Our Common Life Together

want to reflect for just a little bit about a phrase that I use often, "Our common life together." I use it when I invite members and guests alike to Old Buttonwood Hall following the 11 A.M. service, and I use it sometimes in the announcements at the Celebration! Service at 9 A.M. What I mean by this isn't that what we do together is somehow, well, common. I don't mean it in the sense of mundane. What I mean is that there is a tie that binds

I don't know if you've ever sat through a contentious vote of a congregation or a presbytery, but there is a reason why we almost always wind up singing that old hymn "Blest Be the Tie that Binds" while the

"...the tie that binds us is Jesus Christ."

votes are being counted. I find I've been thinking a lot about the ties that bind us these days.

It's not just that we're living in a time of heightened tensions in our political environment as we awaited a resolution to the impasse that our government was in for more than a month. Nor is it because social media has rendered us a hair-trigger away from reaction at most times to whatever is the most recent outrage, and of course the inevitable reaction to the reaction. (Perhaps we should consider the ways that we can all help the world calm down a bit?) The truth is, we've always faced divisions.

It's not because we worship at two different times between nine and eleven and we need, every one of us, to look for the ways that our two worshipping bodies can be together. (My hat is off to the deacons for bringing us together at their wonderful kick-off brunch last fall!) But honestly, more congregations than ours have experienced the metaphorical distance that can occur when we worship in different ways at different times, and they find ways, just as we are, to spend time with one another.

Nor is it that I fear that the world is becoming more and more fragmented as tenure within corporations dwindles to little more than a turnstile, and economic necessity forces people to move from city to city to make their way professionally. People have always migrated where work was, and healthy communities adapt even as we bid sad farewells to those whose path carries them elsewhere.

No, the tie that binds us is stronger than all of these things... the tie that binds us is Jesus Christ. And when I invite us to spend a little time over a cup of coffee or light refreshments, it is because we are celebrating something deeply important over this small repast... we are saying that we believe that we are sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ, and that means that we care for one another to the extent that we will show up with food again and again for no other reason than that it builds up the body of Christ. And we're saying that we will give, meaningfully, of our treasure for the nurture of children in the faith even though our children are long grown, or even if we never had any. And we're saying that when one of us mourns, that we will drop what we are doing long enough to weep with those who weep.

That is what I mean by our common life together. And it is anything but mundane.

-Baron Mullis



February 2019 at a Glance

Sunday, February 3

9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

9:45 am Adult CE (MacColl Room)

Children's Sunday School (Cochran Room)

11:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

12:15 pm Twenties & Thirties "First Sunday" Brunch (Irish Pub)

Monday, February 4

11:00 am Congregational Care Team

Tuesday, February 5

7:00 pm Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, February 6

10:00 am Worship Committee

7:30 pm Twenties & Thirties (T&T) Group

Thursday, February 7

6:30 pm Trustees 6:45 pm Deacons Saturday, February 9

9:00 am Men's Breakfast Group (Cafe @ DiBruno's)

Sunday, February 10

9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

9:45 am Adult CE (MacColl Room)

Children's Sunday School (Old Buttonwood Hall)

11:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

12:15 pm Annual Meeting (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Tuesday, February 12

7:00 pm Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, February 13

7:30 pm T&T Group

Thursday, February 14

5:30 pm Membership & Evangelism Committee

Sunday, February 17

9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

9:45 am Adult CE (MacColl Room)

Children's Sunday School (Cochran Room)

11:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, February 18

Church office closed.

Tuesday, February 19

9:30 am WiseRetirees

7:00 pm Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, February 20

7:30 pm T&T Group

Thursday, February 21

6:30 pm Session

Sunday, February 24

9:00 am Celebration! Worship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

9:45 am Adult CE (MacColl Room)

Children's Sunday School (Cochran Room)

11:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, February 25

6:30 pm Missions Committee

Tuesday, February 26

7:00 pm Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, February 27

TBA Women of Wit & Wisdom - Phila. Museum of Art

7:30 pm T&T Group

Conversations Worth Having...

You heard from me last month that I have invited my friend and mentor, Bill Enright, to spend the weekend with us on March 16-17. Bill will provide an in-service to our officers on Saturday, March 16th, from 10-3. His topic will be how we talk about giving—and it's more than money. I want to invite anyone who has an interest in this topic to attend. I have copies of his book, *Kitchen Table Giving* in my office, and I'd love to provide one to you. The only request I make is that you commit to read it sometime this year.

Why a conversation about giving? Well, I've already been asked if I am concerned about the level of generosity at First Church, and the answer is, "No, I'm not." I find our membership to be deeply generous. But one of the things I've learned in my time in ministry and my studies on philanthropy is that we can never take giving for granted. We must cultivate our ability to have good conversations about the church and its finances.

Arguably, cultivating the ability to engage in "conversations worth having" is one of the most important things we can experience for ourselves and model for the world. That's why we're partnering with the Presbyterian Foundation to share this conversation with Bill Enright with other churches in our area. This year we are going to talk about giving, and I hope in future years to see First Church as a model for other congregations in taking time, with intentionality, to talk about things that matter.

So if you want to know the number one reason why you should mark your calendar for March 17th, when Bill will teach and preach at First, and for March 16th for his in-service on giving, it would be because we say this to ourselves, "This is my church, and I love it; if there is a conversation going on that is important to our life together, I want to be a part of it."

—Baron Mullis

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - FEBRUARY 24TH

Muslim and Christian Connections on the College Campus: an Interfaith Conversation

It's a typical day at the Christian Association (CA) House at Penn, where Rev. Megan LeCluyse serves as the Campus Minister and Director of the CA at the University of Pennsylvania. She and Patricia Anton, the Chaplain for the Muslim Life Program at Penn, are laughing about a Halal scanning app that Megan has downloaded to determine if the snack foods they share are actually Halal—permissible under traditional Islamic law. Patty is posting a photo of Megan scanning the foods on her Snapchat account. Little will the people at Costco suspect that on her next visit, Megan will be using the handy app to Halal-scan the snacks she buys.

Join us on February 24th at 9:45, when the adult education class will feature Celebration Team Leader Rev. Megan LeCluyse and Patricia Anton, Chaplain of Penn's Muslim Life Program. We'll learn about a close-to-home interfaith experience. The two associations began to share space a year ago, and the chaplains will talk about what the experience has been like and how their students have benefited. Patty's background has often included interfaith work. For Megan, being in this close interfaith relationship is new and has been a wonderful opportunity for building new relationships, learning about Islam and expanding the CA's understanding of hospitality. Feel free to email Megan (lecluyse@upenn.edu) questions you might want us to discuss before the 24th, or bring them with you!

Rev. Sarah Weisiger's Maternity Leave

The Reverend Sarah Weisiger, Minister for Membership and Faith Formation, is on maternity leave from February 1 through March 30. During Sarah's absence, please contact Larry Slagle (larry.slagle@fpcphila.org) for questions about membership. For questions or concerns with respect to Children's Sunday School and/or the Nursery, please contact Emily Roan (emily.roan@fpcphila.org) or Karen Marston (karen.marston@fpcphila.org).

ANNUAL MEETING

The Session has set Sunday, February 10th, as the date of our Annual Meeting which will be held in Old Buttonwood Hall at noon, following the 11:00 A.M. worship service. All members are urged to attend this important meeting. A light lunch will be served.

The congregation will (1) receive the 2018 Annual Report, (2) hear and act on the recommendations of the Nominating Committee to elect officers and members of the church's Nominating Committee for 2019, and (3) vote upon a proposed amendment of the Congregational bylaws.

The proposed amendment adds in a new Section XVII, titled "Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy," the following:

Consistent with the policy of the Presbytery of Philadelphia that the by-laws of each church incorporate the church's sexual misconduct policy, the applicable portions of the Personnel Policy of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, including the Workplace Free of Harassment or Discrimination Policy and the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy are incorporated by reference into these Bylaws.

The proposed amended by-laws can be viewed on the First Church website (www.fpcphila.org/policies-bylaws/).

Rebecca MelleyClerk of Session



MOVING FIRST FORWARD - GROWING IN GRATITUDE

Pledge update (as of January 29): we have received 122 pledges for a total of \$424,807 for 2019 Annual Giving. If you have not yet submitted your pledge for 2019, there's still time! Please complete a pledge card, available in the pews or in the church office. You can also pledge online at www.fpcphila.org/make-a-pledge. Thank you to all who have already pledged!

—Patti Sassoli Chair, Annual Giving



PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART TOUR – FEBRUARY 27

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the largest and most renowned museums in the country. You will discover beauty, enchantment, and the unexpected among the artistic achievements from the United States, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The works are thrilling with their brilliant or subdued colors, unique lines, and composition. Each artist's values are universal to every human being and are inspired by the images and sounds of the environment. The creator assembles ideas that express the deepest emotions of life and places them on a canvas or sculpts them from marble. Thus, the artist's soul is connected with ours.

Our guide will be our own Jean Witmer. Jean is a retired teacher who is now devoting her time and talents to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. With two years of intense training and three years' experience, Jean will show us how art reflects the culture of its time and present the collection in the context of world history. We will travel through various countries and centuries and view the style of the period, including baroque, realism, impressionism, abstract expressionism, and others. This is a wonderful opportunity to see magnificent works of art and have our spirits nourished.

Mark the date: Wednesday, February 27. The cost, time of the tour, and other details will be available via email and bulletin announcements closer to the date.

—Diane Rogers and Ruth Camisa

February Faith Formation Activities

Our Sunday School continues to explore faith and discipleship in this green and growing season between Epiphany and Lent in the month of February! We hope that the young and young at heart will consider joining us for what promises to be a meaningful rotation of lessons during the 10 o'clock hour:

- February 2: Body Prayer (Cochran Room) with Emily Roan and Eleanor Young
- **February 10:** Make a Joyful Noise (Old Buttonwood Hall) with Pastor Megan and Daniel Mellinger
- **February 17:** Jesus in the Wilderness (Cochran Room) with Karen Buzan and Becky Yep
- **February 24:** Learning about One Great Hour of Sharing (Cochran Room) with IvaLinda Baird and Daniel Mellinger

Looking ahead, we also hope that you will save the date for our Annual Shrove Sunday Pancake Brunch, which is scheduled for March 3rd following the Celebration! Service. We will be collecting donations to support the mission efforts of our church and are honored to welcome the assistance of our master pancake makers in the Twenties and Thirties Group. It is a great opportunity for intergenerational fellowship and fun as we prepare to enter the season of Lent, and we hope to see you there.

— Rev. Sarah Weisiger Minister for Membership and Faith Formation



Introduction of new members, 11:00 Worship Service, January 27, 2019



Penn's Village Welcomes Volunteers

Penn's Village has many meaningful and interesting volunteer positions either providing direct support to Villagers (driving to medical appointments, grocery shopping, companionship, IT support, light chores), serving on committees or in performing administrative functions. For full information, go to our website www.pennsvillage.org and click on Volunteers.

Much of our important work takes place in our committees. Here are several with openings that may be of interest to you:

- Membership & Welcoming Committee is devoted to outreach, connections, and growth. Plans for 2019 include efforts to strengthen connections with and among Penn's Village members as well as growing Village membership.
- Fundraising Committee brainstorms, identifies and organizes innovative and creative ways to support all that Penn's Village does and wants to do.
- Program Committee develops
 programs that educate and
 entertain members and volunteers,
 provides opportunities to grow
 membership and develops
 relationships with affiliated groups.
- Marketing and Communications
 Committee is responsible for both
 traditional and social media
 promotion. New projects for 2019
 include launching a new logo,
 reaching out to local groups via
 sponsorships, and outreach geared
 toward the newly retired/soon-to be retired.

Join Dancing Classrooms Philly for

Rock the Ballroom

on March 9

Sponsorship Opportunities Available!

Join us for a FUN-raiser for all ages on March 9 at 6:00 P.M. Rock the Ballroom is a fun-filled evening of food, raffles, and a friendly dance competition! (Previous dance skill not required!) And if you're looking for visibility, become a sponsor! Sponsorship packages range from \$250 to \$2,500.

WHEN: Saturday, March 9 from 6:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

WHERE: First Presbyterian Church, 201 S. 21st Street,

Philadelphia

COST: \$40; tickets include food and drink.

Please visit https://dancingclassroomsphilly.org/rock-the-ballroom-fun-raiser/ for more info and to purchase tickets.

SPONSORSHIP: If you'd like to become a sponsor, please contact Jessica Lynch at jessical@musicopia.net or 215-829-9522 x 106. Benefits include event signage, social media recognition, and more.

Dancing Classrooms Philly is an affiliate program of Musicopia. The Musicopia String Orchestra rehearses weekly at the First Presbyterian Church. Special thanks to the First Presbyterian Church for generously donating their venue to host Rock the Ballroom.



New Member Class, January 20, 2019

Member News

Baptisms:

The church joyfully celebrated the baptism of CAROLINE ELISE MELLINGER, son of Daniel and Anna Mellinger, and sister of Dan, on Sunday, January 20 during the 11am service. Caroline was baptized by Revs. Baron Mullis and Sarah Weisiger.



We Welcome New Members:

AMELIA ADAIR grew up in Richmond, VA and is a recent graduate of Sarah Lawrence College. She moved to Philadelphia in May and enjoys finding new ways to explore the city. She will happily take restaurant recommendations or any city insights! Amelia comes to us from the Tuckahoe



Presbyterian Church in Richmond and works as a customer service associate for Instamed. She is an active member of the Twenties and Thirties Group.

LAURIASELLE AFANADOR was born and raised in New York City and has found her way to Philadelphia via Montreal, QC. She earned her Ph.D. in Neuroscience from the City University of New York Graduate Center in 2012. She focuses on areas including neurodegeneration, addiction, cancer, and biologics. She currently works as a medical writer for Icon.



CAROLYN BAVINGTON was born outside of Denver, Colorado and attended the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 2013 with a B.A. in Hispanic Studies. Currently she works as an actuary at a consulting firm. She was first drawn to First Presbyterian by its welcoming congregation and enjoys helping with weddings at the church. In her spare time,



she likes to sing, dance, travel, spend time with her friends, family and boyfriend, and cheer on Colorado's sports teams.

CAROLYN CREGO is a native of upstate New York and is a child of Clarence First Presbyterian Church in Clarence, NY. She attends Drexel University and is in the process of completing a Bachelors Degree in Architecture. She currently works as a student and architectural intern for Group GLLC downtown. She is an active participant in the Twenties and Thirties Group.



KATE, EDWARD and EDDIE LAWLESS found their way to First Church through the Celebration! Service. Kate was born and raised on the Main Line and works for Comcast; Edward is a child of Grace Presbyterian Church in Jenkintown and is a Fixed Income Trader for Macquarie



Investment Management. They are the proud parents of Eddie who will turn one on February 4.

MAGGIE MANDICH was born and raised in Maryland and earned a Bachelor of Science in Operations Management and Marketing from The University of Delaware-Lerner College of Business and Economics. She is an accounts manager for TargetX in Philadelphia and is an active member of the Twenties and Thirties Group.



LESTER MORRIS was born and raised in Winston-Salem, NC. He graduated in 1993 from Appalachian State University with a B.A. in Spanish. He is an Operations Consultant for a data analytics and insights firm out of Chicago called IRI. He enjoys gardening, ceramics and meeting new people. He is the spouse of our Pastor, Rev. Dr. Baron Mullis.



CHARLIE MURPHY is a child of the Wyoming Presbyterian Church in Millburn, NJ. He is currently a student at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA and anticipates completing his studies in May 2019. He is engaged to **Maggie O'Connor** and they are planning to be

married in Fall 2019 at First Church.

MAGGIE O'CONNOR was born in Durham, North Carolina and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. She is currently an M.D./Ph.D student at Drexel University, where she focuses on immunology and neuroimmunology research. She also



earned a master's degree in biomedical science from the Icahn School of Medicine in Mount Sinai. Maggie is drawn to mission and service in the church and is looking forward to getting more engaged in community service through First. Maggie is engaged to **Charlie Murphy** and they are planning to be married at First in Fall of 2019.

(continued on p. 7)

CAROLINE SLYMON was born in Harrisburg, PA and moved during her childhood to Pittsfield, Maine, where she was active in the First Congregational Church. She attended Penn State University, where she earned a B.A. in Media Studies and Philosophy. She is a Research Administrator



for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Caroline is active in community service in the Philadelphia Area and has enjoyed getting to know First Church through our mission committee and the Twenties and Thirties group.

Eva ToIa likes to say that she is one of the five people she knows who were born and raised in Dallas, Texas. She received a B.F.A. in Design and Production from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and later served as their Director of Alumni. Since then she has been active in the arts world directing development in the Dallas area. She and her husband, John, relocated to the Philadelphia area, where she serves as the Director of Major Gifts and Campaigns for the Settlement Music School. Eva and John come to us from the King of Glory Lutheran Church in Dallas, where she was active in the Worship and Music, Evangelism, and Stephen Ministry Committees.

JOHN TOIA was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He attended Wayne State University, where he earned a B.F.A. in Directing. He earned his M.F.A. in Stage Management and Lighting Design from



Florida State University. During his career, he has served as the Director of Stage Management at U.N.C. School of the Arts and as the Director of Production for the Dallas Opera. He and his wife Eva relocated to Philadelphia in 2018 and he serves as the Director of Production for Opera Philadelphia. Prior to First, John was an active member of King of Glory Lutheran Church and served on the church council and as a member of the worship and music committee.

ALEXANDER WEISIGER was born in Maryland and raised in San Rafael, CA. He was raised and confirmed as a member of Christ Presbyterian Church in Terra Linda. He received a B.A. in Political Science from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in International Politics from Columbia



University. He currently is an Associate Professor at the Ronald O. Perelman Center for Political Science and Economics and the University of Pennsylvania, where his teaching interests include the causes of war and peace, war termination and peacebuilding after conflict, international relations theory, and game theory. He is married to Rev. Sarah Weisiger, and they have three children (Amelia, Jeremiah, and Abraham) and are expecting a fourth in February of 2019.

Twenties & Thirties Group News

The T&Ts want to give a BIG Thank You to everyone for taking part in the Giving Tree this year. We provided 15 children and young adults at Valley Youth House with over 53 gifts!

The Twenties & Thirties were excited to have Wednesday night discussions led by Pastor Baron and Michael and Suellen Smith in January, and to gather for ice skating.



In February, the T&Ts will pick back up with a book discussion and continue regular Wednesday night gatherings. If you would like to host the T&Ts or partner for an activity let us know!

Our goal is to grow closer together as a Twenties and Thirties group, fostering friendships, building trust, and creating a community of support and love for one another. We are excited to see new, and returning, faces and invite all Twenties and Thirties to join us! For more information, contact: youngadults@fpcphila.org.

-Annie LeCluyse

New Year, Continuing Need: Come to the Casserole Blitz!

The Missions Committee is embarking on its fifth year of quarterly casserole blitzes to provide meals for the hungry through the University City Hospitality Coalition (UCHC). On March 2, beginning at 8:30 A.M., we plan to make 30 casseroles (which will provide a hot dinner for 8 times that many people) by 10:00 A.M. We could use your help! It's a fun, gratifying way to spend a Saturday morning (and we have coffee and very good donuts). Please contact Beverly Cowart (missions@fpcphila.org) if you can participate.

Volunteer Opportunities

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.

The Arc of Philadelphia advocates with and for all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, to promote active citizenship, self-determination, and full inclusion.

Urban Tree Connection (UTC) is a nonprofit organization that engages children and adults from some of Philadelphia's most disadvantaged neighborhoods in community-based, urban-greening projects.

Hosts for Hospitals provides families in need of lodging when coming from out-of-town to the city for medical care the option of staying at a locally administered volunteer host-home or group facility.

Girls' Leadership Camp program at Bartram's Garden is to help build a new community garden and farm while learning about the environmental impact of growing our own food. Volunteer days are every month on second Saturdays starting in October.

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.

MANNA, an organization founded by First Church, needs volunteers to help prepare or deliver meals for people battling life-threatening illnesses. Contact Manna's Volunteer Services at 215-496-2662 or volunteers@mannapa.org.

FOR INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES CONTACT missions@fpcphila.org.



Like our <u>Facebook Page</u> or join our <u>fellowship group</u>.





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

The First Presbyterian Church IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Church Staff

The Rev. Dr. Baron Mullis, Pastor & Head of Staff The Rev. Megan LeClyuse, Celebration Team Leader

Mr. Andrew Senn, Director of Music & Organist

Ms. Sue Riemann, Church Administrator

The Rev. Jerry K. Foote, Minister for Congregational Care

The Rev. Sarah Weisiger, Minister for Membership and Faith Formation

Mrs. Patti Sassoli, Director of Communications

Ms. Annie LeCluyse, Young Adult Leader

The Rev. Barbara A. Chaapel, Parish Associate

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