. Derek R. Davenport

Some people love sports. Some people love movies. Others love music or cooking or painting. I love learning.

I don't mean that "I love to learn," although that happens to be true. I mean that I am fascinated by learning itself. I love to consider how we teach, how we learn, and how we remember.

As you may realize, my study of art and architecture is part of the fascination with learning. We learn and remember so much from the buildings and artworks that inspire us.

Over this past year, churches and schools, colleges and universities, community centers and libraries have had to rethink learning. Isolation, social distancing, and quarantining have each challenged our traditional models of education. Almost overnight, online learning became not the best option - but the only option.

In institutions all around us, teachers and educators have adapted. Even within our own congregation, we have begun to use new tools in our education. We have embraced digital polls, breakout rooms, slideshows, and even hula hoops in our classes. We have a new understanding of words like "synchronous" and "asynchronous."

These changes fascinate me. I find myself longing to learn how we as a congregation can embrace these changes in our teaching, preaching, and learning. Over this past year, I began talking with schools around the country, trying to find a program that would enable me to do exactly that. Unfortunately, the very circumstances that I want to study have forced many of the programs to go on hiatus. Others were an imperfect fit - on top of that, they would have required me to leave the very community I want to serve.



I then began to dream. In a perfect world, I could study new modes of learning and how to manage systems that enable such learning. I could learn about instruction, but also leadership. And, while daydreaming, I could do it in this community.

That's about when I came upon the Ph.D. in Instructional Management and Leadership right across the river at Robert Morris University. After talking with several of you, I began to explore what it might take to pursue that degree. The more I discovered, the more excited I became.

This summer, I will be embarking on a new part of my education as I continue my ministry here at Sewickley Presbyterian Church. I will begin working on a doctorate to explore these questions of learning, teaching, and leading.

I am so thankful to be a part of this congregation and to have the chance to work with the educational ministries of SPC. I look forward to this next part of my education as we continue our ministry together!

-- Derek



Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.
She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:
"Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."

Proverbs 31:25-30

IN SERVICE: DEACONS

By Tina Thomas, SPC Member

Deacons continue to serve the SPC congregation, but within the limits mandated by COVID safety protocols. Due to COVID restrictions, a few of our traditional projects have had to be canceled or postponed. The Masonic Luncheon, a wonderful time to stay connected and enjoy the company of SPC members residing at the Masonic Village, typically held in February/March, had to be canceled both in 2020 and 2021. The Progressive Dinner and the Deacons' Picnic, two other opportunities to gather the congregation for fellowship and food, also had to be canceled in 2020. The Deacons will follow the advice of the Reopening Task Force to determine if either or both of these events can possibly be held at some point this year.

Blanket Sunday, a time to solicit donations for Church World Service's mission to provide blankets for people in need in the U.S. and abroad, will be held on May 2 and Mother's Day, May 9. The requested donation per blanket remains at \$10.00. There will be a drop-down box included with the other online giving options on the church web site if you would like to give online. Checks can be sent

to the church, made payable to SPC with Blanket Sunday noted on the memo line. Blanket Sunday remains a nice way to honor or remember all the women who have been important in our lives.

Deacons will also proceed with collections for Backpacks in July and at year's end with the Christmas Food Basket projects and the Tree of Memories. Information on how the congregation can participate will be shared in June and November, respectively.

Finally, Deacons continue to serve the congregation via communion each month, by delivering flowers each Sunday to connect with members for a variety of reasons such as illness, loss, celebration, and by organizing temporary meal deliveries to members going through a difficult time. Members are encouraged to reach out to Rev. Rebecca Reeder and the Deacons if any of these needs arise.

DID YOU KNOW?

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

A new Cherokee Chief Flowering Dogwood tree was planted at the Faith House near the front door in memory of Ed Clarke by his sister Gladys Carlyle and his family.



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AMAZON SMILE

Do you shop on Amazon? Most of us do. Did you know Amazon will donate money to our church for some purchases that are made on their website. It's super easy to set-up so that every purchase you make has the opportunity to benefit our church.

Visit smile.amazon.com and sign-in with your Amazon credentials. Choose Sewickley Presbyterian Church as the charity and then start shopping. Amazon does the rest of the work. It's that simple!

TOTAL DONATED SO FAR

2020: \$59.81 2021: \$26.36



EASTER VIGIL

By Craig Dobbins, Director of Music Ministries

On Saturday evening, April 3, for the first time since 2009, our congregation observed the Great Vigil of Easter on the evening prior to Easter Day. The Great Vigil of Easter can be traced to early Christian times. As the name Vigil implies, in the early days of the church, and still in very observant congregations, this service begins in the evening before Easter Day and concludes with a service at sunrise on Easter Day. Our service was 50 minutes.

Over the course of the night, in actuality, four related services are incorporated into one:

Service of Light: The service begins outside in darkness. As candles are lighted, we are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in the darkness. After candles are lighted by all in attendance, leaders and participants move into a worship space. Because of the pandemic and the inability to have the Sanctuary cleaned following the Vigil for Easter Day, our Vigil was held outdoors.

Service of Readings: A series of at least four scripture readings is traditional. These should provide a view of what God has done for humanity, retelling our history as God's children and summarizing the faith into which we have been baptized.

Service of Baptism: In the earliest years of the Christian church, all baptisms commonly took place at the Vigil. When no baptisms are scheduled, the renewal of our baptismal vows is included. This was our congregation's first opportunity since 2005 to renew our baptismal vows. This service concludes with the Asperion, in which an evergreen branch dipped in water is used to sprinkle water over the gathered congregation.

Service of the Eucharist: Because our service was held outdoors, this portion of the Vigil was omitted.

While all members of the Worship & Music Committee participated in multiple ways, the bulk of the work was handled by the subcommittee charged with this task: Cordelia Jacobs, Amy Szuba, Don Zier, and staff liaison Craig Dobbins. Their dedication to this project is greatly appreciated.

Because it's been eleven years since our church hosted a service celebrating The Great Vigil of Easter, the Worship & Music Committee would like to hear from those who attended the Vigil. E-mail messages can be sent to Craig Dobbins at cdobbins@sewickleypresby.org and notes to the committee at the church office at 414 Grant Street, Sewickley 15143.



PRESCHOOL & A NEW YEAR

By Erin Leghorn, Director of FriendShip Preschool

FriendShip Preschool is opening its doors again this fall! As a life-long member of this church, and having been a FriendShip teacher, parent, and even once upon a time student, I feel incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to add Director of FriendShip to that list. This past year has been challenging in so many ways, but during that time I strongly felt God calling me to lead FriendShip forward as Jenny Hay made the decision to retire after many years of serving the families of FriendShip. God has provided me with years of varied teaching experiences and a passion for education to draw upon. What a gift He has given me to be a part of my church family in this way!

Moving forward in this time of COVID is no small feat, but we are doing it one step at a time, adding new things along the way. All our classes will now be held in the morning allowing us to extend the school day for FriendShip I, FriendShip II, and Pre-K. This also allows all students in those classes to stay for lunch.

In addition, as we've seen the world learn to adapt and do so many things digitally and virtually, so have our teachers. Last spring and summer our team worked hard to create a robust virtual learning experience for our students. We still value good, old-fashioned play and hands-on discovery, but we have kept some of the practices that we've learned.

FriendShip has gone digital! We are using digital forms for registration and enrollment. Teachers now have access to iPads to enhance and enrich their lessons with music, videos, and photographs. And, we are on social media! For updates and information about the coming school year, follow us on Instagram and Facebook @friendshipsewickley, email me at eleghorn@sewickleypresby.org, or complete our contact form on the website.



RE-OPENING TASK FORCE

By Nancy House, SPC Member

The Church Re-opening task force has been eagerly following the progress of COVID vaccine distribution even as SPC has continued in person worship service each week with proper social distancing and mask wearing. Palm Sunday and Easter services were well attended. Committees. Elders and Deacons continue to meet online and some small groups have been able to gather in person with appropriate precautions.

Despite the frustrations and setbacks of the past year, a recent research study reveals that nearly 9 in 10 Protestant churchgoers are proud of how their church has responded during the pandemic (Christianity Today, March 26, 2021.) Indeed, our dedicated congregation has risen to the challenge of this pandemic in countless ways.

But now, we are all asking the same questions: "When can we sing? When can we sit next to each other in pews? When can we take our masks off? It seems fair to say that we are all feeling the weight of "pandemic fatigue" and are ready to move on. As the supply of vaccines has increased recently and many in our community have been vaccinated, we are optimistic that our church can begin the long road back to "normal." As we have all learned over the past year, the pandemic is not always predictable, sometimes necessitating modifications in plans as circumstances change.

Items the task force will prayerfully consider shortly include providing child care for worship and increasing the availability of seats for in person worship. Lemonade on the lawn following worship will resume in May and we're cautiously hopeful that more gatherings, including possibly singing, will be happening as well. While this transition period is not without its complexities and challenges, the task force looks forward with faithful optimism to the time when our church family can be truly together again and participate fully in the life of our church.



GROWING PAINS

by Mike Creamer, Director of Youth Ministries

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps you can understand what he is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is he up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: But he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself.”— C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

The quote above is one that I find myself returning to time and time again. *Mere Christianity* is the first book I read by Lewis, and the above quote is what I think of when I think of that book.

Paul writes in the famously quoted passage 2 Cor. 5:17 that when we are in Christ we are new creations, the old has passed away and that the new is here. I think that Lewis's quote here paints this picture beautifully. In life we find ourselves in all kinds of places and circumstances. Some periods of our lives feel like great successes, and other terrible failures. Some feel like times of growth, and others periods of inertia or “stuckness.” The beauty of the Christ-life is that God is a God of resurrection. He brings new life and new creation out of what seems old, dead, and hopeless.

But new life is painful. Growth is painful. When we embrace the Christ-life, we look forward to the peace and fulfillment promised. We aren't as thrilled about the pain it takes for us to get there. What brings me back to this quote time and time again is the idea that Jesus is with me, now, working in me. He isn't depending on me to be ready—He's already working. The question is whether we will join Him in that work.



EASTERTIDE RINGERS

By Craig Dobbins, Director of Music Ministries

For the past several years, a dedicated group of handbell ringers representing the church's two adult handbell choirs, i.e., the Calvin Handbell Choir and the Westminster Ringers, has participated in the church's 10 PM service on Christmas Eve. While you heard them aurally during the Offertory at our prerecorded Christmas Eve service, you weren't able to see the ringers in action.

For the first time since they met to rehearse and record a setting of the Appalachian carol "Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head" on December 6, 2020, this group gathered again on April 11, 2021, with only two personnel changes, to record a setting of the hymn tune "Diademata", which is the tune to which a number of hymn texts, including "Crown Him with Many Crowns", is sung. For social distancing, the group rehearsed and recorded in the Robinson Room while wearing masks. The recording made on April 11 is to be used in worship on Sunday, May 2. This time we hope you enjoy watching the ringers, as well as listening to them!



JANE DEHAVEN "RETIRES"

We'd like to extend a big thank you to Jane deHaven (pictured above with her husband Bill) for the many years she has served as the Chair of our Flower Committee. Jane has recently 'retired' from the Flower Committee which she led for 21 years!

Shortly after becoming a member of SPC in 1983, Jane went to work with the Flower Committee using her many gifts to make our Sunday and holiday services come to life with beautiful floral arrangements and decorations.

Jane organized the weekly schedule for arrangements, made sure the necessary supplies were provided for others on the committee, arranged flowers, and always made sure to keep the committee on budget by bringing new ideas to the table throughout the years to save money.

As we say thank you to Jane, we want to also welcome Carrie Beynon to the role of Chair of the Flower Committee. Thank you for helping to keep our sanctuary beautiful!

2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

239 Pledges

**Total Pledged
\$1,188,899**

**Pledges budgeted
\$1,206,459**

**Shortage
\$17,560**

PPP LOAN UPDATE

In the Summer of 2020, we applied for and were approved for the Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP) in the amount of \$214,000. This was used to pay our church and preschool staff and was a big help to us last year as we were all dealing with the uncertainties of the COVID crisis.

As part of the Cares Act, the U.S. Small Business Administration forgave the loan on April 21, 2021. The loan has been 'paid in full' according to the details of the loan program.



ADULT FELLOWSHIP & STUDY GROUPS

We have many groups that meet weekly and monthly. Some gather for a book study, Bible study or to create things, all the while providing much needed fellowship

and to grow new and old friendships. All of the groups welcome new members. If you would like to try one out, visit our website for contact information.

**SUN
DAY**

WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY

Frequency: Bi-Monthly

Leader: Rita Hoepp

Book: *Finding Hope in Hard Times: A Positive Take on Suffering*, by Pierce Taylor Hibbs

**WEDNES
DAY**

BIBLE BASICS

Frequency: Weekly | 11 AM

Leader: Rev. Kevin Long

Book: *The Book of James*

All are welcome to join in on this informal Bible study.

**MON
DAY**

MEN'S HUDDLE

Frequency: Weekly, begins 6.7

Leader: Rich Weber

The Huddle will begin again on June 7 in-person. Keep an eye out for details on our website.

Study: *The Bible Project*

**THURS
DAY**

KNITTING FOR MISSION

Frequency: Weekly

Leader: Nancy Merrill

If you have a passion for knitting, then this is the group for you. Contact Nancy Merrill if you'd like more information on projects the group is working on and how you can become involved.

**TUES
DAY**

KOINONIA

Frequency: Weekly | 9:30 AM

Leader: Rev. Rebecca Reeder

This group is open to all women.

New Study: *The Gospel-Centered Life* by Robert Thune & Will Walker

**FRI
DAY**

JOURNEYMEN

Frequency: 1st, 3rd Fridays | 8 AM

Leader: Dale Allerton

A study for men of all ages.

Current study: *Quiet Strength* by Tony Dungy



BUILDING FAITH TOGETHER

By Rev. Derek R. Davenport, Parish Associate

Like everything else in our lives, our educational offerings have changed quite a bit in the last 18 months. Incredibly, though, SPC has continued to offer various educational courses and programs even during the pandemic.

Romans with Joan has met weekly, diving into the history and theology of Paul's most well-known epistle. Insights from pastors, historians, and living scholars have informed the study and allowed participants to engage with scripture and theology on a deeper level. Our Ansby and Connections classes have joined together for some tremendous opportunities. From counselors to colleges and university faculty and staff to Pittsburgh Seminary to Pittsburgh Presbytery, we have had outstanding leadership in our courses. Some of our recent topics include:

Hope's Toolbox: Caring for Self and Others
Life, Race, and Faith
Advent, Artifacts and the Jesse Tree
Depicting the Dismissed - Obscure Scripture Characters in Art
The Parables of Jesus
Book Study: "White Awake."

As we conclude our school year, be sure to join us via Zoom at 11:15 AM each Sunday to build our faith together!

STUDYING ROMANS

By Kelly Gray, SPC Member

I have attended adult education at SPC off and on for years. But something peaked my interest in a deeper study of an important book in the New Testament- Romans. So I signed up to study Romans with Joan and I am so happy I did.

The classes are virtual yet they are full of fresh learning and interaction. We studied Ancient Rome for critically important context to understand what Paul was telling us during his time. And to fully appreciate just how difficult it was to ask people to believe his message given the times and their past knowledge interfering with understanding what seems so obvious to us now. We carefully read and study each chapter and the verses to better understand the full story, to appreciate the full arch of Paul's message. And we are only half way through the complete book of Romans.

Joan Murdoch is an amazing teacher, devoted to preparing for teaching this difficult book of Romans. She enlisted help from a Biblical scholar to help us better understand through videos, tips, notes and lectures. This scholar, N.T. Wright, even became personally interested in our class and Joan's devotion to being the best teacher she could be by trading emails with

STUDYING ROMANS CONTINUED...

her. We were all flattered. This may seem consistent with what others might expect in a virtual Bible study, but I was not prepared for the richness of new information and the insights that appeared each Sunday. It was truly a new adventure for me.

All of this would have been amazing and enough to meet most students' expectations of the class, but to my surprise what emerged was a beautifully generous sharing of thoughts and insights on the meaning of the scripture. A collective will to include all class participants in bringing us to the understanding needed along with some laughs and smiles each Sunday. I knew I was not the most knowledgeable member of the class. Others had done more studying than I previously, but those with additional knowledge and understanding generously shared their new wisdom with the rest of the class every Sunday. We also shared our questions and thoughts for all to consider as we gently brought all forward with new understanding. To my surprise, I realized some incredible new revelations into our overall faith, God's promises, the gift of Grace and even a new and deeper understanding of the crucifixion and the resurrection. What a gift! I hope any who are curious and want to learn more will consider joining this Bible study class. You will be richly rewarded.

BEING TRANSFORMED

By Tim Merrill, SPC Member

I was quite impressed with the scope and sensitivities of the Ralph Lowe and Brian Wallace conversations in the Awareness and Transformation series I attended earlier this year during the Adult Education hour. From making us more comfortable in hearing and using the terms racist, racism, and anti-racist, to talking about the implicit biases that I think we all have, to discussing whether reverse racism exists in our culture, to the Black Lives Matter movement and "defunding" (sic) the police, all the way to kneeling during the National Anthem, these conversations were important to my cultural identity journey, and my faith journey.

Perhaps the most dramatic take-away I heard was the two of them, college graduates, both PTS staffers, Pittsburghers with young families, discussing the different scope of their encounters with police. Brian, a white man, had but one over all of his years; whereas Ralph, a black man, has had more than two dozen.

This is not about police brutality which we see day after day. I think this says how white supremacy is ingrained in our society, and we can be totally oblivious to its existence.

I am thankful and appreciative that our church kick-started my awareness journey, and continues, with series like this to push me on down the road.



MIKE CREAMER COMPLETES FIELD EDUCATION

As most of you know, our outstanding Director of Youth Ministries, Mike Creamer, has been taking classes at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for the past few years. Over the last nine months, he has been completing one of the graduation requirements known as Field Education, where students get hands on experience working in a church or other setting. Since Mike already works here with our youth, he took on additional responsibilities to make his year of field education more fruitful.

One of the things Mike has done is participate more often in leading worship, both in the liturgy as well as in preaching, which he has done on five occasions. Mike also recently finished teaching a wonderful five-week Lenten class during Bible Basics on how to understand and interpret the Bible. Another task that Mike has taken on is to be the director for our video and slide production in worship, working with the musicians, pastors and volunteers to ensure that everything runs smoothly. He has learned a lot about our equipment and software, and has become an invaluable asset to our worship team. Mike's field education ends officially on May 14, 2021. If you see him around, please congratulate Mike on the outstanding job he has done this past year completing this part of his seminary training.

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

By Charlene Beck, SPC Member

With the pandemic still upon us, we met via Zoom to study "The Science & Sorcery of Solving Problems" led by Rev. Derek Davenport. Starting with small discussion groups, participants were presented with logistical problems faced by hypothetical armies of settler drones from another planet. Each week's lesson was focused on a major world power from the Old Testament, with Egypt as the first setting, then around the Mediterranean Sea to conclude with Greece. Although we could not be at table together, before each session Gretchen Burnham, Wayne Murphy, Ann Boyer and Don Zier graciously shared their recipes of favorite soups from past Lenten studies on video. The Fellowship & Hospitality Committee also shared the secret of the popular children's soup. The soup prep videos can be found on our YouTube channel.

ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE

By Jane Shadle, SPC Member

Last June, our world watched in horror as George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis. We all tried to somehow make sense of this tragedy. Led by our pastors, about 60 of us participated in the "21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge," a national program. We read articles, listened to podcasts, and watched videos, trying to deepen our awareness of racism in America.

One result of this effort was the formation of the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) in September of 2020. Under the umbrella of the Discipleship Committee of Session, the ARTF created the following working mission statement: To keep racial justice issues in our collective conscience and help us to continue moving forward in our awareness, learning, and acting toward racial reconciliation. This task force - Jana Joseph, Joan Murdoch, Anneliese Perry, Becky Senior, Ann Strong, Elizabeth and Tom Szuba, Jennifer Berg, Linda Benson, Tim Merrill, and Jane Shadle, with Rev. Rebecca Reeder as the staff liaison - has been meeting over Zoom monthly since October. We've shared books and articles on racism, as well as our own individual experiences. We've discussed the importance of self-education and reflection, humility and love, as members of the Sewickley Presbyterian Church. We've also been learning about community efforts to combat racism.

In fact, at our February meeting, Community Youth Worker Floyd Faulkner spoke to us about student-led anti-racism efforts at Quaker Valley High School. Floyd talked about community efforts: Sweetwater's virtual Sewickley Black History Self-Guided Tour; "Growing up Sewickley," a conversation emerging from the AME Zion Church; and a June-teenth event hosted by the Sewickley Community Center. Floyd urged us to "stand in support of Black organizations," loving one another through our differences as brothers and sisters in Christ.

This is slow, thoughtful work. So far, the ARTF, along with the Adult Education committee, has promoted a 6-week Sunday school video class called "Awareness and Transformation," in February and March. This was a conversation between two Pittsburgh Presbytery employees, one White, one Black, discussing issues regarding life, race, and faith.

We just recently started a 5-week book study of *White Awake: An Honest Look at What It Means to Be White* by Rev. Daniel Hill. The small groups will use this book as a springboard for discussion of racial justice issues, seen through the lens of our faith.

The task force is moving ahead in this important transformational work, praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit. We are seeking to further the call for unity that Paul stated in his letter to the Galatians: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We appreciate your prayers.

And just like that...
Winter opened cold bleary eyes
to the newborn colors of spring.

Angie Weiland-Crosby



YOU'VE GOT MAIL!

SPC Kids had Mardi Gras delivered to their homes this year! Our wintry February was the perfect time to spend some time with DIY Mardi Gras masks, fun facts about Mardi Gras, a word search, and a 40 day Lenten activity worksheet for families!

YOU'VE BEEN EGGED!

Children's Ministry brought the annual Egg Hunt to families front yards this year! Kids were surprised throughout the month of March with a dozen plastic eggs hidden in their front yard. One egg was left unfilled as a reminder of the empty tomb!

EASTER EGG SCAVENGER HUNT!

Families were able to enjoy an Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt throughout Sewickley and Edgeworth. Children's Ministry distributed Easter egg pictures to homes along a one mile loop between SPC and Edgeworth Elementary. SPC Kids had to solve riddles to find the eggs hidden in windows. The weather really cooperated for us and it was a great way for everyone to join in on the fun!

CLUB 345 STRONG!

We welcomed back Club 345 this April and this group is as strong as ever! We are having a blast meeting new friends, reading devotionals, playing minute to win it games, and drawing words of strength, optimism, and peace on the sidewalks of the Faith House lawn. In the coming weeks we will enjoy some outdoor games in addition to a project for our heroes, and our moms. It's a joy watching this group grow together!

ZOOM SUNDAY SCHOOL!

We have continued our Zoom Sunday School lessons and will conclude this May with our Heroes of the Bible Series. Each week we have learned about a new hero and his or her traits and virtues that we can practice too!



COMING THIS SUMMER

JULY: SUNDAY FUNDAYS!

During worship, through the month of July, Children's Ministry will be hosting small group Bible stories on the Faith House lawn, followed by an activity and snack.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: August 2-6

We are thrilled to host VBS this year on the Faith House Lawn. Kids will learn about Jesus, grow in their Faith, build friendships, participate in crafts and activities, and have a lot of FUN! Be sure to check back to the website for registration and additional details.

These kids haven't skipped a beat. They are bursting with hope, faith, and an optimism that is, well, contagious!



ANOTHER DAY ANOTHER ADVENTURE

It's been over a year since the world seemed to turn upside down, and as I look back at all the things that have changed, I have also been struck by what hasn't. And being with our teenagers has been one of the most powerful testaments to the fact that some things don't change regardless of how many struggles might arise. Yes, the way we met for youth group changed. Yes, the number of times we used Zoom changed (did people even use Zoom before last year?). Yes, we started wearing masks when we were around each other. There were some changes to be sure. But not all changes are bad. Something about this last year changed all our perspectives about the value of this community we are a part of. And not only that, but some things didn't change. What didn't change is that teens still wanted to be together. What didn't change is the amount of laughter (sometimes to the point of tears and falling over). What didn't change was the desire to dive

deeper into this faith together even when nothing in our worlds made sense.

The history of the Christian faith is a history of life circumstances changing dramatically over and over and OVER again, and despite the new world leaders and technological developments and struggles and triumphs--this faith has remained. This is the faith that has been passed down to us and that unites us with people all over the world and all throughout time. We call it the "Communion of Saints" on Sunday mornings during the Apostle's Creed. And this year, spending time with our teens week in and week out has reminded me just how beautiful that communion is.

-- Mike Creamer, Director of Youth Ministries



YOUTH GROUP

Sunday evenings have been a staple in what we do with the teens here for years, but we weren't sure how that might change with COVID and the winter weather. But over the last few months even when there was rain, sleet, or snow the teens still wanted to meet outside. There were a few weeks when we were standing in snow at the fire pit just to have that time together. It is a reminder of is how powerful this community of faith is. So although we toughed it out through the winter, needless to say we are thrilled that the sun is out and the temperature is above 40. We're looking forward to an awesome summer.

GEOCACHING

As we were trying to figure out what all we could be doing outside over the last few months there were a number of possibilities, and geocaching ended up being a blast. If you don't know what geocaching is, picture treasure hunting but your smartphone is the map. You follow clues to a certain location and then look for a secret container with trinkets and a list of all those that have found it before you. We were very thankful for Matt Doeblner leading the charge for us and helping us find 3 caches in one afternoon!

LITTLE PANTRY PROJECT

Last fall we began helping out with the “Little Pantry Project” which is an effort to help alleviate the struggles of food insecurity in surrounding communities. We had our students help paint and decorate multiple “pantries” and then we went to set them up. This spring we continued on with the project and had a group of our teens head up a food drive to help fill the pantries for a few rotations. We are looking forward to how we might be able to stay involved moving forward!



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

One thing that we were able to do with the teens regardless of the temperature was go hiking. It's amazing how many little trails and loops there are nearby. We took a few different hikes over the last couple of months to help us get together outside and even learn a few things along the way. North Park has a really cool loop that we got to do with some instructors on the way pointing out the wildlife that we probably would've missed otherwise. We might not be the most skilled hikers as a unit, but we still show up and get it done!



CONFIRMATION

The journey over the last few months for our confirmands has been a perfect look at what the journey of faith is. When we began in the fall our plan was to meet outside as regularly as possible, but once the weather got too nasty, we shifted to Zoom. We all know what Zoom fatigue is, yet despite that these students have persevered and pressed on in the process. They've showed up, asked hard questions, and had great conversations about life and faith. The journey of faith is lifelong, and confirmation is just one part of that journey, but we've been very blessed to be on this small part of the journey with them.



UPCOMING DATES

Confirmation Elders Meeting

May 16 | 11:30 AM

Final Youth Group

May 23 | 4 PM

Confirmation Sunday

June 6 | 10 AM



NEIGHBORS IN NEED

By Nancy Merrill, SPC Member

Our second 2021 Neighbors in Need collection will begin May 1. Your generosity in our January-February drive was extraordinary! We hope you will continue to help our neighbors in need by contributing personal care items through the month of May. Contributions are distributed weekly to our mission partners: Center for Hope, Sewickley Community Center, and the Ladle. In addition, we are helping to stock the Little Free Pantries, in conjunction with the Sewickley YMCA.

REQUESTED PERSONAL CARE ITEMS INCLUDE

(full size, not travel size):

Lotion
Sunscreen
Toothbrushes / toothpaste
Shampoo / conditioner
Body wash
Deodorant
Chapstick
Feminine hygiene pads and tampons
Ivory bar soap
Dish detergent
Laundry detergent
Adult masks
White sport socks (mens and womens)

DROP -OFF LOCATIONS

- 315 Quaker Road, Edgeworth (Stephanie O'Kane)
- 113 Scottsdale Drive, Moon Twp (Pam and Ron Charles)
- At the church: at the back on the Grant Street side on the outdoor elevator landing and inside the Grant Street door on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11 AM and 1 PM when the Chapel is open. Please place items in the large bins labeled "Neighbors in Need."

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE ALSO WELCOME

- Online: <https://sewickleypresby.org/give/>
- By check to 414 Grant Street, Sewickley 15143

Donations allow us to supplement the donated items. Neighbors in Need also has an Amazon wish list whose items are shipped to church member Anneliese Perry: <https://smile.amazon.com/registries/custom/35AC3O4UMCJS4/guest-view>

Contact any member of the SPC Neighbors in Need committee with any questions: Glenis Levine, Nancy Merrill, Stephanie O'Kane, and Anneliese Perry.

Blanket the world with love



May 2-9

Every year, in the beginning of May, we hold Blanket Sundays to support Church World Service. By financially supporting CWS, individuals and families around the world are provided blankets to keep warm and provide comfort during times of struggle. Each blanket costs \$10. If you would like to donate a blanket, or two, please either send a check to the church office with a notation of "Blanket Sunday" or you may also use our GIVE page on our website. There is an option for Blanket Sunday on the drop-down menu.

In 2019, \$2400 was raised to send to CWS. That's 240 blankets! Despite the difficulties of last year, we were still able to raise \$310, which is 31 blankets. Any support is welcome and we appreciate your willingness to spread God's love around the world!

Please contact Laura Mikush with any questions about donations: lmikush@sewickleypresby.org/412.741.4550.

I've seen these blankets used in homeless shelters. I've seen them wrapped around refugees. I've seen them handed out at food banks. It's more than just a blanket. It's an *act of love.*

- PATRICK WALKER
SENIOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST
CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

cwsblankets.org/mothersday

"I saw how they use the blankets and it's awesome!"

cwsblankets.org



CENTER FOR HOPE



One thing that hasn't changed in the past year is the dedication of our church family to ensure the Center for Hope is still able to provide for people who are in need. We've continued providing our regular scheduled monthly dinners, volunteering to help with the Kids in the Kitchen program, and also helping with clothing donations and financial gifts to help the Center with other various needs they have.

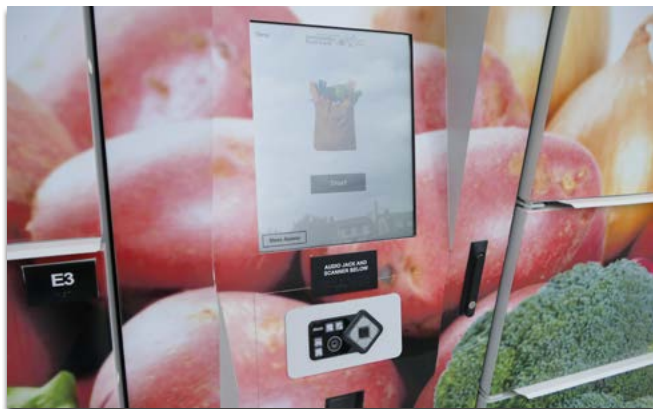
The Center was recently chosen to be part of a pilot-program for a large, outdoor locker system that can store food (pictured to the left). The locker is split into three parts (internally). One-third of the lockers are at room temperature, one-third are refrigerated, and the final third are at freezer temps. Clients of the CFH are able to register online and then access the lockers via a code they enter into a screen attached to the front of the unit. Once the code is entered, the appropriate lockers open and clients can retrieve any food or grocery items inside.

The lockers will help with clients who aren't able to make it to the Center's scheduled times for weekly dinners or when the food pantry is open. It will allow them to still pick-up food for their families. Take a drive by the Center and check it out!

Grab-n-Go Meals provided by SPC each month:

January: 170 meals
February: 170 meals
March: 200 meals
April: 200 meals

Thank you for your faithfulness to this ministry!



MANUP PITTSBURGH

LIVE EVENT JUNE 12, 2021

7:30AM - 3:00PM AT VICTORY FAMILY CHURCH

REGISTER TODAY

FEATURED SPEAKERS



MIKE TOMLIN



CLAUDE ALEXANDER



KENT CHEVALIER



CRAIG WOLFLEY



CAM HEYWARD



ED GLOVER

ManUp helps maximize your impact in your home, neighborhood, and city. Keynote speakers, local pastors, and sports personalities will challenge you to be the best Godly leader you can be and raise awareness of the devastating impact of fatherless youth today. Breakouts and meals are included with the live event and we will be adhering to current CDC guidelines. Recommended for ages 15+.



Register for the event here:
uifpgh.org/man-up-pittsburgh/

In-Person: \$49

Virtual Option: June 19, No Cost



Sewickley Presbyterian Church

LIVE · GROW · SERVE

414 Grant Street

Sewickley, PA 15143

www.sewickleypresby.org

Dated Material

PLEASE EXPEDITE



-- Begins May 6 --

Every Thursday

8 - 9:30 AM

Faith House Fire Pit

Rain? No meeting.

Start your Thursdays with your favorite cup of coffee and some morning fellowship with church members & Rev. Rebecca Reeder.