

Here Comes the Sun...

It's just about summertime, and there's a feeling that things may be starting to get back to some sense of "normal" in our lives. The PA safety restrictions (except masking) were lifted as of May 31. Pools, amusement parks, and restaurants are beginning to open up again. People are starting to feel safe to travel. Vaccinations are increasing, allowing for more of what we knew pre-COVID to start transitioning back. And the sun is shining more and more...

While official changes to our current routines have not yet been decided upon by the Worship Committee or Session, a few things ARE starting at FPCE. First, summer worship at 10AM begins June 6 with an outdoor service behind the church at the Gathering Place alley entrance. We haven't attempted anything outside for worship since 2015! And the Deacons have found a creative way to bring back the Strawberry Festival on June 16. Read the article later for details. Join us as we gather to give thanks to God for the many blessings in our lives through worship and fellowship!

SOCIALLY DISTANCED & ONLINE WORSHIP

First Presbyterian Church of
EDGEWOOD
The Community Church

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W W W . F P C E D G E W O O D . O R G

WORSHIP MOVES TO 10:00AM THIS MONTH

Sunday, June 6: For our first Sunday at the summer hour of 10AM, we will meet OUTSIDE! Please join us in the area behind the building by the door to the Gathering Place and the daycare entrance. Seats will be placed out on the alley facing the building, where the worship leadership team will be set up on steps and ramp that serve as a built-in staging area. We will have cool bottled water available for you and encourage you to wear your sunglasses as Pastor Tony preaches a sermon titled "To Enjoy and Glorify God Forever" from Psalm 16:5-11 and 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Sunday, June 13: Due to the outdoor service last week, we will celebrate Communion this Sunday as well as the sacrament of baptism. Pastor Tony's sermon is titled "The Beginning," and is the first in a sermon series from the first chapter of John's gospel. This week is John 1:1-4.

Sunday, June 20: On Father's Day, Rev. Rivera preaches on "The Light in the Darkness" (John 1:6-13).

Sunday, June 27: "The Word Became Flesh" (John 1:14-18), Pastor Tony preaching.



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*Believing we are
called together
by God's love
through Jesus Christ,
our mission as the
First Presbyterian Church
of Edgewood
is to love God,
to love each other,
and to love our neighbors.*

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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**LOVE GOD
EACH OTHER
OUR NEIGHBORS**

As a Christian, I am called to grow in my relationship with God and in my faith. The same is accomplished through prayer and

**PASTOR'S
POINT
OF
VIEW**



the study of God's word – the Bible. It also entails that I remain in Christ for, without Him, I will not be able to grow at all. I am reminded of Jesus's words in John 15, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. . . Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

On an autumn evening in 1858, Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) shared the following opening lines to the sermon, "Growth in Grace," based on 2 Peter 3.18. May his words stir up our hearts to grow in the Lord throughout the summer months, and always.

"It is worthwhile to remark that this passage immediately follows the seventeenth verse, where the apostle says, "Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." He puts the one after the other, as if the one must be the means of the other. There had been some, in the apostle's day, who had twisted, to their own destruction, certain expressions in the Epistles of Paul which Peter said were "hard to be understood;" and, therefore, he warned Christian men and women to take heed lest they, "being led away with the error of the wicked," should "fall from" their "own steadfastness." In order that they might know how to stand, and to be preserved from falling, he gave them this direction: "grow in grace;" for the way to stand is to grow; the way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression. If you see even such a simple thing as a child's top rolling along your floor at home, you will observe that it will always stand upright as long as it keeps on rolling; but when it stops, down it goes. So is it with the Christian; as long as he is in motion, he stands; but if it were possible for the motion to cease, then the Christian would fall from his steadfastness. Glory be to God, he will be kept from falling, and he shall be presented faultless before the throne of God! The way to stand, then, is to go forward; the way to be steadfast is to progress; the way to be alive, according to the apostle, is to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.""

Glory be to God!

Pastor Tony Rivera

Outdoor Worship Planned for June 6

As you have already read earlier in this newsletter, we are planning an outdoor worship service on **Sunday, June 6**, with a rain date of June 20. It's hard to believe, but the last outdoor emerging worship service we held on the side lawn was in 2015!

Due to limited resources (and to make the workload easier on those involved), we are going to meet on the street behind the Gathering Place. It is much easier to move chairs just outside the door to the street than what it takes to get to the lawn, plus we have a sound system already set up in the Gathering Place that won't need to be taken anywhere!



Please plan to show up by 9:00AM if you are available to help set up chairs. We'll need a few folks to help bring them back inside after the service as well. And for those attending at 10AM, bring your sunglasses and summer hats! We're planning to sing some of our favorite songs with keyboard and guitar. We'll provide cold bottles of water for those who would like them. Please join us!



STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL, JUNE 16, 6-8PM

We're Back!!!!!! Hey strawberry lovers we are welcoming you to a walkup or drive thru Strawberry Festival **Wednesday, June 16 from 6-8PM**. \$5.00 per pre-packaged strawberry dessert. Please wear a mask and come one - come all to support our Deacon Board. (We will be set up on the sidewalk by prayer garden outside)

P.S. Remember it's yummy in your tummy!!!!



F.R.O.G.S. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

FRIENDS, READING, & OTHER GREAT STUFF

FROGS, their families and volunteers had a fantastic reunion on the side lawn on Tuesday, May 18. Since our program ended so abruptly last March 2020, we decided to try to catch up with our tadpoles and their families. We had a great turn out of FROGS and volunteers, finding out about their school attendance, seeing how much they grew, voices changed, family news, etc.

Volunteers, we need to meet sometime during June to plan the upcoming session in September - watch for emails, phone calls, etc.

Session Notes

At their May meeting, Session:

- Voted that Summer worship will begin at 10:00AM from June 6 - September 12, 2021.
- Approved the use of the side lawn or sanctuary for a memorial service for Judy Mysels' mother on Saturday, August 7, 1-3 PM.
- Voted to move communion from 6/6 to 6/13 so as not to have it outdoors.

The Community Church in Music

As you all know, our own music during worship has been limited to just Sunny and me leading each week in our services. I'm grateful to Sunny for her dedicated, faithful, and of course amazingly musical performances at the piano enhancing our worship. I'm also hopeful that as restrictions are relaxed over the coming months that we can encourage congregational singing, start incorporating more folks into our services, and eventually get back to whatever will pass off as "normal" when it's safe to do so. Thank you to the congregation for your patience, understanding, and support during these difficult months of most unusual ways to worship!

The last part of our FPCE mission statement says that we "love our neighbors." We've done our community meals, strawberry festivals, Camp SOS, supported WCM, among others as a way of reaching out. But we've also discussed for years opening our doors and allowing people and organizations to use our facility. Really becoming the COMMUNITY church.

Over the past couple of months, Session has received requests and approved the use of the church building by a private flute studio teacher named Sarah Steranka and the a cappella barbershop group Vocal Confluence.



Sarah Steranka lives in Edgewood and was seeking a space to teach her private students through the Pittsburgh Flute Academy as students begin in-person meetings again. She will likely be in the building 2 afternoons per week (location TBD as of the last conversation). Sarah, who is also an adjunct faculty member at Carnegie Mellon University, has also offered to perform during our worship services on occasion, so we may take her up on the invitation!

Vocal Confluence is a Pittsburgh-based a cappella chorus, comprised of a Men's and a Mixed Ensemble. The group performs music in a variety of styles, including barbershop, jazz, traditional choral, and contemporary a cappella. Made up of members of diverse ages and backgrounds, VC is committed to musical excellence. Vocal Confluence has performed over the years for such occasions as barbershop contests, community events, and its own annual concerts, and is always looking for new performance opportunities.

Founded in 1997 as the Steel City Harmonizers, Vocal Confluence proudly represents the Pittsburgh Metro Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Prior to pandemic closures, VC was rehearsing at Beulah and their new guidelines and fees prompted a search for a new location. In discussions with the Vocal Confluence leadership, they've expressed a desire to also perform outreach events. We may see them at a future community dinner as entertainment to go along with the meal. And I can personally vouch for the group as I've worked with them on a joint virtual concert last December with Voces Solis, and their artistic director has also sung with our Summer Singers group (he was in the choir with me that sang at FPCE in August 2019).



Also, just as an FYI, I am taking the month of July off for vacation. No official plans of traveling or anything yet, but when I looked at the calendar, I realized that I haven't taken an actual vacation Sunday (I'm supposed to have 4 each year) since some time in 2019! (And even then it was to travel with the North Hills Choir on our tour to NYC so it was still for work!) Tyler McGuigan has agreed to lead singing during my absence. I look forward to making a joyful noise to the Lord with you online or in-person after a much-needed break!

Peace,
Shaun

The Currency of Love

We are familiar with the Parable of the Talents/Minas (Matt 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27). The master leaves for a trip and gives talents/minas to his servants. The ones who earn more are rewarded and the one who hid his talent/mina is judged. While we often think about these passages in monetary terms, a deeper meaning may be there regarding how we use our currency of love. "For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away." (Matt 25:29)

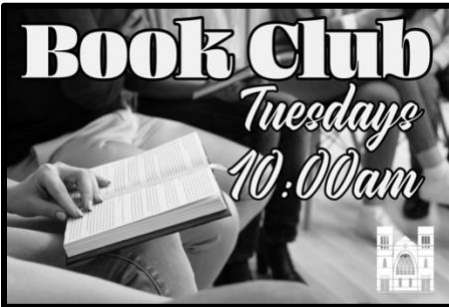
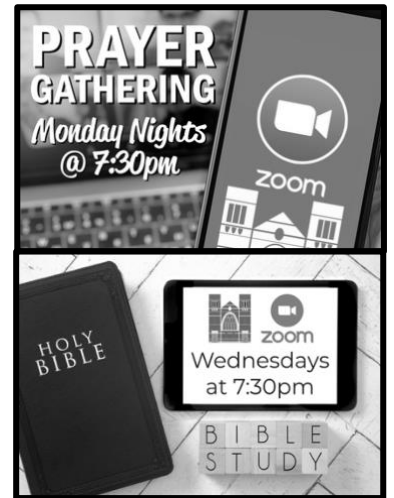
Blessings,
Paul Otori
Chair, Stewardship

Weekly Zoom Meetings for Prayer & Study

Join one of our weekly gatherings on Zoom for prayer, discussion, and study.

On Mondays at 7:30pm, we gather for intentional prayer focusing on our members, community, and world. Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm is a Bible study led by Pastor Tony.

An e-mail invitation is sent out weekly with Zoom links, meeting ID and passcode. To be added to the email list, contact the office. And if you don't use Zoom on your device, you can call in to the meetings to participate by voice. Call Judy in the office to receive the number, meeting ID and passcode to participate if you don't receive the email.



Book Club Transitions to In-Person Meetings

Our weekly Book Club that meets on Tuesday morning has decided to begin socially distanced in-person meetings as they did pre-pandemic at the home of Rhonda Apossos on Maple Avenue. They usually meet at 10:00AM (though occasionally it is pushed back an hour depending on the group's schedules). If you are interested in joining the group, contact either the church office or Rhonda for details.

Reminder of In-Person Worship Guidelines

As of the printing of this newsletter, neither the Worship Committee nor Session has met yet to discuss any changes to our current worship guidelines. Until that occurs, we will continue to follow our established protocol put in place for in-person worship since January:

- everyone must wear a mask properly
- there is a 50-person maximum capacity in the sanctuary, including the pastor and worship staff
- refrain from singing, handshaking, and hugging
- please move personal discussions after the service outdoors to avoid inside gatherings
- please observe social distancing in the pews - space apart from each other in the marked pews
- We understand that each person is different with the possible risks he or she may have. Live-streamed online worship will continue to be available on Facebook and YouTube for those who choose to stay home until they feel safe to rejoin in person.

God with us in the listening

May 12, 2021 by [Julie Raffety](#) | *Presbyterian Outlook* blog

I remember being selected for an exercise on active listening while I was in seminary — trust me, I did not volunteer. If you know me, you know I would not volunteer to sit in front of 60 classmates and talk about myself. But nonetheless I ended up “on display” (as my sister would say). I don’t remember what the professor asked me to talk about, but her role was to practice active listening. She kept repeating what I had said back to me, to which I kept responding, “Right... I just said that.” We would learn later on that repeating is a technique used in active listening. Only, just repeating is clearly not listening. I was more annoyed than validated when this professor kept echoing my words. If we are simply looking for echoes, we would all just buy parrots.

Of course, active listening is more than repeating. It is a technique designed to help us listen more engagingly and paraphrasing, not repeating, is encouraged. But the issue, when it comes to listening, is that it has to be more than a technique to be meaningful. I would argue that you can’t fake truly listening to someone. And perhaps that is why the Holy Spirit, God’s presence, is so compelling.

There was a really beautiful moment in a recent episode of the TV show “This Is Us” when Randall, a main character, makes the decision to attend an adoption support group. Before he goes, his wife Beth reminds him to do some listening too. Randall is known for eloquent speeches and deep thoughts, but Beth senses he needs to just listen. The scene opens with another participant being given permission to share, and then a few others. When the group leader decides it is Randall’s turn to share, he responds with, “Would it be all right if I just keep listening for a little while?” Of course, the answer is yes.

Have you ever asked that question? *Would it be all right if I just keep listening for a little while?* I think our Creator asks us that daily. We call out to God for answers, and God petitions us to listen. We even demand that God “give us a sign” or “show us the way,” and the Almighty keeps listening.

I have been blessed with some great listeners in my life. When I need to talk, I know they will really listen – not the kind of listening where they hear my words and respond with an in-kind story about them, not the kind of “first date” listening where they robotically ask probing questions (if you’ve ever been single, you know this is a thing), not the kind of listening that has a time limit on it before they “need to get going” or get their phone out and scroll – the kind of listening where the silence compels me even when my mind wants to hold back from sharing. I have some great listeners in my life, but who do I listen to? Who would call me a great listener? Am I someone’s first choice listener?

The world is noisy. Even if you live by yourself or work alone from home, the world perpetuates noise. God’s gift to us, so often, is to perpetuate silence, stillness, pause. And we so often push back and try to press God for a response. In that active listening exercise in seminary, my soul felt pressed in upon by the constant responses. Authentic listening is the antithesis of active response, but the active piece of “active listening” is still there.

What we so often fail to recognize is that God listening to us is not God taking a break or doing nothing; God is at work in the listening. True, authentic listening engages the heart. When you truly listen to someone, their life becomes a part of you. You may even feel compelled to share their story — because in a way, it becomes your story too. When God listens, God is (Emmanuel) with us. God is not asleep or out to lunch or on vacation, God is with us. I can’t help but think of how much more present God would be in our communities if we were with listening with one another. If we, just once, were brave enough, when it was our turn to respond, with that question: *Would it be all right if I just keep listening for a little while?* And then, if we truly did listen as our response.

JULIE RAFFETY serves as the pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Franklin, New Jersey. Julie is a violinist, aspiring writer, snowboarder, runner, identical twin and crazy about popcorn.

From Wilkinsburg Community Ministry



- Calling all friends and families who remember the Mulberry Second Presbyterian Church. The new owner of the building, Center for Civic Arts, is seeking individuals to share human scale, everyday memories and experiences, even photographs, of this once sacred space of convening. As we transform the sacred space into a civic space, we want to reflect your stories in how we honor this indelible community landmark. If you prefer to keep your stories private let us know and your story will be archived for private research. An essential inquiry question we ask you is: Why was this church important to you, your family, and/or the community? You do not need to confine your response to this question, but it offers a starting point. No story is too long or short. If you can share your name, address and email Civic Art would be honored to add you to our newsletter which provides updates on revitalization efforts at the Center for Civic Arts. Please submit any written story to civicarts211@gmail.com or request Civic Arts Founder Jody Guy to place a phone call that could be recorded.
- Always needed: cases of new canning jars and rings/lids, of course. Pints and half pints especially. When you pass by the canning supplies in the store, please have a special look to see if there are rings and lids!
- **SAVE THE DATE!** July 25, 2021 at 1:00PM: WCM Medicine Way Garden Dedication. By the end of July, it will be HOT HOT HOT, and our garden will be growing at its peak. Come help us celebrate the hard work of a small army of volunteers and staff. Medicine Way is parallel to Wood Street. The garden is at the corner of Medicine Way and Franklin Avenue. Coffee from Biddles' Escape, Cookies by Chaz Cooks & Eats! This event coincides with the Wilkinsburg Pollinator Garden tour, a self-guiding tour of 20 gardens throughout Wilkinsburg.



Sharing the Joys & Concerns of the FPCE Family

- Congratulations to Amber Wilson who graduated April 30 with a degree in Early Childhood/Special Education from Slippery Rock University.
- Kenneth Craig Simon will be baptized on Sunday, June 13, 2021. He is the son of Scott Simon and Elizabeth Raisig Simon. He is Flo and Russ Raisig's grandson. Kenneth joins his sister, Veronica, as the 4th generation of Raisigs to be baptized in the FPCE sanctuary.
- Ruth Miller's granddaughter Alexa and her husband, Michael, celebrated their third wedding anniversary May 27 and, aside from that, they both acquired news jobs and will be moving to Maryland in June. They will be missed but wish them all the best.

June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Meeting Locations: Worship – Sanctuary and online Book Club – Apossos home AA – Social Room Strawberry Festival – Side Lawn		1 11:00 Book Club	2 NO Bible Study	3	4 8:00 AA	5 8:30 AA
6 9:00 Set-up 10:00 Outdoor Worship	7 7:30 Zoom Prayer Meeting	8 10:00 Book Club 7:00 Session 8:00 AA	9 7:30 Zoom Bible Study	10	11 8:00 AA	12 8:30 AA
13 10:00 Worship (Baptism & Communion)	14 7:30 Zoom Prayer Meeting	15 10:00 Book Club	16 6:00 Strawberry Festival	17	18 8:00 AA	19 8:30 AA
20 10:00 Worship	21 7:30 Zoom Prayer Meeting	22 10:00 Book Club	23 7:30 Zoom Bible Study	24	25 8:00 AA	26 8:30 AA
27 10:00 Worship	28 7:30 Zoom Prayer Meeting	29 10:00 Book Club	30 7:30 Zoom Bible Study	*Vocal Confluence will also meet periodically out on the side lawn this month. They hope to return to indoor rehearsals in July or August on Monday & Wednesday evenings at 7:00PM.		




First Presbyterian Church of

EDGEWOOD

The Community Church

120 East Swissvale Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15218



summer
SUNDAYS

Sunday Worship moves to 10:00AM for the months of June, July, and August.

 fpcedgewood.org

 [@fpcedgewood](https://www.youtube.com/fpcedgewood)

Join us for worship

 In-person, socially distanced

 Facebook Live Stream

 YouTube channel