



LECTIONARY

FEBRUARY 7

TRANSGURATION OF THE LORD

Exodus 34:29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Luke 9:28-36

FEBRUARY 10

ASH WEDNESDAY

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 51:1-17

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

FEBRUARY 14

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

FEBRUARY 21

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

FEBRUARY 28

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalm 63:1-8

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

the Messenger

Lent

Lent is the most ancient of the seasons of the Christian year, going back to the very early years of the church. It was originally a time of preparation specifically for those who were to be baptized at Easter, and it was modeled on the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness in fasting, prayer, and meditation while preparing for his ministry. Over the years this time of preparation was extended to all Christians as a time to prepare for the observances of Holy Week culminating in the great celebration of Easter.

Here at First Church we will offer a number of opportunities by which we can all observe a holy Lent. On Wednesday, February 10, we will mark Ash Wednesday, the traditional beginning of Lent, with a service of prayers and reflection including the imposition of ashes for those who desire it and the sharing of the Lord's Supper. On Saturday, February 20, we will gather for a

Day of Spiritual Reflection devoted to the ancient disciplines of Lent. On Sundays during Lent, one of our adult education offerings will be a discussion led by several of our members of the book *"Being Mortal"* by Dr. Atul Gawande, a reflection on mortality that speaks to one of the fundamental themes of Lent. Each week we will also gather for our Lenten Wednesdays with a simple dinner in Old Buttonwood Hall at 6:30 P.M., followed by a presentation led again by our own Phil Webster on the history of the Bible over the years, before concluding the evening with a brief service of evening prayers.

You'll find more information on all these opportunities in this issue of the Messenger. I hope that you will be able to participate in at least some of these occasions to explore more deeply your faith and prepare for the experience of Holy Week and Easter.

—Jesse Garner

PLEASE NOTE:

On Sunday, February 7, a single worship service will be held at 10:00 A.M. in the sanctuary.

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 7 @ 11:15 A.M. in Old Buttonwood Hall

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of First Church will be held on immediately following worship at 10 A.M. The congregation will receive the Annual Report, act on the recommendations of the Nominating Committee to elect officers, approve clergy terms of call, and elect members of the church's Nominating Committee for 2016. All members are urged to attend.

February 2016 at a Glance

Monday, February 1

- 10:00 am Reading Buddies
11:00 am Congregational Care Team

Tuesday, February 2

- 5:30 pm Worship Committee

Wednesday, February 3

- 6:30 pm Will Harris Seminar: *Christianity's Humanity*
(MacColl Room)
7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study (Cochran Room)
7:00 pm Concerts@First - Curtis Organ Recital

Thursday, February 4

- 6:30 pm Deacons Meeting
6:30 pm Session Meeting
6:30 pm Trustees Meeting

Saturday, February 6

- 9:00 am New Member Class (MacColl Room)

Sunday, February 7

- 9:00 am Christian Education
—Adults (MacColl Room)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)
10:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)
11:15 am Annual Meeting of the Congregation (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, February 8

- 10:00 am Reading Buddies

Wednesday, February 10

- 10:00 am Planned Giving Team
7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday, February 14

- 9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)
9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (MacColl Room)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)
9:45 am New Member Class (Lounge)
11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)
12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, February 15

- 10:00 am Reading Buddies

Tuesday, February 16

- 6:00 pm CE Committee

Wednesday, February 17

- 6:30 pm Lenten Wednesdays
7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study (Cochran Room)

Thursday, February 18

- 5:30 pm Membership & Evangelism Committee

Saturday, February 20

- 9:00 am Day of Spiritual Reflection

Sunday, February 21

- 9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)
9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (MacColl Room)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)
9:45 am Spiritual Direction Group (Whitfield Room)
11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)
12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, February 22

- 10:00 am Reading Buddies
6:30 pm Missions Committee

Wednesday, February 24

- 6:30 pm Lenten Wednesdays
7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study (Cochran Room)

Saturday, February 27

- 8:30 am UHC Casserole Blitz

Sunday, February 28

- 9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)
9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (MacColl Room)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)
11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)
12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, February 29

- 10:00 am Reading Buddies

Concerts@First — The Curtis Institute Organ Students

Please join us on Wednesday, February 3rd at 7:00 P.M. for our next Concerts@First presentation. As we continue to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary year of our acclaimed organ, we will welcome the organ department from The Curtis Institute of Music. Clara Gerdes, Bryan Dunnewald, and Joe Russell — all students of internationally acclaimed performer, Alan Morrison — will perform a tremendous concert of some of the instrument's

greatest works. On the program will be movements from Louis Vierne's scintillating *3rd Symphony*, Max Reger's stormy chorale fantasy on *Wachet auf*, and Maurice Duruflé's immortal and other worldly *Suite for Organ, opus 5*. This program is free, please spread the word and bring your friends. This is a great opportunity to hear our own magnificent organ in the hands of the brightest musical stars of tomorrow!

—Andrew Senn



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 10

7:00 P.M.

Communion Service with
Imposition of Ashes

👁 NOTICE 👁

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws of the Congregation

At the February 7, 2016 Annual Meeting of the Congregation the Nominating Committee, in addition to presenting recommended nominees to fill vacancies on the three boards of the church, will also be requesting approval of several proposed amendments to the Congregation Bylaws. These proposed amendments, if approved, will result in:

- A change from requiring 15 to “not less than 9 and not more than 15” members of each of the three boards; and
- Delegating to the Session the authority to determine, from time to time, the number of members for each of the three boards, so long as that number is not less than 9 and not more than 15.

The changes are important to permit us to be more flexible regarding the number of members on our three boards. For the past several years the nominating committees have found it difficult to meet the Bylaw requirement of 15 members on each board. Because the changes in our congregation mirror the changes in our larger more mobile society, an increasing number of our members have declined to be nominated to board positions because of their business, personal, and family commitments. Thus, the Nominating Committee is requesting these amendments to provide this additional flexibility in the numbers of board members so that we are able continue to provide effective governance of First Church.

NOMINEES FOR BOARDS WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Nominating Committee, which began meeting in September of last year, has completed its work. The Committee will present the following nominees to fill vacancies on the three boards of the church at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on February 7:

ELDERS	DEACONS	TRUSTEES
Emily Buurma	Linda Deis	Joann Bailey
Beverly Cowart	Edna Dick	Craig Boddorff
Rosie Hsueh	Olivia Hall	Mike Carl
Phil McMunigal	David Huting	Andrea Bowman
Patti Sassoli	Fran Kraemer	Jen Gay
	Anita McLarin	Rob Romano
	Evelyn Schwartz	

The Nominating Committee reviewed many potential nominees, including each of the 34 names submitted to the Committee by members of the congregation. The work of the Committee included considering and interviewing many more than the 17 nominees listed above.

The members of this year's Nominating Committee are Craig Boddorff, Susy Christensen, William Leonard (chair), Joan Mount, Patti Sassoli, Mary Schneider, and Michael Smith.

*—William Leonard, Chair
Nominating Committee*



Moving First Forward

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Moving First Forward annual giving campaign! This was another successful year and is only made possible because of your support and commitment to the mission and work of First Church!

Year to date, pledges total \$407,000 with 110 pledges including 15 new pledges.

Many thanks also to the members of the Annual Giving Team for their help and work in making the campaign a success: Phil Amoa, Dave Huting, Bruce Rapsher, George Schneider, and Allan Schimmel.

And if you haven't yet supported this year's campaign, there's still time! You can make your pledge or commitment on the church's [website](http://www.fpcphila.org). There are also pledge cards in the church pews and in the Church Office.

*—Christina Carl
Chair, Annual Giving Team*

It's Time to Make the Casseroles!

The Missions Committee is once again organizing a casserole-making event to benefit the University City Hospitality Coalition (UCHC). UCHC is an all-volunteer organization that has provided meals for the hungry and homeless in University City for over 30 years. We will meet in the kitchen on **Saturday, February 27, between 8:30 and 9:00 A.M.** With

8–10 volunteers, the task can be completed in an hour and a half — and you can enjoy the remainder of your Saturday knowing you have helped your neighbors in need. If interested, please contact Beverly Cowart (mission@fpcphila.org or 215-382-4315).

—Beverly Cowart

Being Mortal: Lenten Book Study

A special Lenten book study will meet each Sunday morning at 9:45 A.M. during the season of Lent. A wonderful panel of medical professionals who are part of our church will be facilitating a discussion on Atul Gawande's recent book, *Being Mortal*. This book discusses the need for changes in the medical field when patients and families are required to deal with some of the most difficult medical decisions of their lives. Our panel includes the following professionals:

- **Delores Brisbon** worked at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania as a member of Nurses Leadership as Strategic Planner and Chief Operating Officer. Delores was educated as a nurse and sociologist, practiced medical and neurological nursing, taught and supervised nurses across three health-care institutions, and owned and operated Brisbon & Associates, a management consultants business.

- **Joan Mount** worked at Boston Childrens' Hospital as a head nurse on Neurosurgery, Philadelphia Childrens' Hospital, Paoli Hospital as an ICU nurse and as an Assistant Nursing Director, Chestnut Hill Hospital as a Nursing Director

and Johnson & Johnson in Pharmaceutical Research & Development in Drug Safety.

- **Douglas Murken** received his M.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and is currently a fourth year resident in General Surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He plans to pursue a fellowship and career in Liver/Kidney/Pancreas Transplantation.

- **Courtney Russ** worked at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Adult Trauma/Surgical Intensive Care and Pediatric Intensive Care; Courtney currently works as a Family Nurse Practitioner at Westside Family Healthcare and teaches in the Family Health Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Pennsylvania.

- **Noble Thompson** was Director of Neuroradiology at the Bryn Mawr Hospital, Martin Luther King Medical Center, the Charles Drew Medical School, University of California in Los Angeles, and Assistant Director of Neuroradiology at Jefferson University.

Copies of the book are available in the church office.

—Jeffrey Halili

Lenten Wednesdays: *What is the Bible? A Material History*

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? The answer may seem self-evident, but in our Lenten Wednesday series we'll discover what the surprising material history of the Bible tells about what it is, and what it has been. We'll look at what the Dead Sea Scrolls tell us about what the Bible would have been for Jesus, how vellum and illuminated manuscripts made the Bible a luxury object in the Middle Ages, how print-

capitalism transformed it in the 19th century, and what it is today in the age of Amazon and iPads.

We are extremely fortunate to welcome back Philip Webster, who earned his Masters in Theological Studies from Duke University and spent two years at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is now a doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania and is the

2015-16 Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.

Our Lenten series is held every Wednesday in Lent at 6:30 PM, beginning on February 17. The evening begins with a simple soup supper, and concludes with a brief evening service. Please join us!

—Jeffrey Halili

Young Adult News

Our Acts bible study is now underway, and we are emerged in the narratives of the first apostles. In January, we began reflecting upon the early church's calling and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. We are now encountering their actions as they seek to be the body of Christ in the world, and we've noticed many recurring themes: devotion to prayer, a communal identity and way of living, and witnessing to Christ through building relationships.

In his book on making changes in life, *Change or Die*, Alan Deutschman notes that people rarely change through the three F's: facts, fear, and force. Rather it is the three R's that really create space for people to make change in their lives: relate, repeat, and reframe. In Acts, we've encountered

holy community: that is, not a people who are more righteous than others, but a people united in their common calling to serve Christ and who live out of gratitude to God. They share life with one another (2:45), they break bread together (2:46), they look intently at others (3:4), "and day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (2:47). We still have a long way to go in Acts, but the importance of holy community has been plain...

This month, we will strive to embrace this model as we continue with our bible study each Wednesday. We will also have a potluck Super Bowl party on the evening of February 7. For more information, contact youngadults@fpcphila.org.

—Chip Rotolo

A Day of Reflection in Lent

The season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday and continues for six weeks until Easter, is a time for reflection and soul-searching in the Christian life. It invites us to ask questions like these:

- *What can I offer to God and to others?*
- *What do I want to release, let go of?*
- *For whom am I called to pray?*
- *To what is God calling me in my life of discipleship?*

On Saturday, February 20, the Worship Committee will sponsor a Day of Reflection as part of our spiritual journey of Lent. It will provide a special opportunity for members and friends of the congregation to share prayer, quiet meditation, contemplation of scripture, music and singing, and to experience some of the spiritual practices of the Christian life.

Led by our parish associate, The Rev. Barbara Chaapel, the day will begin at 9:30 A.M. (with registration and coffee and tea at 9:00) and continue until 1:30 P.M., concluding with a simple meal in silence and closing worship together.

During the day, you will have time in silence, time for guided reflection on scripture, time to use writing or drawing as a meditative practice, time to sing together, led by Andrew Senn, time for contemplative prayer, time for worship in the style of the Iona community, time to light candles and offer intentions to God.

Last January, 30 people participated in our first Day of Reflection at the church. For Phil Steinberg, the day “gave me insight into my spiritual side, and stimulated me to write in my journal on a regular basis. I now find journal writing is part of my day; it helps me to focus on the important pieces of my life.”

Heather Coyne also attended last year and found the experience of great value. “It provided useful skills for meditation, prayer, and for just being quiet and listening. But more importantly it reminded me of the wonderful resources we have at First Church—the people. As one of the younger participants, I appreciated learning from and listening to those with more years of experience. I hope that more young

adults will participate this year. It is not to be missed!”

A registration charge of \$15 per person will help defray the cost of food and materials. If you have a concern about cost, please speak with Bill Leonard or Jen Johnson, co-chairs of the Worship Committee; we do not want anyone to be excluded because of cost. Please register through the church office no later than Sunday, February 4 so we can plan for food. Make checks payable to the First Presbyterian Church, with Day of Reflection in the memo line.

Lent originated in the earliest days of the church as a preparatory time for Easter; its forty days mirror Jesus’ forty-day journey in the wilderness. We hope you will take this opportunity to be together in a time of contemplative preparation for Easter, and hope that members and friends of all ages, long-time members, new members, visitors, and friends, those who worship at 9:00 and those who worship at 11:00, will join together in God’s presence.

Make this day a gift to yourself.
Make it your gift to God.

—Barbara Chaapel

We're So Glad You're Here

We are SO glad you came to the third annual “We’re So Glad You’re Here” party on Thursday, January, 21st. Old Buttonwood Hall was the scene of nearly 60 newer First Presbyterian members, visitors and friends as well as many of our staff, Elders, Deacons and Trustees. What a wonderful time

was had by all — visiting with and meeting new people of all ages, learning about their backgrounds, their careers and their interest in First. Thanks to all who attended and to the Membership and Evangelism team for their planning.

—Fran Kraemer



The First Presbyterian Church

IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

201 South 21st Street • Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-567-0532 fax: 215-567-7697 • fpcphila.org

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Jesse B. Garner, Minister

Mr. Michael S. Rotolo, Seminary Intern

Rev. Megan LeClyuse, Celebration Team Leader

Rev. Drew Harrison, Membership and
Congregational Care Director

The Rev. Barbara A. Chaapel, Parish Associate

The Rev. Kenneth Ross, Parish Associate

The Rev. Herbert D. Valentine, Parish Associate

Mr. Andrew Senn, Director of Music & Organist

Ms. Gwendolyn Scott, Church Administrator

COMMITTEES OF SESSION

BUDGET & STEWARDSHIP • Dave Huting, Chair

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION • Jeffrey Halili, Chair

MEMBERSHIP & EVANGELISM • Larry Slagle, Chair

MISSIONS • Beverly Cowart, Chair

PERSONNEL • Allan Schimmel, Chair

WORSHIP • Bill Leonard, Chair

CHURCH OFFICERS

ELDERS *Class of 2016*

Lisa Hanson, Fran Kraemer, Bill
Leonard, Stella Tsai

Class of 2017

Christina Freeman, Jeff Halili, Larry Slagle,
Suellen Smith, Jim Wilson

Class of 2018

Dave Huting, Jen Johnson, Rebecca Melley,
Allan Schimmel, George Schneider

DEACONS *Class of 2016*

Linda Deis, Jennifer Hsiung, Jim Schreyer,
Evelyn Schwartz, Gudrun von Auenmueller

Class of 2017

Robert Cole, Elena Colon,,
Marc Lloyd, Cynthia Olds-Greeley

Class of 2018

Fred Barfoot, Miles Davis,
Cathy Lever, Jean Witmer

TRUSTEES *Class of 2016*

Craig Boddorff, Mike Carl,
Heather Coyne, Susan Davis

Class of 2017

Rebekah Horowitz, Tom Lever, Robert Linck,
Cade Massey, Jon Rogers

Class of 2018

Jeannie Boehner, Gary Christensen,
Leila Vaughan, John Witmer

THE MESSENGER

Patti Sassoli, Executive Editor

Owen Robbins, Design Director

Please submit all information for the
March issue of The Messenger to
communications@fpcphila.org by
Monday, February 22nd.

Volunteer Opportunities

MANNA, an organization founded by First Church, needs volunteers to help prepare or deliver meals for people with HIV, diabetes, undergoing chemotherapy, or other conditions requiring quality nutrition. Contact Jen Stackhouse, Volunteer Manager at 215-496-2662 ext 138 or volunteers@mannapa.org.

READING BUDDIES volunteers are needed to help children learn to read, and make a friend. Volunteers are needed at First Church and other locations throughout the city. Contact Pat Quigg at readingbuddies@aol.com.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S WEST PHILADELPHIA REPAIR INITIATIVE (WPRI) is an urban ministry that assists homeowners in West Philadelphia with repairs to their homes. The organization needs volunteers. Work can involve painting, installing sheetrock, windows, flooring, carpentry, etc. Volunteers do not need any experience. If you have interest in being a volunteer, please contact the Missions Committee at missions@fpcphila.org.

WINTERSHELTER volunteers are needed to serve meals each Monday evening during the cold weather months at Trinity Memorial Church, 22nd & Spruce Streets. Contact Suellen Smith (suellen.smith@fpcphila.org).

URBAN TREE CONNECTION (UTC) is a non-profit organization that engages children and adults from some of Philadelphia's most disadvantaged neighborhoods in community-based, urban-greening projects. Visit urbantreeconnection.org or contact Bruce Rapsner at utc@fpcphila.com.

PENN'S VILLAGE, an aging-in-place program for Central Philadelphia seniors, needs volunteers for driving, friendly visiting, light household tasks, administrative and technical assistance, and committee work. Call 215-925-7333, email info@pennsvillage.org or visit www.pennsvillage.org.

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HOSPITALITY COALITION (UCHC) provides hot meals to anyone in need on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and, during the academic year, Sundays, at sites in the University City area. Volunteers to serve meals are needed during the summer and academic breaks, when students are not available. In addition, First Church sponsors quarterly casserole "blitzes," in which we prepare 30-40 casseroles to be served at UCHC meals. These typically occur on the first Saturday of February, May, August and November, but check the bulletin for announcements. Contact Beverly Cowart at missions@fpcphila.com.



Are You Surrounded by Stuff?

If you would like to have some helpful information about de-cluttering, Penn's Village has some answers. We have held two highly successful programs on the subject in Philadelphia high-rises (so far, Academy House and Hopkinson House). At these programs, a panel of experts has presented on such topics as attachment to belongings and the challenge of letting go as well as tips on disposing of items by a professional home organizer and a member of the staff of an auction house.

We plan to hold more of these sessions in other buildings in the City, so keep an eye on our program listing on the website: www.pennsvillage.org. All the Penn's Village programs are listed there along with much else about the organization.



Like us on our [fan page](#) or join our [fellowship group](#).