



The FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
in PHILADELPHIA

est. 1698

LECTIONARY MAY 2016

MAY 1

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 16:9–15

Psalms 67

Revelation 21:10, 22–22:5

John 5:1–9

MAY 8

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 16:16–34

Psalms 97

Revelation 22:12–14,

16–17, 20–21

John 17:20–26

MAY 15

DAY OF PENTECOST

Genesis 11:1–9

Psalms 104:24–34, 35b

Acts 2:1–21

John 14:8–17, 25–27

MAY 22

TRINITY SUNDAY

Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31

Psalms 8

Romans 5:1–5

John 16:12–15

MAY 29

1 Kings 18:20–39

Psalms 96

Galatians 1:1–12

Luke 7:1–10

the Messenger

Politics

At the risk of wandering into always dangerous waters, I'm going to talk politics. I have to confess that I simply cannot make any sense at all of the political realm these days. I'm no politico to begin with, and I haven't watched an entire political speech of any sort in longer than I can remember.

Actually, I think I can remember: it may have been Nixon's resignation speech in 1974, over forty years ago. These days, I can't even listen to the politicians that I have voted for, since political speech in general in this country seems to have sunk to the lowest common denominator, and I don't care to have my intelligence insulted by politicians pandering to what they think (and they may be right) the public wants to hear. I hate to think I'm as simple-minded as they apparently believe I am.

So I haven't watched any of the candidates' debates over the past several months, though I have watched with some amusement clips of some of the lower moments in a few of those debates. The problem is not that I disagree with some of the candidates, though obviously that's true. But that's always the case. No, the problem

is that I cannot understand how anyone could support some of the candidates (and I'm not just talking about one). By that, I mean that I cannot understand on what basis, or by what logic, someone might choose to support their positions. I just don't get it.

I realize our country is divided these days into quite distinct camps. We talk about blue states and red states, or the two coasts and everything in between, but however you cut it the divide between camps seems to me to be greater than at any time in my life. I'm not at all clear why that should be. This is not Germany in 1932. This is not even America in 1932. What is it that has pushed people to such extremes? Why do we have so little respect for those with whom we disagree? What does it mean to be an American if we seem these days to have so little in common that we truly value, so little we can agree on? What we would do if faced by a serious crisis, whether of international origin or something domestic? Would we come together, or would be divided even farther?

—Jesse Garner

*"Why do we
have so little
respect for
those with
whom we
disagree?"*



May 2016 at a Glance

Sunday, May 1 - Sixth Sunday of Easter

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

9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (Lounge)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)

11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)

12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

12:15 pm Young Adult Brunch

Monday, May 2

10:00 am Reading Buddies

Tuesday, May 3

5:30 pm Worship Committee

Wednesday, May 4

7:00 pm Young Adult Topical Discussion Series (Cochran Room)

Thursday, May 5

6:45 pm Deacons Meeting

Sunday, May 8 - Seventh Sunday of Easter

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

9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (Lounge)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)

9:45 am Spiritual Direction Group (Whitfield Room)

11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)
Ordination and Installation of Officers

12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, May 9

10:00 am Reading Buddies

Wednesday, May 11

10:00 am Planned Giving Team

7:00 pm Young Adult Topical Discussion Series (Cochran Room)

Thursday, May 12

6:30 pm Session Meeting

Saturday, May 14

8:00 am Men's Bible Study (Plenty Café, 1602 Spruce St.)

2:00 pm Ladies' Spring Tea (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Sunday, May 15 - Day of Pentecost

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

9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (Lounge)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)

11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)

12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Monday, May 16

10:00 am Reading Buddies

Tuesday, May 17

9:30 am WiseRetirees

Wednesday, May 18

7:00 pm Young Adult Topical Discussion Series (Cochran Room)

Thursday, May 19

5:30 pm Membership & Evangelism Committee

Friday, May 20

5:00 pm Youth Retreat

Saturday, May 21

8:00 am Men's Bible Study

8:30 am UCHC Casserole Blitz

10:00 am Urban Tree Connection/Youth Volunteer Day

Sunday, May 22 - Trinity Sunday

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

9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (Lounge)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)

9:45 am Spiritual Direction Group (Whitfield Room)

11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)

12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

2:00 pm Jean Schneider Piano Recital

Monday, May 23

10:00 am Reading Buddies

6:30 pm Missions Committee

Tuesday, May 24

6:00 am CE Committee

Wednesday, May 25

7:00 pm Young Adult Topical Discussion Series (Cochran Room)

Saturday, May 21

8:00 am Men's Bible Study

Sunday, May 29

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

9:45 am Christian Education
—Adults (Lounge)
—Children & Youth (Cochran Room)

11:00 am Worship (Sanctuary)

12:15 pm Fellowship (Old Buttonwood Hall)

Tuesday, May 31

7:00 pm *Song of Thanks* Concert

Jean Schneider Piano Recital May 22

On **Sunday, May 22 at 2 o'clock** Jean Schneider will present a festive 45-minute piano recital in honor of Mary and George Schneider's 60th wedding anniversary, which is in early June. The program will take place in the Sanctuary with a reception to follow in Buttonwood Hall.

Please come and join in the celebration of this happy milestone.

Songs of Thanks: a Benefit Concert

In thanksgiving for all the gifts that have been given to the Halili Family over the years by the First Presbyterian Church and the Academy of Vocal Arts, Jeffrey Halili is presenting a benefit concert with the proceeds going to the First Presbyterian Columbarium Project and the Academy of Vocal Arts. The concert will take place on **Tuesday, May 31st at 7:00 P.M.** Tickets will be available at the door for \$35.00.

Get the Lead Out

In April, one of the Christian Education Social Justice series topics was lead poisoning, led by Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey. As a follow up, Doug has provided the following resources he discussed during his talk.

Sadly, this issue will continue to be in the news, although most of the focus will remain on Flint, and not enough on our own lead pipes and lead contaminated houses and apartments in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

1. **How To Get Testing:** If you are concerned about lead in your home water supply (and you live in Philly), you can call the PWD hotline (215-685-6300) to schedule a technician to come out and conduct a free water test. Testing is free and technicians come out Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Please note you need to ensure that you don't use water before the testing.
2. **Lead Contamination At Home:** The most prevalent source of lead contamination — and potent — remains our homes and apartments. Clearly children are the most at risk, but adults can also be impacted. Here are several resources to refer to:
3. **EPA:** Excellent overview: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>
4. **CDC:** Tips To Avoid Lead Contamination: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>

5. **Home Renovations:** Good tip list when doing any sort of home renovation: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead/homes/>
6. **Parents:** To-Dos If You Have Young Kids: <http://www.parents.com/baby/safety/lead-poisoning/dangers-of-lead/>
7. **Lead: America's Real Criminal Intent:** <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2016/02/lead-exposure-gasoline-crime-increase-children-health>. A chilling 2013 Mother Jones article on the link between lead poisoning and violence/crime rates, especially in urban cities.

Obviously, there are clear budget issues with fully funding lead remediation efforts in both states. Good resources include coalition efforts in New Jersey by the Anti-Poverty Network and the Housing Community and Development Network for New Jersey. Also, note because of public pressure, Gov. Christie announced the week after the work-shop that he would restore \$10 million of dedicated state funding for lead remediation.

If you are the parent of a toddler, you should know there is testing of infants at 9 months and then for toddlers at 2 years. However, if your pediatrician is doing blood testing, you can ask for a lead blood test to occur in between those testing periods if you're worried about your child being exposed to lead.

—Doug O'Malley

PENTECOST

The Day of Pentecost, so named because it comes fifty days after Easter, marks the occasion when the Holy Spirit descended in tongues of flame on the apostles gathered in an upper room after Jesus' resurrection. The church celebrates Pentecost using the color red to symbolize the joy and fire of the Spirit.

On Pentecost Sunday, May 15, the Worship Committee will dress Old Buttonwood Hall for the Celebration Service and the sanctuary for the 11:00 service, with a red cloth on the Communion table, and with ribbons of red and orange descending from the lights high above the congregation, symbolizing the descent of the flames of the Holy Spirit on Christians today. God's Spirit is also described in scripture as breath or wind. As the ribbons gently move during our worship, so the Holy Spirit moves as God's wind breathes through our lives.

Some say that Pentecost marks the birthday of the church, when the disciples understood clearly that they should not stay in that upper room in Jerusalem, but instead go out into the world to proclaim the good news of Jesus' Resurrection, and thus become his body, the church.

During the 11:00 service, the Nicene Creed will be read in the many languages represented in our congregation, symbolizing the fact that the disciples spoke in many languages at Pentecost, yet everyone was able to understand.

While most Christians are very familiar with the symbols at the center of our faith — the cross, the font, and the table — the Worship Committee hopes that by "proclaiming the Word" through other symbols that touch our senses, we will more fully experience the truth and joy of God's Good News for the world.

—Barbara Chaapel for the Worship Committee

Cool Springs is indeed "God's Country"

"COOL SPRINGS, TENNESSEE, IS GOD'S COUNTRY," as Pastor Jesse from time to time proclaims from the pulpit. His recollections of his growing-up days there are clearly personal, folksy and merit our hearty appreciation from the pews.

Probably we thought that "God's Country" label was his personal view. After all, his time in Cool Springs on his grandparents' farm created a childhood aura that we too could and do embrace. *Well, the label is not Jesse's personal one at all.* On a refrigerator magnet that features Cool Springs Cumberland Presbyterian Church on its 125th anniversary, in fancy letters is the label "God's Country." Yes, God's Country!

Recently, member Fred Barfoot and his adventurous sister Dot Ledlow drove about two hours from her Memphis home to Cool Springs. Their trek on hilly and curving back roads wove through countless well-groomed farms, with fields of rich soil tilled ready for spring planting contrasting with fields of brilliantly green rye grass. Finally, at a crossroads a bold

sign directed them to the right. In the bright sunshine, on a hill, the church and its historic cemetery gleamed.

Turning the old white enamel door knob (no locks), they went into the sanctuary. It is a pristine, simple space, with a plain, centered pulpit and curved pews graced with



comfortable cushions. The congregation must love its comforts, as there were blankets and throws scattered here and there on the pews. Sunday, April 10, Cool Springs worshippers sang "Praise the One who Breaks the Darkness," "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" and "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee."

Back outside, they studied the grave stones. They knew at once that this is Garner and Headden (Jesse's other grandparents' name) turf, now and for generations before. Beyond those stones are hundreds of well cultivated farms — still Garner land.

Listen for Pastor Jesse's next proclamation about "God's Country." It's true.

—Fred Barfoot

Make a Joyful Noise!

Can you remember the songs you learned as a child at church? We bet you can! Join us May 15 following the 9:00 A.M. Celebration! service, for our first *Make a Joyful Noise* gathering, as we joyfully sing children's songs together. We'll gather in Old Buttonwood Hall at 9:45

around the end of the fellowship time, break out some shakers and percussion instruments, and have a great time helping our youngsters learn the music of our faith. Although this program is designed for our young families, all are welcome!

Buttonwood Circle Members Honored at April 9 Brunch

Members of the Buttonwood Circle were the guests of honor of the brunch in Old Buttonwood Hall on Saturday morning, April 9 sponsored by the Planned Giving Team. Membership in the Buttonwood Circle is open to all persons who have included First Church as a beneficiary in their estate or other kinds of planned gifts. Anyone who is not yet a member of the Buttonwood Circle and has made First Church a planned gift beneficiary or who wants more information about planned gifting to the church should contact any of the members of the Planned Giving Team: Herb Valentine, Phil Steinberg, Pat Quigg, Patti Sassoli, Sheila Ferguson, Jesse Garner and William Leonard.

The program presented by the Planned Giving Team, entitled "We Need to Talk About It" addressed end-of-life issues that everyone must eventually confront. The unfortunate truth is that all of us tend to avoid addressing these issues in a timely manner, often placing the burden on our children or other relatives to make decisions for which

we have provided no guidance or plan. Considering the questions and the lively discussion prompted by the program, it was clear that the 35–40 persons in attendance found the program to be helpful and interesting.

The featured speakers were Nadine Doolittle, Esquire, a member of the Trusts & Estate Department of the law firm of Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis, LLP, and Lisa Dustin, AIA, of Atkin Olshin Schade Architects. Ms. Doolittle reviewed a number of possible estate and planned giving options that everyone should consider as they review their personal financial and personal situations. Ms. Dustin, the architect retained to work on the design of the First Church columbarium, gave an update and the current status and estimated schedule for the design and construction of the columbarium.

William L. Leonard
Planned Giving Team

Young Adult Topical Discussion Series: Wednesdays @ 7:00 P.M.

Postmodernism, globalization, the dramatic growth of higher education, birth control, the influence of social media—these are just a few of the factors that have radically altered the ways that millennials experience the transition to adulthood as compared to the generations before them.

While the average ages of marriage in 1950 were 20.3 for women and 22.8 for men, they are now 25.9 and 27.9, respectively. Similarly, most millennials are now spending five to ten years experimenting with jobs before finding a long-term direction. It suffices to say that the differences encountered by young adults today are far-reaching, and using old paradigms and models of ministry to guide and support them have already proven to be futile.

For the month of May, the young adult group will be giving more consideration to "who we are," with the aid of articles, new sociological findings, and our own experiences. Each week, a different aspect of young adulthood will be brought to the floor, and we will consider how our faith challenges us to respond. We will continue to meet at our normal time, each Wednesday at 7:00 P.M. in the Cochran Room. For more information, contact: youngadults@fpcphila.org.

—Chip Rotolo

Ladies Spring Tea

Ladies of all ages — members and visitors alike — please join us on Saturday, May 14, for Afternoon Tea at 2:00 P.M. This will be our third annual intergenerational Spring Tea in Old Buttonwood Hall.

Several women will serve as hostesses by bringing their lovely china to make the table settings elegant. Special tea sandwiches, scones, *petit fours* and delicious tea will be served. Our guest speaker Margaret Somerville will bring us a brief message, and beautiful piano music will provide the background as we chat with old friends and build new friendships. Childcare will be provided.

We are so happy to have many new members and visitors at First Presbyterian. What a perfect time to get acquainted with someone you haven't met or reconnect with women in the church that we only see for brief moments after a worship service! Please bring a guest, and consider offering a ride to someone who might not have transportation. The event will conclude by 4:00 P.M.

Please R.S.V.P. to Gwen in the church office (office@fpcphila.org or 215-567-0532). Contact Fran Bjorneby Kraemer (215-356-8865) for more information, or to volunteer to help with food preparation or as a hostess.

CASSEROLES FOR THE HUNGRY

Our next casserole-making event to benefit the University City Hospitality Coalition (UCHC) will be held on **Saturday, May 21**. We will meet in the kitchen **between 8:30 and 9:00 A.M.** With eight volunteers, the task can be completed in a little over an hour—and you can enjoy the remainder of your Saturday knowing you have helped your neighbors in need. If interested, please contact Beverly Cowart (missions@fpcphila.org, 215-382-4315).



Penn's Village Celebrates Its Volunteers & Supporters

Each year we are reminded of the essence of the village movement in general (195 villages in operation now) and of Penn's Village specifically, dedication to living life fully in the communities we love and supporting our neighbors if their needs change. This year we will gather on May 25th between 5:30 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. in the garden of Christ Church on 2nd Street above Market, to celebrate our volunteers and supporters. RSVP by calling 215-925-7333 or emailing info@pennsvillage.org. Look for our name in lights on the Philadelphia Electric Company marquis from May 23–25.

We remain extremely grateful to the First Presbyterian Church for providing us with office space and the ability to support our members and volunteers and sustain our programs in such a congenial setting.

Offering Logistics

Have you ever wondered what is happening when seemingly random people, during the postlude, go to the front of the church, pick up the offering, and take it into Jesse's office? These are your Trustees and one of the tasks of the Trustees is to count and document the offering. This is done to provide a duplicate of amounts given, for audit purposes, while simultaneously organizing the offering to improve the efficiency with which the finance office can record and process it.

There are a number of things which our members can do to help the counting process and contribute to the stewardship of the time of the counting volunteers. The first is to make use of **electronic giving**. This is an easy, convenient and secure way of giving, that eliminates the possibility of leaving your offering at home, and removes the hassle of trying to work out how much you should be giving after an extended absence.

Some people do not utilize this method because they prefer to place their offering in the collection plate. Those who use the method have come up with a number of alternatives, like, placing their empty pledge envelope in the

plate, and writing EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer) on the outside. Another practice is to place a prayer card in the plate instead, or, simply putting \$1 in as a token.

Anyone who has made an Annual Giving pledge to First Church receives a box of **pledge envelopes** at the beginning of the year. Each set of envelopes has a unique number which is associated with the pledger. This number helps the finance office effectively record what you have given. That is the **ONLY** purpose of the pledge envelopes and so, if you miss a couple of weeks, you do not need to return all of those envelopes, simply consolidate those weeks into a single envelope and discard the unused envelopes. And please do not tape down the envelope as securely as Fort Knox – the Trustees have to open the envelope as part of the counting process. In fact, you don't even need to lick the sticky part – money and checks do not fall out of an unsealed envelope.

Thank you for your sustained dedication and generosity to First Church, and for anything that you can do to aid the Trustees in their weekly counting duties.

MEMBER NEWS

New Members

Brian & Kristin Adams, and their 11-month old son **Hudson** are excited to be a part of the First Church community. They have been attending for a few years, and have just completed a move from South Philly to Media, PA. Both are Pennsylvania natives. Brian is from Bucks County and Kristin is from Pittsburgh, where they met when Brian was at the University of Pittsburgh and Kristin was working in the city. Brian works for IBM, and Kristin is a stay-at-home mom taking care of Hudson, who will be baptized the first Sunday in May.



Brian & Kristin Adams, and their son Hudson

Baptisms

Malcolm Wich O'Malley, son of **Doug O'Malley & Katie Wich**, was baptized on April 3.

Jane Marian Harrison, daughter of the **Rev. Drew and Dr. Hannah Harrison**, was baptized on April 24.



Rev. Drew and Dr. Hannah Harrison and their daughter Jane

Dear Fellow Church Members,

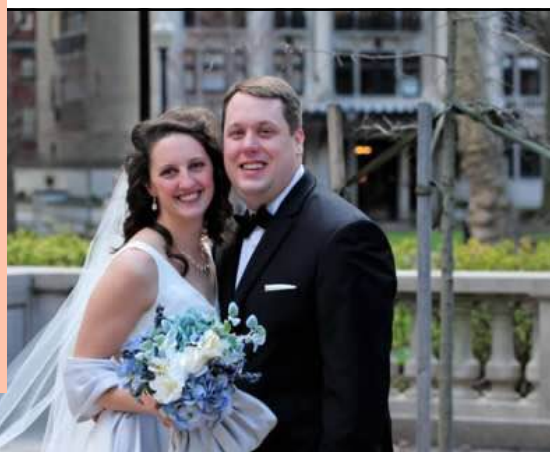
As some of you know, my husband and I were married by Jesse Garner in the church on March 18th. Thank you to Jesse, Andrew Senn, and Gwen Scott for all your help making the ceremony as flawless as it was.

Many of our guests commented about the beauty of the church, and boy are they right! Hard as it is to believe, sometimes I'm distracted from the beauty of the church. I'm distracted by the kindness, faithfulness, and authenticity of the people inside the church. I'm distracted by the spirit moving in me during the harmonious swells of the organ. I'm distracted by seeing new faces and how it encourages my faith journey to see new people coming to church.

I wanted to also thank everyone for continuing to reach out to new visitors because it was that famous First Pres. warm welcome that brought me in and is keeping me here.

Love,

Emily (Buurma) & Christopher Roan



Men's Bible Study

First Church is beginning a weekly Men's Bible Study on Saturday mornings led by Drew Harrison and Rob Romano. The Men's Bible Study will be a casual time to come together and listen for how Scripture is speaking to us in our daily lives. Our initial gathering will be on Saturday, May 14th at 8:00 A.M. at the Plenty Café at 1602 Spruce St., where we will begin studying the book of John. Contact Drew (drew.harrison@fpcphila.org) for more information.

First Church Youth Retreat & Mission Day

The spring Youth Retreat and Mission Day is scheduled for Friday, May 20th through Saturday, May 21st. The teenagers will meet at the church on Friday around 5:00 P.M. for dinner, games, a movie and worship.

On Saturday morning they will volunteer in a gardening project in coordination with Urban Tree Connection. For more information, contact Jeffrey Halili (jeff.halili@fpcphila.org).

The First Presbyterian Church

IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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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

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION • Jeffrey Halili, Chair

MEMBERSHIP & EVANGELISM • Larry Slagle, Chair

MISSIONS • Beverly Cowart, Chair

PERSONNEL • Allan Schimmel, Chair

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Class of 2019

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Jennifer Gay, Robert Romano

THE MESSENGER

Patti Sassoli, Executive Editor

Owen Robbins, Design Director

Please submit all information for the
June/Summer issue of The Messenger to
communications@fpcphila.org by
Monday, May 23rd.

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 nonprofit 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.

CELEBRATION! A WORSHIP SERVICE



Sundays 9 am in Old Buttonwood Hall
(enter at 21st Street)



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