

INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter | July/August 2018



SPC Members: Tim Merrill & Mark Gensheimer
working during our Spring Clean-Up Day

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NEWSLETTER

The SPC newsletter, **Interpretation**, is published six times a year. Please make submissions to, 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 and would like a visit, please call the church office to let us know.

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We aspire to be a CHURCH where the GOSPEL of Jesus Christ is
 FAITHFULLY PROCLAIMED and FAITHFULLY LIVED
 in grateful response to God's love.



TO-BE LIST by Rev. Sarah Bird

As I am writing this, I am in the throes of preparing for our church mission trip to the Czech Republic. We leave the day after tomorrow, and I am trying to remember all the details that so often get forgotten when embarking upon international travel – did I pack my cell phone charger? What about the adapter for the electrical outlet? Where can I put my passport so I don't lose it? How many pairs of shoes is TOO many?

It's been so easy for me to become overwhelmed by this minutia that my motivation and excitement about the trip has been somewhat overshadowed by worry. Something similar happened to me when I was preparing for my trip to Israel/Palestine last month. My mind became so cluttered with my to-do list that I forgot my "to-be" list. I love making lists. I love checking things off of

lists to show I've completed a certain task. But sometimes, I need to take a step back from to-do lists and remember how important it is "to-be" – to be joyful, to be patient, to be kind, to be hopeful, to be grateful.

So that is the list I will be keeping for a while until I get reoriented around the things that actually matter – a to-be list! As I recognize the gift of these incredible trips and see that God is working in every corner of the world, I realize that it's okay if I forget my cell phone charger. It's not a big deal if I pack the wrong footwear. It's so important to be aligned with what really matters. It's so important to remember that God is using this trip to shape me more into His image and to serve His people.

Even if you're not traveling internationally this summer, the practice of drafting a "to-be" list could still be genuinely valuable. What is it that you would like to be? More flexible? More faithful? More generous? Perhaps you just want to be more still. The psalmist beckons us to that place of stillness and rest in the Lord when we put aside our to-do lists and the countless ways we seek to earn our place, our worth, and God's grace. And we can just be for a little while. That might be the best place to start. It's definitely what I will be doing over the next few days before the chaos of the trip sets in, I will be still and know that God is God and I am not.

*Be still and know that
I am God.*

Psalm 46:10

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Join us!

Women's
retreat
October 27 & 28

Antiochian Village
Ligonier, PA

Women from 10th grade and older are invited to be a part of a special night away with other women from our church! Have fun, fellowship, and spend time around the Word of God. The Laurel Mountains house the beautiful and peaceful Antiochian Village where we'll be meeting. There are places to sit, walk, and relax around a beautiful pond with lovely swans and other wildlife.

Online registrations are now open on our website, or you may see Sharon Barber, in the church office, for a printed registration form. The deadline to reserve your spot is **July 13**. The cost is \$152 for a single room and \$117 for a double. This includes one night's lodging and three meals. Please call the church office (412.741.4550) with any questions or visit our website.

WESTMINSTER RINGERS SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

By Craig Dobbins, Director of Music Ministries

The Westminster Ringers is seeking additional members. Prior ringing experience is not required nor is reading music, although it speeds up the learning process. This year weekly rehearsals resume on Thursday, September 20, from 6:45 - 7:50 PM.

If you're interested or want to know more, Craig Dobbins, at cdobbins@sewickleypresby.org or at 412-741-4550, x205.



By Jenny Hay
Director of FriendShip Preschool

It is with great pleasure that FriendShip Preschool announces three new staff persons for this coming 2018-2019 school year.

We welcome church member, Sara Hoagland, as the Assistant Teacher in the FriendShip I classroom Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and as the Assistant Teacher in the FriendShip II class. Sara is replacing Heather Taylor-Martin who now teaches fitness classes at Robert Morris. Sara is very familiar with FriendShip as daughters Dilan and Emma are preschool graduates. Sara also served on the FriendShip Subcommittee and has filled in as a substitute teacher in the past. She serves on the Children's Ministry Subcommittee and has also been a teacher of Vacation Bible School and Children's Church. In addition, Sara volunteers at the Center for Hope.

FriendShip also welcomes Stacey Engel as our new Head Children's Corner Teacher, replacing Terry Doughty who retired this summer. Stacey has a background in nursing and healthcare management. She has volunteered extensively with many children's programs and is looking forward to teaching in the Children's Corner classroom and Stay and Play lunch program.

Finally, Kristie Shanahan joins the FriendShip staff as our new PreK Head Teacher, replacing Pat Lear who also retired this summer. Kristie has a background of teaching both kindergarten and preschool classrooms and has also taught Sunday School classes within her home church.

We welcome Sara, Stacey, and Kristie to SPC and the FriendShip Preschool and wish them many happy years working with our preschool children.

FAITH GROUP RECAP

By Tom Szuba, SPC Member

Close to a dozen church members participated in an eight-week study of the book, *Paradoxes for Living: Cultivating Faith in Confusing Times*, on consecutive Wednesday evenings in the Faith House in April and May. Led by the Rev. Dr. Graham Standish, Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling and the book's author, the group engaged in deep and meaningful discussions of seemingly paradoxical perspectives Christians are called to believe and practice, including *To Be Strong, We Have to Be Weak; To Receive, We Have to Give; To Save Our Lives, We Have to Lose Them; and To Live, We Have to Die*.

As Dr. Standish wrote in the book's introduction: "At its center, Christianity is the ultimate paradox... How can God, who is immortal and transcends this universe, suffer, die, and then be resurrected? How could God, who is divine, be human? How could God both be on earth, incarnate in Jesus, and at the same time be the Father who is in heaven... These are not questions that can be answered logically or rationally. They can be answered only through years of reflection, contemplation, meditation, and prayer."

They can also be answered, or at least discussed honestly and in great depth, in dialogue with fellow Christians who are striving to better understand these fundamental, yet complex, foundations of our faith. The small group setting encouraged both discussion and debate as participants shared personal interpretations of the book's unique, revealing, and thought-provoking content.

If you missed this class, the book is available online and, more importantly, know that we expect to have additional small group studies led by Dr. Standish in the future—after all, he has written six other books, including *Humble Leadership* (2007), *Becoming the Blessed Church* (Revised 2016), and *Discovering the Narrow Path* (2002).

DOLLAR & SENSE: Did You Know?

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

We have a new steam table in the kitchen. A new unit was purchased with funds designated from the Presbyterian Woman's Association. The old unit was more than 30 years old, was stationary, and did not function properly anymore. The new unit is portable and much smaller in scale, but still allows for the same amount of food warming.

The old unit had two large, wooden cutting boards attached to it. Thanks to Keith Boyer, we now have six cutting boards to use in the church and Faith House kitchens. He took the old cutting boards and made new ones out of it! Also, thank you to the Hammer and Nails crew who removed the old unit.



FREE PEW CONTROVERSY

By Tim Merrill, SPC Member

Last fall in *Interpretation*, there was an article on this subject occasioned by the placement of a 19th Century seating chart in the back hallway leading away from the Robinson Room. More information about the “free pew” controversy recently has come to light as the Historical Subcommittee continues to delve into the History Closet.

Most of us know that our original church building was built in 1859, and that soldiers on their way to the Union Army were housed in the church in 1861. However, it is less common knowledge that for the duration of the 19th Century, all church pews were “owned” or “rented” to church families, and only those families could sit in those pews. The annual rentals for the pews came to \$6000 per year, and those funds were used to pay the pastor.

Due to a 1994 letter found in the History Closet, written by the late John Orndorff Sr., to the then Chair of the History Committee, Mrs. Nathan (Pat) Pearson, a fuller understanding of the Free Pew Controversy has come to light.

Apparently, the crisis developed in the spring of 1899, when, all the pews having been sold, ushers were having great difficulty in seating strangers or other non-pew owners. The solutions to this dilemma were to build a gallery, thereby adding more pews, enlarging the sanctuary, or changing to a free pew system.

In his letter, John says that he reviewed 72 letters from church members back then stating their opinions of changing to a free pew system. He attached to his letter 20

of those comments. Here are a few:

“My present feeling is aversion to the free pew system. From earliest childhood I have been accustomed to a family pew where we were families apart though united in worship.”

“I am in favor of having my own pew, but will always and cordially give the unoccupied seats to strangers.”

“I am not prepared at present to yield my proprietary right to my present pew. I bought it, not from the church but from another member just as I would buy a horse.”

“I much prefer the present system of seating but will accommodate myself to the decision of the committee.”

In the end, the final decision was to discontinue the sale of pews, but it appears that it was a difficult decision. Change is often difficult, but tradition has its value as well. A prior pastor observed that he would look out at the congregation and see second and third generation family members sitting in the same pews.

SPC has had its controversies over the years (hiring pastors, installing an organ for example), but perhaps because successfully resolving controversies is a part of our origins – people of the old Scots tradition and people of the newer English tradition came together as the original pioneers of this church – we got through the free pew controversy. But, look at some of opinions John found:

Then, as now often happens, there were those willing to “accommodate” to change, as we continue to grow, together.

FIRE PIT AT THE FAITH HOUSE

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

A vision was set in motion in December of 2016 by church members Sylvia Dallas and John Oliver to create a fire pit/worship area near the Faith House. The project began with a vision of an area that would entice all ages to gather around the fire for meetings/singing/worship. In January of 2017, the Property Committee was presented with the idea and was in favor of the plan. Steve Victor began the process by designing a proposed plan and a cost estimate.

As part of his Eagle Scout project, Kyle Wolf began working with Rich Gratton, Bonnie Moorhead, and Steve Victor on the pit in February. Site work began in May to clear the location, setting of the base, installing the stones and landscape. The final stages of installing the burner and logs was finished in June. There will be a special lighting ceremony at a future date.



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

From January 1 to March 31, your Amazon purchases have given the church a donation of \$25.71. Thank you to everyone who has activated Amazon Smile on their Amazon account.

If you have an Amazon account, all that you need to do is to visit smile.amazon.com and follow the directions. That's all there is to it! It's super easy!

Amazon will keep track of qualifying purchases and donate the proceeds to our church. Please let Laura Mikush know if you have any questions: lmikush@sewickleypresby.org.

GUEST PREACHER IN JULY: Rev. Brian Wallace



On Sunday, July 15, Rev. Brian Wallace will be joining us as our guest preacher. We've welcomed Brian before and it's always a blessing to hear what he has to bring to us.

Brian serves as an Associate Minister to the Pittsburgh Presbytery. In this role he resources and supports leaders and congregations through the Pittsburgh area.



beginning
beginning

end
end

BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND

By Eric Fulmer, SPC Member

In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey suggests that “one should begin each day, task or project with a clear vision of one’s desired direction and destination”. I must admit that when I began the Bible Project on January 1, the destination I had in mind was getting THROUGH the Old Testament and getting TO the New Testament as rapidly as possible. For me, the Old Testament was a means to an end...something to be endured in order to gain a deeper understanding of Christ’s teachings in the New Testament (NT).

Congratulations to those tenacious participants who started with “in the beginning” in January and have kept up with their daily readings. We are now rapidly approaching the midpoint of the Bible Project. But there are still nearly 80 days of Old Testament (OT) readings remaining before we arrive at the good news of the Gospels on August 24. Wow, this is an incredibly lengthy OT journey!

Yes, the OT readings can sometimes be laborious, but after reading for 5+ months I am beginning to understand that the OT offers important historic context and advice that allows us to better understand the NT while helping us to become better decision makers in the process.

For example, isn’t it interesting that Matthew begins his Gospel by describing Jesus as the “Son (i.e., descendant) of David?” So, why is this so important? Had we not read the OT, we might be tempted to say “so what?” to Matthew. I now believe that it was worth the effort to read about the 12 tribes of Israel, their leaders and interrelationships just to understand the connection to Matthew’s lineage of the house of David.

Also, isn’t it amazing that 700 years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah was inspired by God to write:

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14, NIV)

These passages afford a glimpse into the Master plan that God had devised centuries before this prophecy was fulfilled through the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah was a divinely inspired instrument who provided evidence that God began creation with the end in mind.

Here’s another thought from my reading of the OT: Ever since creation and the Garden of Eden, there has been a documented human propensity to disobey God. It seems that many Israelites were fundamentally incapable of learning from their mistakes and becoming loyal followers of God. This precipitated a perpetual cycle of God’s judgement/forgiveness with an abundance of life and property destroyed in the process. While reading the OT, I have often wondered why God selected Israel as his chosen people in the first place. What was God thinking? Surely he knew that the Israelites would eventually become disobedient. Was God desperate? Were there no other contenders?

Perhaps at least part of the OT takeaway for each of us involves patience and perseverance in our Biblical reading habits, a healthy appetite for understanding, learning from our mistakes as well as those of our forbearers, and perhaps most importantly, conducting our lives with God’s Master plan in mind.

A LOOK AT OUR WINDOWS



“SAINT CECILIA”
(Tiffany Studios)
in memory of
Myra Davis (1884-1899)

Myra Davis was the daughter of Henry Davis (1855-1910) and Elizabeth McCleery Davis (1858-1957), who were married in Sewickley in 1882. Elizabeth was the daughter of Samuel McCleery, one of Sewickley's wealthiest men in the late 19th century, who had been involved in the establishment of the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne and Chicago Railroad. Henry Davis was the law partner of Christopher Magee.

In 1897, Henry and Elizabeth purchased a riverboat captain's Victorian house in Glen Osborne Borough, located on a large tract between Boundary and McKown Streets. For the next two years, they extensively remodeled the house.

Tragically, in 1899, just three weeks after moving into the house, their 14-year old daughter, Myra, died of typhoid fever. Henry never recovered. He gave up his business interests and travelled, leaving Elizabeth at home with their two remaining daughters, Helen and Dorothy, who was ten years younger than Helen, born after Myra's death. When Henry was in Egypt, he sent his wife a card every day with a rhyme on it.

The Saint Cecilia window in the west wall of the Sanctuary is a Tiffany window. It shows a girl holding a lyre and standing in a field of iris. She is crowned with a wreath and nimbus.

While the reason for the choice of this design is not known, we do know that Saint Cecilia was martyred in Sicily in the year 176 A.D. because of her faith. For hundreds of years she has been celebrated as the patron saint of church musicians as well as all musicians.



MINISTRY ARCHITECT VOLUNTEER TRAINING

August 4 | 9 - 11:30 AM | Faith House
Breakfast provided

Children's Ministry will be hosting a volunteer training/kick-off event for the 2018/2019 school year. Through our work with Ministry Architects and coach Mary Beth Abplanalp, we will be preparing our volunteers by providing helpful training, advice, materials, and guidance for the year ahead.

If you are involved in children's ministry in any way, or have even the slightest interest in becoming involved, I strongly encourage you to attend this event. Teaching and leading our children is an important building block in their spiritual, emotional, and physical development, and we hope you'll join us as we strive to help them grow in the faith. This event is free of cost, and we ask that you RSVP to Brian Mack by August 1 at bmack@sewickleypresby.org.



YOU ARE NEEDED!

Would you like to be involved in our church family, but don't have a lot of time to do so? A great way to take part is to be an usher on Sunday mornings. As an usher, you welcome people coming into the sanctuary, hand out bulletins, and help with taking the offering. The only requirements are that you arrive 15-20 minutes before the service begins and to have a welcoming attitude! During the summer months, we need three ushers at the 8 AM service and four at the 10 AM service.

Please consider signing up for a week or two this summer! You can sign-up on our website under **Get Connected**. Please contact the church office with any questions you might have.

CHURCH OFFICER NOMINATIONS

This year's Nominating Committee invites you to serve by suggesting members of our church family to be considered to serve in the offices of elder, deacon and members of the 2019 Nominating Committee.

How do I recommend someone?

Fill out a recommendation form on our church website or request one from the church office.

What do these individuals do?

Ruling Elders exercise leadership, government, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of the church. They serve on the Session, which is the body that establishes and oversees the direction of the church's ministry, program, and budget. Elders are also asked to chair and serve on committees of session. The Session and most committees meet monthly.

Deacons serve in compassionate ministry. Deacons organize and serve in ministries to engage people and groups in Christ's service. Deacons meet monthly or more frequently if a particular program or project requires this.

Nominating Committee members take suggestions from church members, along with their own candidates, and prayerfully determine whom they will nominate to serve as elders, deacons, and members of the nominating committee in upcoming years.

Are there guidelines to follow?

In considering persons to recommend, you may wish to reflect on the following:

- Is this person faithful in his/her attendance and commitment to the church?
- Does this person demonstrate Christian living in his/her daily life, within the family, at work in the community?
- Is this person involved in this congregation's activities?
- Has this person demonstrated leadership ability through involvement in other community organizations or service at other churches?
- Can this person fulfill the requirements of the office, i.e., attend the meetings?

Please visit our website to learn more. Recommendations are due by July 15. Please submit them online or to Sharon Barber in the church office. Thank you.

BIDDING ADIEU TO THE GRAHAMS

By Jennifer Johnson, Director of Communications



In August, we'll be saying goodbye to long-time members, Tom and Toby Graham, as they relocate to New Jersey to be closer to their daughter, Lisa, and her family.

Tom and Toby have been members of SPC since 1984. During that time they have immersed themselves in our church family and have been faithful members to the SPC ministry. They were originally members of the Ben Avon Presbyterian Church before coming to SPC.

Tom was Chair of the Property Committee during the Faith House renovation. He regularly dealt with the Sewickley Borough, with the regulatory committees, and helping with the Save the Pink House group who ultimately helped raise funds for the project. He also oversaw major renovations of the stonework on our main building, the steeple, and roof, as well as the sanctuary, dining room, the Senior Manse and our underground storm water system. Tom served as a member of Session for two 6-year terms, and has always been a part of our Chancel Choir and more recently Arise, Shine, our 9 AM worship team. Believe it or not, these are just some of the things that Tom has been a part of. There have been many more.

As with Tom's, the list of things that Toby has been a part of is almost endless during her time in our church. Toby has also served on Session and has been a part of our Chancel Choir and bell choirs. Toby served as a Sunday School teacher and was a part of our Adult Education planning committee for many years. More recently, she served as Day on the Lawn chair for three years and is currently chair of our Mission Committee.

Years ago, Toby started the Fortnightly Fellowship which morphed into the (now) monthly Book Club which many of our church and community members are a part of.

Here are a few words from Toby:

Our time at SPC has been a time of joy. We leave this community of faith where we have felt loved and supported with tears in our eyes. Goodbyes are hard, but the motivation for our move to New Jersey is love—love of family and wanting to be a presence in the life of our granddaughter, Nora.

My favorite word-smith, Frederick Buechner says:

"Whenever you find tears in your eyes, especially unexpected tears, it is well to pay the closest attention. They are not only telling you something about the secret of who you are, but more often than not, God is speaking to you through them of the mystery of where you have come from and is summoning you to where, if your soul is to be saved, you should go to next."

We are so very thankful for the testimony of faithfulness and love of Christ that Tom and Toby have displayed to all of us. If you would like to keep in touch with them, please feel to email or drop them a note in the mail:

Tom: thomasgraham46@gmail.com

Toby: tograham43@gmail.com

Tom & Toby Graham
1-01 Morlot Avenue
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL WAS A BLAST!

By Brian Mack, Director of Children's Ministry



We just finished Vacation Bible School, and to say that it was fun, crazy, and exhausting would be an understatement. We had an amazing group of kids participating, and an equally impressive staff of teens and adults leading our crews and stations throughout the week. I could go on for pages with stories from the week, and will gladly talk to you if you'd like to hear more, but here are some of my favorite highlights from VBS.

On our third day of camp, the kids heard the story of Jesus and his disciples in the garden on the night Jesus was betrayed. The disciples were struggling to stay awake as Jesus went off to pray. When they were finally able to stay awake, a crowd was brought to them as Judas approached Jesus. As Matt Braksick (our Bible Discovery leader) told this story, and described Judas, one of Jesus' closest friends, betraying him and bringing mean people to arrest him, I sat in the room, watching the children as they listened. One child leaned forward, eyes widening. Her jaw dropped as she heard about Judas leading the crowd to Jesus. I sat back and smiled, watching this reaction. It reminded me that the stories that have become old and familiar to so many of us are still as compelling as they were when we first heard them.

My next story is about one of our crew leaders interacting with Jeremy Fisher as he led the kids in music one morning. He asked for a dance volunteer to help do the motions up front for the kids, and immediately one of our green group leaders jumped up! She was pumped, excited, and ready to help lead. The music started, and it was clear that she knew all the motions perfectly, except, now she was facing the kids, and not facing the screen that showed off the motions, so everything she was doing was backwards. What ensued was about two minutes of Jeremy discreetly giving directions to his helper while trying to lead and sing. He would whisper to her, "Remember, everything starts on your left now... It says jump left, but you jump right... spin the other way next time." She tried her best and the joy on the kids faces as they laughed together, meant it was no problem at all. Our Bible point midway through the week was, "When you struggle, Jesus rescues!" and while Jesus may not have helped her dancing, His presence was there rescuing her from awkwardness and embarrassment through Jeremy's comforting words.

VBS was amazing this year, and I can't say enough about all the people involved. Next time you're in the church office, stop by and ask me about VBS, and I'll talk your ear off about the many children, youth, and adults who made it a success. I thank God for this wonderful church and supportive community, because I wouldn't be able to do this on my own. On top of all of that, I'm going to remember this VBS for its theme, that no matter what happens, Jesus rescues!





HELLO
SUMMER
2018



ALL YOUTH

WATER WARS | July 1, 4-5:30 PM | Faith House

From the beginning of time, water has been essential for human life. During summer when it feels like it can't get any hotter, we will need water even more. So come out for the water wars! Don't worry, we will have games planned and water balloons provided. So just show up, get splashed, and have fun! Nobody is going home dry!



HS CAMPING TRIP | July 7-8

Raccoon Creek State Park

Do you like the outdoors? Hiking? Swimming? Spikeball? Campfires? S'mores? This is the trip for you! Join us next month for an unforgettable experience with one another as we brave the elements and enjoy a much needed break from everyday life. This trip is for all high school students, including rising 9th graders and recent graduates. RSVP on the church website. The cost is \$20.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SURF CITY | August 5 – 10 | Lake Michigan

We are so excited to be heading back to Surf City with the PKF this summer. Please check your emails for more information and specifics about our departure and return times. If you have not done so already, please print out the health and release form (found on our website) and turn it into the church office along with your full payment by July 1.



ALL YOUTH

COLOR WARS | August 12 | Faith House

Do you love colorful clothes? Do you love hurling things at others to make sure their clothes become more colorful? Then this is the event for you! Join us for a night of team-based competitions where you defend your team's honor through a series of events in order to emerge victorious. Wear a white shirt to prepare for the festivities for the night. We will have capture the flag, a tie dye station, summer snacks, and more!

ALL YOUTH

STUDENT MINISTRIES NIGHT | August 19

In April, we held our first collaborative youth group night between all of the youth groups in Sewickley. We had a blast over at the Tull Family Theater, playing 9-square in the air, spikeball, jenga, eating ice cream, worshipping together, and hearing our friend KG share the word. Join us again this August as a last hurrah before school starts back up -- it's going to be an unforgettable night!





By Mike Creamer, Director of Youth Ministries



CAR WASH FUNDS RAISED

Thank you to everyone who came out to get the winter muck cleaned off of their cars by our youth! As the Apostle Paul writes, "everything old has passed away; everything has become new!" In all seriousness, your support from the car wash has been a huge help as we prepare for our mission trips this summer. Everything that you contribute enables our students to do more, so we cannot convey our gratitude enough! You helped to raise \$470!

MOVE-UP SUNDAY

One of the weirdest transitions in life can be the jump from elementary school to the mysterious, ever-changing "middle school." Here at church, a similar change is made as our 5th graders move into 6th grade, when they are officially welcomed into the youth program. This year we were so excited to have eight 5th graders join us on Move-Up Sunday, and it seemed like they had no care in the world. They came over to the Faith House and made themselves at home as if they were departing seniors. It looks like it's going to be an unforgettable year!

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY



After eight months of weekly classes, retreats, impromptu lunches, meetings with mentors, service projects and more, we have had another class of students go through the confirmation process and officially join the church as members. This is one of the most exciting parts of our ministry here, as we are seeing the vows made at baptism 14 years ago come to fruition now, and as a result we get to continue this faith journey with these students together. Learning to live together as the Church is learning that (as John Donne puts it in his famous poem), "No man is an island entirely of itself; every man is a part of a continent, a part of the main." To be the Church means that we all are in this journey of faith together, through the highs and lows, encouraging and edifying one another from day to day. We are so thrilled to have witnessed these students take another huge step in their walk of faith, and we are excited to see what comes next!

BACCALAUREATE



We were excited to have our dear friend, Derek Davenport, come and celebrate the class of 2018 with us at Baccalaureate this year. As the end of the school year was as hectic as ever and with graduation just around the corner, Derek wanted to leave our students with less of a new idea about Scripture, and more of a reminder to hold onto as they move onto the next chapters in their lives, and that reminder was this: *God loves us, no matter what.* A simple idea, but it brought with it the power of how simple the Gospel truly is when we allow it to sink in. Every story, every moment, every experience we find in scripture is pointing us to Jesus, pointing us to the unavoidable, unchangeable love of God that is pursuing us. We are grateful to have had Derek sharing this year, both for our seniors' sakes and for our own. Good luck to the class of 2018!



PUERTO RICO SCHOOL PROJECT

By Suzanne Watters, SPC Member

My son, John, would like to personally thank everyone who donated to his project this past spring, and he would like to share a message with you. John did two mailings of over 40 boxes of supplies to individual households in Puerto Rico for his sophomore year personal project at Quaker Valley High School. He read that many people in Puerto Rico were still without power, and he wanted to do something that helped people directly. Through friends, John found addresses of families in need, and he collected items like batteries, gloves, flashlights and solar lamps from school and from our church. He received a number of letters from people in Puerto Rico, and here is one of the letters:

Dear John,

Thanks John!!! I used all the products and appreciate your kindness. Thanks so much to you and to the Sewickley Presbyterian Church. In Puerto Rico, we love you too for your help.

*Many Thanks,
Annie, Jose, Joshuan, Jarib, Rayzel*

PRODUCE TO PEOPLE

By Diane Glas, SPC Member

Thank you to all that turned out to make the June 9 Produce to People distribution a success. We served 333 clients and the food distributed will feed 704 people in their households. A big thank you also for the extra kindness extended to our 42 first time clients and those needing assistance thru the lines.

We appreciate you spending a beautiful Saturday morning serving our neighbors in need and supporting Produce to People!

Our next distribution date will be October 20, 2018.

BLANKET SUNDAY THANK YOU

By Tina Thomas, SPC Member

On behalf of the Church World Service blanket program, the Deacons extend their warm appreciation to their fellow SPC members for their response to Blanket Sunday in May. Thanks to the generous support of our church family, we were able to collect \$1686, which will be use to aid families in need -- here and around the world.



CENTER FOR HOPE IN MAY

By Gretchen Burnham, SPC Member

What a glorious evening! Several of us remarked about all the smiling faces and "thank you's" we witnessed! Everyone loved the delicious fried chicken dinner prepared by Safran's! What a treat for the cooks to have the afternoon off from cooking dinner. The runners were kept busy refilling the pans of fried chicken, baked beans, coleslaw, potato salad, fresh fruit cups and green salad.

Safran's had prepared just the right amount of food! We served 104 meals with just eight take home dinners. It was wonderful to have so many back at the table - it seems the warm weather and sunshine brought our friends out for dinner. One of the children from Center for Hope asked to help pass out the desserts. He seemed to really enjoy the task, and was rewarded with his choice of cookies.

In closing, I'd like to share the prayer we recited that evening:

Thank you for our neighbors, those we serve and those we serve alongside. Thank you for these special Thursday evenings when we get a small glimpse of your kingdom of love and generosity here in this place. May we be ever mindful of the gift of this time, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.



A NOTE FROM THE DAWSONS

Regional Liaison for Southeast Asia

Greetings to you, and thank you for your continuing prayers, encouragement, and financial support for our mission work in Southeast Asia. We truly are grateful for the many ways that your church has supported us and walked with us in the power of Christ throughout our years of mission service in Southeast Asia. Thank you for being our partners in Christ's global mission!

We would like to take this opportunity to more personally inform you of some important transitions in our lives and our mission work.

For the past year we both have been engaged in a prayerful process of listening for the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and discerning whether we were being called to remain in Southeast Asia or pursue a different form of Christian service. To that end, on June 30, 2018, we will be ending our service as mission co-workers with the Presbyterian Church (USA), and concluding our roles as the Regional Liaisons for Southeast Asia.

Barry is taking a new position as the Senior Pastor of the American Protestant Church (APC) in Bonn, Germany. Although the name "American" is in the title of the church, that is more of an historical reference, rather than a description of the current demographic realities in the congregation. Today, the APC, Bonn is an international church, including people from perhaps as many as 30 different countries. APC, Bonn also is an interdenominational, English language congregation that has many similarities to the international churches where Barry previously has served as Senior Pastor (The Hague, Netherlands; Paris, France; Tokyo, Japan; and Muscat, Sultanate of Oman).

We will be in Germany by early July, and so we ask for your prayers during our upcoming time of transition to a new ministry context and congregation.

There are no adequate words to express how significant your prayers, your messages of encouragement, your positive responses to our visit to your church, and your financial support have been to us. You have been a strong partner in mission with us, and we will never forget the ways that your support and love have blessed us beyond measure.

The Presbyterian World Mission office of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has begun an active search for the person(s) who will become the new Regional Liaison(s) for Southeast Asia after we conclude our service on June 30. It is our sincere hope and our fervent prayer that you and/or your congregation will continue to support the new mission co-worker(s) who will serve as the new Regional Liaison(s) for Southeast Asia. Your continued support will be vital to making an impact for Christ from the mountain villages of Myanmar to the Bible training schools in Thailand. Lives are being transformed and filled with fresh hope because of your continuing sacrificial gifts that support Christ's mission throughout Southeast Asia.

From our perspective, our mission partnership with you has been a treasure, and, we believe that our relationship with you – as sisters and brothers in Christ who are committed to the global mission of the Church – has been much more than transactional. For us, our friendship in Christ with you has been transformational. In so many ways, your prayers, your gifts, and your compassionate companionship in solidarity with us during our years in Southeast Asia have been tangible signs of hope, the palpable presence of Christ with us, and an authentic expression of your deep desire to impact the world with the Savior's love and justice.

Even though our official responsibilities as Regional Liaisons for Southeast Asia will come to an end on June 30, please know that we will continue to hold you in prayer and value you as our friends in Christ. We hope that you will keep in communication with us in the coming years, that our friendship will endure across the years and time zones as we all attempt in our own mission fields to do small things with great love and be answers to Jesus' prayer that God's will may "be done on earth as it is in heaven."

With love, and in a spirit of thanksgiving and joy for your partnership in Christ's global mission,

Rev. Dr. Barry Dawson and Shelly Dawson

Regional Liaison for Southeast Asia
Presbyterian Church (USA) World Mission
Webpage: Dawson Mission Connections

Backpacks in July



It's that time of year again! In July, the deacons will be collecting backpacks filled with school supplies for students at the Center for Hope in Ambridge. This year, the CFH has asked us to provide 50 backpacks for grades K - 6 and 50 backpacks for grades 7 - 12.

To participate, all you have to do is sign-up in the Robinson Room, take a backpack tag/supply list, and go shopping! If you are unable to shop, you may also make a monetary donation. The backpacks need to be returned to the church by Tuesday, July 31. There will be large, rubber bins in the Robinson Room for you to place them. They will be distributed to the CFH on August 2.

The deacons thank you for your generous support and for your faithfulness to this mission. If you have any questions, please contact Tina Thomas: tinathomas99@verizon.net.

FAITH IN ACTION

By Barb Swan, SPC Member

Faith in Action is a program of the Sewickley Valley YMCA that provides the elderly with drivers to help them remain independent and a vital part of their community. They provide rides to doctor appointments and medical treatments, the grocery store and access to conduct their personal affairs. The program serves adults 60 and over who live in the Quaker Valley, Cornell, Moon, and Ambridge Area school districts.

Annually, Faith in Action provides approximately 1,400 rides to elderly citizens in the Sewickley Valley through a network of volunteer drivers. Faith in Action began in 2002 as a community outreach program at the YMCA, with initial funding provided by SPC. It now is a program jointly supported through a partnership between the Y and Heritage Valley Health System.

In 2017, SPC provided \$5,000 to Faith in Action. SPC members serve as volunteers and receive services from the program. If you'd like to become a volunteer, contact Heather Ochman at the YMCA at 412-741-9622 ext.135 or hochman@sewickleyymca.org.

VICTOR MAKARI RECEIVES AWARD

By pcusa.org (modified)

Rev. Makari has served with the PC(USA) for more than half a century. Victor is a missionary of ours, whom we have supported for several years.



The National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus recognized two Presbyterians for their many years of service to the church — the Rev. Najla Kassab and the Rev. Victor Makari, who was awarded the Fahed Abu-Akel Award. The honors were announced Tuesday evening at a dinner sponsored by the caucus at our denomination's General Assembly that took place June 16-23 in St. Louis, MO.

Rev. Makari said: "I cannot take all the credit. In fact, God chose so many of us to be the planters, thinkers, field workers, for this thing to grow." He encouraged Presbyterians to keep smaller churches in mind, because such churches "receive little financial support —very, very little — but they contribute a great deal."



SUMMER PEACEBUILDING INSTITUTE SCHOLARSHIPS

By Barb Swan, SPC Member

In 2017, the Mission Committee provided \$4000 from the Campbell Scholarship for students attending the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University. The 2017 offering included five sessions from May 8 to June 16, offering 22 courses to 215 participants from 40 countries. The SPC grant provided scholarships to five participants:

Muhammad Akram, from Pakistan, is a young leader in international development with eight years experience in design, monitoring and evaluation, and research. He is currently an Atlas Corps Fellow at the Emerging Global Leaders Initiative by US State Department as well as a Program Fellow and Pakistan Country Advisor at the Center for Islam and Religious Freedom. He is seeking a graduate certificate in International Human Rights and Religion at the Newseum Institute in Washington DC. Muhammad was engaged with World Council of Religions in Pakistan for four years to design and monitor quality of projects on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. At SPI, he took "Analysis: Understanding Conflict."

Catherine Ashasim, from Nigeria, is a education professor at Taraba State University. In addition to initiating a peace center at the university while Acting Vice Chancellor, she worked with a committee that led to peace among two tribes in the local government of Taraba State. She organized peace workshops and seminars in the state headquarters, which included extensive research on the role of women in peace. She took "Peace Education" to further her interest in this area and gain skills to take back to her students.

Jackie Buyncks is from Kansas City, Missouri, and works at the Center for Conflict Resolution. She teaches students, teachers, parents, and neighbors how to resolve conflict using restorative processes instead of punitive ones. Jackie has worked with over 500 students in the last twelve months, in various schools, churches, community centers, and summer activity youth programs, sharing and equipping them with the skills necessary to function

peaceably with others on a daily basis. She also counsels married couples and teaches nonviolent communication. She took "Peace Education" at SPI.

John Lash is executive director of Georgia Conflict Center in Athens, Georgia. In this work, he provides resources on restorative justice and interpersonal skills for conflicts within juvenile courts, schools, religious groups, families, and individuals. John was incarcerated for 25 years, serving a life sentence for killing a man while on temporary assignment at an Army recruiting station. During his time in prison, John learned about and became committed to nonviolence, studying Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and restorative justice. Paroled in 2009, John undertook an intense study of NVC as part of Compassionate Leadership, and focused on using NVC for mediation. In 2011, he enrolled in the MS in conflict management at Kennesaw State University, where he focused on community based approaches to addressing conflict and violence. He has worked at Georgia Conflict Center since 2012, starting as an intern. He has become increasingly interested in supporting groups that are addressing structural violence, and has facilitated dialogues on race, religion, and ideological differences. John took "Restorative Justice Organizing."

Isabel Sampaio Lima is a professor and retired judge from Brazil. First introduced to restorative justice 20 years ago at a conference in New Zealand, she finally made the journey to CJP as a visiting scholar in spring 2017. Her current goal is to develop new paradigms linking restorative justice and human rights education to children's rights and peacebuilding. She is organizing a restorative justice training at CJP this fall for Brazilian professionals active in the country's restorative justice movement. Isabel also hopes to create a restorative justice training for professionals from the seven Portuguese-speaking countries through their Judge and Attorney Schools. Isabel took "Analysis: Understanding Conflict" and "Circle Processes."



DAY ON THE LAWN

SEPTEMBER 8, 2018

Sign-Up Online:
www.sewickleypresby.org

Most of us know that Day on the Lawn is coming up VERY soon! If you are new to SPC, here's what you need to know: Day on the Lawn is the biggest and best rummage sale you could ever dream of being a part of. Every September, for one day only, our church campus is taken over by merchandise of all shapes and sizes AND by countless people who come to shop for the best deals around! Last year, DOL raised over \$60,000 for mission! It's an incredible day and one that most of our church family takes part in one way or another. It's also a great way to get to know others in our church.

We've been holding donation drop-off days since May and we still have quite a few left. Please consider volunteering to work one of the days. You can find additional details (what it's like to volunteer, when you can volunteer, times/dates) on our website or you may sign-up in the Robinson Room as well.

We also need your stuff! Please visit our website to see a list of items we aren't able to take. If you would like to donate furniture and need some help with getting it to the church, please contact Becky Senior: 412.741.7274.

We are now beginning the process of recruiting for DOL departments. Working the day of the sale, and preparing for it, is a lot of fun (believe it or not!). Just as with Donation Drop-Off Days, there is a need for many to help on the day of the sale (September 8) and the week leading up to it. The available departments are listed below. Sign-up for one that interests you and the department Chair will contact you about the details.

Antiques
 Bakery/Deli
 Books
 Cafe
 Clean-Up Crew
 Electronics
 First Aid
 Furniture
 Jewelry
 Lawn/Garden/Pets

Linens
 Seasonal
 Security
 Set-Up Crew
 Sporting Goods
 Square Cashiers
 Toys
 Transporter Crew
 White Elephant
 Cashiers

DONATION DROP-OFF DAYS

Saturday, July 14 | 9 AM – 12 PM
 Saturday, July 28 | 9 AM – 12 PM
 Saturday, August 11 | 9 AM – 12 PM
 Wednesday, August 15 | 5 – 8 PM
 Saturday, August 25 | 9 AM – 12 PM
 Friday, August 31 | 9 AM – 12 PM
 Saturday, September 1 | 9 AM – 12 PM



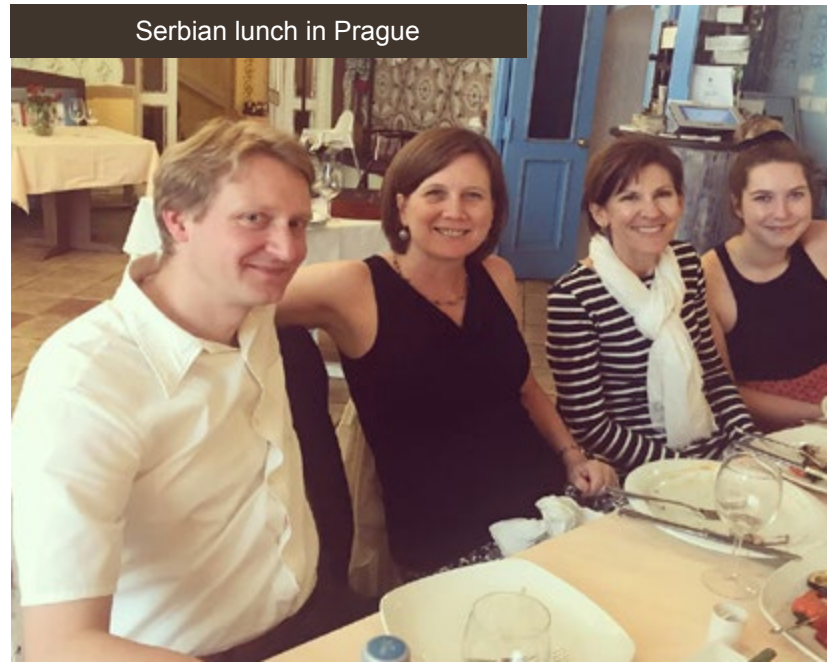
Czech Republic Memories



A view of Prague



Prague Church



Serbian lunch in Prague



Prague headquarters of Diaconia



Jewish ghetto of Terezin outside Prague



Boat ride down the Vltava river



Citadel Hospice run by Diaconie



Jewish ghetto of Terezin outside Prague





Sewickley Presbyterian Church

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Dated Material

PLEASE EXPEDITE!

This newsletter is published by
Sewickley Presbyterian Church



*Mark your
Calendars!*

September 2

Final Day of 8 & 10 AM Worship Services

September 8

Day on the Lawn Sale

September 9

10 AM Worship Service only

September 11

Koinonia Retreat

September 15

Good Little Giants Concert

September 16

Fall Worship Schedule Resumes

September 23

New Member Classes Begin