



# THE TOWER



SEPTEMBER 2017

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TITUSVILLE, PA

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## A Note from Pastor Norma Murphy

The Lord be with you all!

A passage from Romans is on the lectionary for this week, but I am not reading it or focusing on it at worship. It is Romans 12:1-8 if you would like to look up the full passage, but in part it reads:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”

*Romans 12:1, 4-5*

When Paul talks about presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice he is not talking just about our physical bodies, but rather our whole selves. We are to present our whole selves as a living sacrifice – one that is not martyred or killed, dead to this world, but alive and vibrant. We do this as an act of spiritual worship, worship that takes place any time, any place, in any context, not just organized formal services of worship.

Who among us is perfectly happy with our ‘body’? How many of us have grown up equating the ‘body’ with something sinful? Yet here Paul is saying that we are holy and acceptable to God, redeemed beings with redeemed bodies (selves). And together, we are to be the one body of Christ.

How would you rate your performance as a living sacrifice, a worshiper, a member of Christ’s body? Don’t think about other people, let them be concerned with themselves.

Just think about you, yourself, and how you are doing at being the 'self' God wants you to be.

Do you feel a need to grow more in your body, in your ability to be a living sacrifice? There are Sunday school classes, Bible Studies and Transformation Tuesdays to help with that. Do you feel a need to serve more in the church? Talk with me and I can help you plug in where your gifts are needed. And there are so many ways to grow and serve out in our community and out in the world.

If you aren't feeling too terribly holy and acceptable to God, being nurtured in growth and supported in service are primary ways to break that feeling. The more we all do this the more we are truly members of the body of Christ. Differently abled, unique, but beloved children of God working to make the kingdom of God tangibly real here on earth.

Grace and peace,  
Norma

## Session News

Your Session met to discern God's leading for our congregation on Monday, June 26, 2017. During that meeting the spiritual leaders of the church:

- ❖ Approved the May 22, 2017 minutes
- ❖ JoAnn Pondel-Fry was removed from the church roll per her request
- ❖ Pastor Norma reported that the Howard/Uterhark wedding took place in our church on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>
- ❖ David Pickens spoke on behalf of the Committee on Ministry of the Lake Erie Presbytery
- ❖ A Congregational meeting will be called on July 19<sup>th</sup> to approve a new PNC Committee. The PNC Committee members, if approved, will be: Jack Samonsky, Lynn Stover, David Steinbuhler, Bruce Smith, Gail Billig, Kirt Zimmerman, and Barbara Frye

The next meeting of the Session will be held on Monday, September 25, at 7 p.m.

# Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

This question, along with a similar one: “Why do children have to suffer?”, is older than Job. Throughout the ages there has not been an answer to this question that I find particularly satisfying. So, I turned to Frederick Buechner and his book *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* to see what he says about evil, which is what this question really deals with. He writes:

“Evil

- God is all-powerful
- God is all-good.
- Terrible things happen.

You can reconcile any two of these propositions with each other, but you can’t reconcile all three. The problem of evil is perhaps the greatest single problem for religious faith.

There have been numerous theological and philosophical attempts to solve it, but when it comes down to the reality of evil itself they are none of them worth much. When a child is raped and murdered, the parents are not apt to take much comfort from the explanation (better than most) that since God wants man to love him, man must be free to love or not to love and thus free to rape and murder a child if he takes a notion to.

Christian Science solves the problem of evil by saying that it does not exist except as an illusion of mortal mind. Buddhism solves it in terms of reincarnation and an inexorable law of cause and effect whereby the raped child is merely reaping the consequences of evil deeds it committed in another life.

Christianity, on the other hand, ultimately offers no theoretical solution at all. It merely points to the cross and says that, practically speaking, there is not evil so dark and so obscene – not even this – but that God can turn it to good.”

That’s not a satisfying answer for most, but the best one I have. When you offer up a tragedy to God, God can and will do amazing things with it. It doesn’t erase the pain, but softens it, and allows room for joy to move in beside it.

## Upcoming Committee Meetings

Mission – Thursday, Sept. 14, 12 noon., Conference Room  
Christian Education – Thursday, Sept. 14, 1 p.m., Conference Room  
Finance – Thursday, Sept. 21, 5:30 p.m., Conference Room  
Deacons – Thursday, Sept. 21, 7 p.m., Conference Room  
Worship – Sunday, Sept. 24, 12 noon, Conference Room  
Heritage – Sunday, Sept. 24, 8:30 a.m., Conference Room  
Session – Monday, Sept. 25, 7 p.m., Conference Room

## Sunday School News

### Rally Day

We'll be celebrating Rally Day on Sunday, September 10. This is the time when everyone comes back to the church for Worship at 11 a.m. and all fall programming begins.

### New Format for Sunday School Beginning, September 10

This year's Sunday school will be a little different than previous years.

- Middle School, Senior High, and Adult Sunday school classes will meet at 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. If you are coming to an adult class, please feel free to bring your children as they will be welcomed to our supervised young people's area located in the nursery to wait for you before church begins.
- All children in Kindergarten up to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade will meet for Sunday school during the church hour. Each child will come to the sanctuary with his or her family; stay for a short portion of worship (about the first 15 minutes); then be excused to their Sunday school classroom.

We hope that you will be able to join us at these times.

### New Adult Class Being Offered

Beginning on Sunday, September 10, 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. upstairs in Room 204, a new Bible Study will begin entitled "Twelve Ordinary Men" facilitated by Terry Davitt.

They weren't saints; they weren't scholars; they weren't even religious sages; they were simply 12 ordinary men. There were fishermen, a hated tax collector, and an impulsive political zealot.

Come explore these ordinary men and explore how the Master shaped them for greatness and what He wants to do with us.

## Seminary and September

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you...’”  
Genesis 12:1-2a

“Going forth” is a scary term, but it’s one that sufficiently sums up the last few months for me.

Beginning last spring, I knew God was calling me *somewhere*, but discerning that place took some time and much prayer. It wasn’t until June, while serving with the youth at Broad Street Ministries in Philadelphia, that I clearly received a call from God to begin my seminary studies. From early summer on, my life has been a whirlwind; and, I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Once I had God’s green light for seminary, I immediately set about finding a program that would fit my needs as well as my family’s needs. I decided on a four-year online M.Div program at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary; and, after applying and being accepted, the adventure began!

While most of my course work will be done online, there is a two-week required August residency each year that I need to attend. So, just days after acceptance, I found myself on a plane headed for Dubuque, Iowa, to begin my studies. What awaited me there was a community unlike any other I’ve ever experienced. Even though I spent my days from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. in classes and chapel, the movement of the Holy Spirit through the group was breathtaking. I found myself seated next to people of all ages and races, coming from all backgrounds, and all in love with our Creator God. Together with our professors, we prayed, sang, studied Scripture, went into nature, shared testimony, and broke bread daily – not unlike the early Christians!

At the end of our two weeks together, my fellow seminarians and I packed up our dirty laundry, used textbooks and many notebooks, and said our good-byes as dear brothers and sisters in Christ. But with our hearts now attuned to one another, we can engage in our online courses by reading, journaling, and responding to one another in an online community that flows out of a true fellowship forged amidst the corn fields of Iowa.

While “going forth” has meant sacrificing much that I enjoy, I’m learning that God’s blessings always outweigh the sacrifices made. I pray that as I continue to follow His guidance through this new season of my life, I may be a blessing to Him and to this congregation.

Grace and Peace,  
Eryn Lavery

## **Christian Education**

### **Women’s Bible Study**

Welcome to a new season of fellowship! The women’s Bible study will resume September 12<sup>th</sup>. We will be meeting every Tuesday morning from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the conference room. We will be studying a series entitled “Who Is Jesus? What a Difference a Lens Makes” by Judy Yates Siker.

Pastor Norma Prina Murphy invites you to join her on a journey to expand our understanding of who Jesus was and is – a journey of our hearts and our minds, a journey that we will take together.

I invite you to be good conversation partners along the way, sharing with one another how you see and experience the various lenses and how these different perspectives impact your understanding of who Jesus is.

Books are needed at a cost of \$6. Stop by the church office to sign up, or call and let Terry know you plan to attend. We will have your copy waiting for you on the first day of class.

For any questions contact Pastor Norma at 827-3665. We look forward to seeing you!

### **Fall Youth Group to Begin**

It's that time again! School is starting up, and so are the youth groups of First Presbyterian Church in Titusville. Open to any students in 6th through 12th grade, youth group will be a blend of service, worship, study, and fellowship. Our first meeting will be September 10, from 5-6:30 for middle school and 6:30-8 for high school. If you are new to youth group and would like more information, contact the church office.

## **Transformation Tuesdays to Begin September 12!**

Transformation Tuesdays, our after-school program for children in K-5 through 5<sup>th</sup> grades will return beginning on Tuesday, September 12, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Walkers will escort children from Main Street Elementary to the church for snacks, Christian Education, crafts, games, and children's choir. We also love our family of volunteers who help make this program a reality. Consider joining us!

For Registration forms and questions about the program contact Gail Billig at 827-3122 or the church office at 827-3665.

Note: After-school Programs follow the School Calendar.

No School – No After-School Program

## **Men of First Breakfast Bible Study**

MOF will begin on Wednesday, September 13, at 7 a.m. in Scheide Hall. Men of the church and community, come for a Bible Study, a delicious breakfast, good fellowship, and conversation on a passage of the Bible, leaving well-nourished and fulfilled.

If you would like to help prepare the morning breakfast, speak with Tom Newcombe.

## **Music News**

### **Chancel Choir**

At First Church the worship choir is a major part of the "Sunday Experience." I encourage anyone with a heart for worship and a song in their heart to consider joining this long-standing ministry! The choir meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. from September through May. They sing a wide variety of anthems that please most musical tastes, as well as lead the Sunday hymns. No experience is necessary and I am always available for "on-the-job training" for any choir member, not only in vocal production, but in ear training, music theory, sight-reading, and Christian understanding. As Marty Haugen wrote, "All are welcome in this Place!"

Nathaniel Licht,  
Organist and Choirmaster

# Church Mission Statement

## First Presbyterian Church

A Christian community that welcomes all people and equips them to proclaim, witness, and teach the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and caring service.

## Mission News

### Breaking Bread Together

“Do you like eating out? Do you like big crowds? Do you like to fellowship with people from the church?” If you said “yes” to any of the above questions, then you are invited to come and break bread together, Tuesday, September 12, at 12:30 p.m., at Perkin’s Restaurant located on Central Avenue.

To participate, we ask that you call or stop by the church office by Monday, the 11<sup>th</sup>, before 5 p.m. to make your reservation(s). Children, college students, and the young at heart are all invited.

Our hope is to be able to dine together each month on the second Tuesday at a different restaurant in the area. When we meet on September 12, we will decide where our next outing will be held.

### Back-to-School Backpack Fill-Up Mission Great Success

The Summer Mission for Associated Charities Back-to-School Backpack Fill-up was a great success! Our church is so generous in its giving of collected numerous tablets, pencils, pencil boxes, crayons, glue sticks, and erasers. But, best of all, the College/Young Adult Ministry held a fundraiser for this mission and donated \$160.00 on top of the \$1,007.00 collected from you each Sunday during July!

Thank you again for your generosity! God is smiling down on your good deeds.

### College / Young Adult Fellowship

The College/Young Adult Fellowship Meets each Sunday evening at 6 p.m. This group usually meets at facilitator Tom Newcombe’s home located at 308 North Fourth Street. If this is your first time attending, contact Mr. Newcombe at (814) 547-1760 or 827-6295.

Our hope is to achieve an atmosphere of spiritual growth, exploration, support, fostering, and challenge for young adults to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



## **SAM's (Senior Adult Ministry)**

All those 55+ are invited to participate in all SAM's Club events. If you have a suggestion for a movie/event, would like to make the soup for the day, or simply need a ride, call Tom Newcombe at 827-3665.

### **Elvis Will Be In the Building!**

On Saturday, September 9, 2017, at 6 p.m., in Scheide Hall, Jack Donovan will be the evening's entertainment. A lover of Elvis Presley, Jack will sing some of his favorites from the icon's repertoire.

### **Russia Through Dr. Rhonda Clark's Eyes**

On Wednesday, September 20, 2017, at 5:30 p.m., the evening will begin with a potluck supper, followed by Dr. Rhonda Clark speaking on Russia where she studied.

## **SAM's Club Weekly Programs**

Each Wednesday, join the SAM's Club group at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of needlecrafting.

Each Thursday, join the SAM's Club group at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of card playing.

## **SAM's Club Lunch and a Movie**

On Friday, September 8, at 12 noon, in Scheide Hall, join the SAM's Club for Lunch and a Movie. This group will also meet again on September 22.

## **Worship**

Thanks again to Nathaniel Licht for filling the pulpit on July 23 and Barb Frye for filling the pulpit on July 30! FPC continues to be blessed by people who so willingly share their gifts.

The Worship Committee met on Sunday, August 27, 2017. A motion was made and approved by the committee for our Pastor's proposed order of worship (which will begin on September 10), which motion will be presented to Session on August 28.

Pastor Norma will be on study leave October 18-31. The pulpit will be filled by Presbytery supply on October 22 and 29.

Phil Cauvel, Deb Kirvan, and Nathaniel Licht will be working on plans for our stewardship drive. More information will follow on this as plans develop.

Communion will be served (in the pews) on Sunday, September 3.

The worship hour is at 10:00 a.m. on September 3. **THE WORSHIP HOUR WILL RETURN TO 11:00 A.M. ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10!**

Ushers for September are: Art McIntyre (Captain), Adam Middleton, Bob Schneider, and Dick Zimmerman. If you would like to serve as an usher (even as a "sub"), please contact Sandy Smith.

The Worship Committee will meet again on Sunday, September 24, 2017.

Summer is still with us!

Sandy Smith,  
Moderator, Worship Committee

## Birthdays

Evelyn Kelley	1	Nancy Roeder	11	Jane Watson	21
Mike Nystrom	2	Barb Kocher	12	Cid Paden	22
Sherry Stover	3	Amanda Enright	14	Mike Langer	22
Bud Root	5	Jane Morrison	14	Judy Scott	27
Shawn Harrison	5	Jessica Decker	15	Becky Middleton	27
Joan Foley	6	Jim McFarland	15	John Shoup	29
Tye Cressman	6	Jim Pattison	16	Barb Reagle	29
Todd Greer	7	Stacie Warner	16	Audrey Renn	29
Marc Bodamer	7	Jena Sutley	16	Tony Deitz	30
Terry Wonderling	10	David Sutley	18	Sandy Chandler	30
Susan Atteberry	10	Bob Schneider	18		

***If we have missed your birthday – please let us know.***

## Flowers for the Sanctuary

If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary on any Sunday throughout the year, let Terry Davitt know at the church office (827-3665) by the Wednesday prior to them being in the sanctuary. This way, she can place the dedication in the bulletin.

# Community

## **Alzheimer Caregiver's Support Group Meeting**

An Alzheimer Caregiver's Support Group, led by Marcia Garrett and Carol Morgan, meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month (September 5 and 19) at 2:30 p.m. in Emerson Parlor.

A difficult challenge to face alone, Marcia and Carol have participated in special training to equip them to lead the group. All those who live with or care for those afflicted with Alzheimer or dementia of any kind are welcome to participate. If you have questions about the group, call Marcia Garrett at 827-7404.

## **Lions Club to Host Annual AMBA Wellness Program**

On Saturday, October 7, 2017, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., the Titusville Lions Club will once again host the AMBA Wellness Blood Screening here in our Scheide Hall.

Anyone interested in having these tests done should call (800)234-8888 Monday-Friday (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) to schedule an appointment.

The cost is \$40.00 and it includes testing for coronary disease, anemia, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, calcium, magnesium, chloride, potassium, sodium, uric acid, TIBC, and transferrin saturation. There are optional tests available at additional fees. Note: all optional tests require a separate script from your doctor.

## **Titusville Ladies Conference to Be Held in Our Sanctuary on October 20 and 21**

Due to construction at the Free Methodist Church, the Annual Titusville Ladies Conference (TLC) will be held here this year in our sanctuary on October 20 and 21. The speaker for this event will be Robyn Dykstra. For more information, see the attached brochure.

Mark your calendar now and invite a friend!

## **A Food Pantry**

The Food Pantry needs our help. They are always collecting food items for its shelves. Gift cards, for personal hygiene items and toiletries, are always appreciated, too.

## **Boy Scout Troop Meets on Mondays**

Beginning Monday, September 11, at 6 p.m., in Scheide Hall, all boys in grades Kindergarten - 5<sup>th</sup>, interested in joining a great club for boys, are invited to come and check it out. Any questions should be directed to Geri Whitney at (814)564-1179.

### **Crisis Hotlines**

Drug and Alcohol Crisis Line: (844)643-5766

Case manager available 24/7 to assist in seeking treatment and to get screenings/assessments and appointments made

Mental Health Crisis Line: (814) 724-2732 or (800) 315-5721

To access help in case of an emergency

Warm Line: (800)951-2055

When you need someone to talk to on a bad day.

## **Contact Us**

### **First Presbyterian Church**

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(814) 827-3665

[firstpresby216@verizon.net](mailto:firstpresby216@verizon.net)

[www.titusvillefirstpresbyterian.com](http://www.titusvillefirstpresbyterian.com)

## **Staff**

Kai Baldwin, Accompanist

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Email: [tdavitt.presby@gmail.com](mailto:tdavitt.presby@gmail.com)

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