

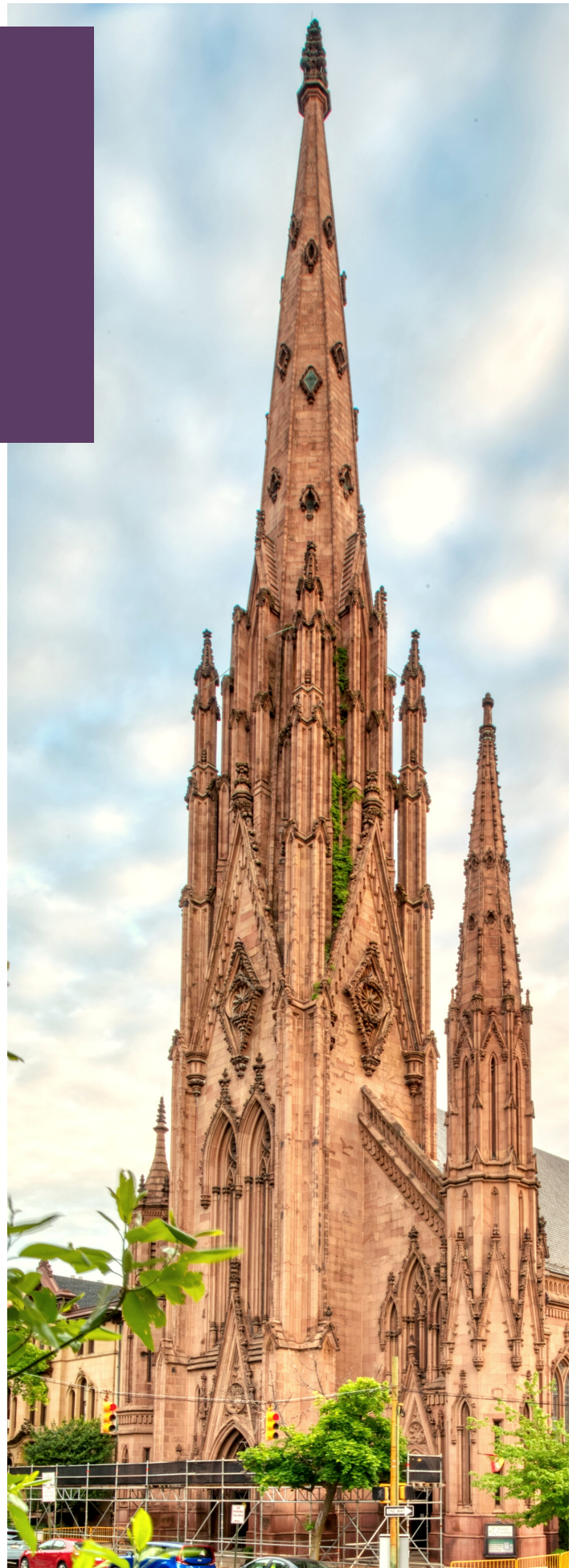
SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

FIRST & FRANKLIN

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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A WORD FROM REV. STEVE NOFEL

1 Corinthians 6:17,

“Anyone united to the Lord becomes one in spirit with him.”

Don't you just cringe when someone begins a statement with, “I'm no expert (long pause) BUT...” Then they monologue about what you should do and how you should do it. Truly cringe-worthy. Well, let me set aside my own bias and begin by saying, I am not an expert on homecomings or reunions.

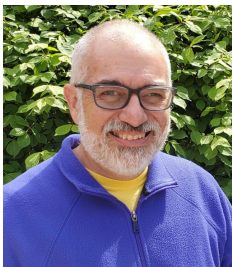
In my whole life, I have never been to a homecoming, family reunion or class reunion. In high school and college, I made it a point of hard-guy-inner-city-dude pride not to do anything as sappy as homecoming games or dances. As a mostly mature adult, I have never been in a position to attend a class reunion. We get together with Kim's family about as much as is humanly possible with all of us spread throughout the country. However, we have never done the formally-scheduled family reunion with planned activities such as the three-legged race.

BUT, I urge you. I beg you. Please, please, please join us on Sunday September 10, for our First & Franklin Family Reunion/Homecoming Sunday! We do have some terrific activities scheduled. We will begin our Sunday School season for all ages that day at 9:15am. Our worship at 10:30am, which is always special, will welcome back our choir! As all happy church families do, we will also eat together with a picnic in the courtyard.

Our activities may not be as zany as a sack race, but are vitally important to who we are as the family of God.

- *Church School* – 2 Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” And as Crosby, Stills, and Nash put it, “Teach the children (children of every age) well.”
- *Worship the Lord with Gladness* - Psalm 95:2, “Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!” St. Augustine said, “Anyone who sings, prays twice.” And don't forget Karen Carpenter, “Just sing...sing a song.”
- *Being together and sharing a meal* - Acts 2:42, “They (the infant church) devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (Christian study) and fellowship (being together), to the breaking of bread (the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper AND agape meals shared in love) and the prayers (worship).” As Toni Tennille sang, “Love will keep us together, whenever.”

Join us for Homecoming Sunday where we will share the Lord and be united once again with our Jesus and each other.



Grace and Peace,
Pastor Steve Nofel

SEPTEMBER 2023 CALENDAR

09/01 Fri | Rev. Nofel out through 09/06
09/02 Sat 1:00pm-3:00pm | Food Pantry (Backus House)
09/03 Sun 10:30am-11:30am | Hymn Sing
09/04 Mon | Office Closed - Labor Day
09/05 Tue 7:00pm-8:30pm | Peacemaking Committee Meeting
09/07 Thu 7:00pm-9:00pm | Choir Rehearsal Resumes (Sanctuary)
09/09 Sat 1:00pm-3:00pm | Food Pantry (Backus House)
09/09 Sat 3:00pm-5:00pm | Ponemone Exhibit Opening
09/10 Sun 9:00am-10:00am | Adult Education and Sunday School Resume
09/10 Sun 10:30am-11:30am | Bridge Pastor: Rev. Steve Nofel
09/10 Sun 11:30am-12:30am | Homecoming Picnic
09/13 Wed 7:00pm-8:00pm | Membership Committee Meeting
09/16 Sat 1:00pm-3:00pm | Food Pantry (Backus House)
09/17 Sun 9:00am-10:00am | Adult Education
09/17 Sun 9:00am-10:00am | Sunday School
09/17 Sun 10:30am-11:30am | Guest Preacher: Rev. Christa Burns
09/17 Sun 11:30am-12:30pm | Ponemone Exhibit Reception
09/18 Sun | Rev. Nofel out through 09/25
09/18 Mon 5:30pm-7:30pm | WMA Committee Meeting
09/19 Tue 7:00pm-8:30pm | Education Committee Meeting
09/19 Tue 7:00pm-8:30pm | Mount Vernon Belvedere Association Meeting
09/20 Wed 5:30pm-6:30pm | Finance Committee Meeting
09/21 Thu 6:30pm-8:30pm | Building and Grounds Committee Meeting
09/23 Sat | No Food Pantry
09/24 Sun 9:00am-10:00am | Adult Education
09/24 Sun 9:00am-10:00am | Sunday School
09/24 Sun 10:30am-11:30am | Guest Preacher: Rev. Janine Zabriskie
09/26 Tue 6:30pm-8:30pm | Session Meeting
09/27 Wed 6:30pm-7:30pm | AIDS Action Baltimore Meeting

SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS



BIRTHDAYS

Michael Costa
Nusrat David
Mara Dudrow
David Fischel
Geoff Genth
Jason Kissel
Coila Seiber
Sophia Smith

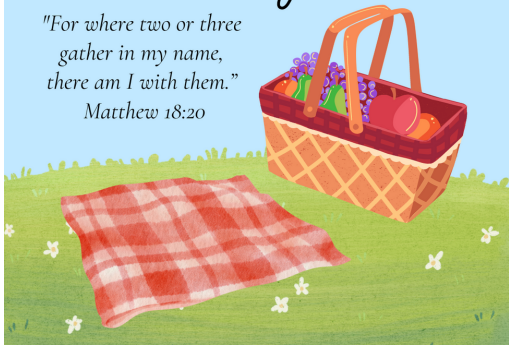
ANNIVERSARIES

Anjal Amin & Amy Pucino
Scott Fulton & Sasha Koo-Oshima
Steven Lapsley & Jim Sinclair
Ann & Michael Lucas
Chris & David Wallace

First & Franklin Presbyterian Church
Sunday, September 10, 2023

Homecoming Picnic

"For where two or three
gather in my name,
there am I with them."
Matthew 18:20



HOMECOMING PICNIC

First & Franklin will hold a Homecoming Picnic on Sunday, September 10th, to welcome back members, friends, and the Sanctuary Choir after this busy summer season. After our worship service at 10:30am, we will have lunch in Reid Chapel. This is a time to reconnect with our church family, share about your travels, and enjoy a delicious meal, courtesy of the Membership Committee. We invite guests to bring a side dish to share. All are welcome!

A RECEPTION FOR ART UNDER THE SPIRE

Art Under the Spire is returning to First & Franklin! The first installation will be 25 watercolors by artist Scott Ponemone, which are being displayed in support of our Guns 2 Gardens program and the Gun Buy-back Event that took place on August 5th. The exhibition is divided by the Reid Chapel's three walls. One wall, the "Guns" of the exhibition, features seven paintings, each showing a gun-range target held aloft by a person's arms. The opposite wall displays eight paintings of vegetables or young animals, the "Gardens" of the exhibition. On the third wall are images of infants, who are the witnesses to this world of "Guns" and "Gardens." On September 17th, after worship, we will have a reception with Scott Ponemone and the congregation to celebrate this powerful collection of art.



THE 2023-2024 SPIRE SERIES BEGINS

On Sunday, October 1, at 3:00pm, the Spire Series at First & Franklin will host our first artist of the 2023-2024 season - the Josh Espinoza Trio! Latino-American jazz pianist Joshua Espinoza blends and bends genres into songs that are immediately relatable yet hard to define. He has performed with such luminaries as Sean Jones, Warren Wolf, Miho Hazama, Jihye Lee, and Chuck Redd. Alongside bassist Kris Monson and drummer Jaron Lamar Davis, the Joshua Espinoza Trio explores the undefined space between jazz improvisation, classical chamber music, pop music, and folk traditions. This concert celebrates the release of Espinoza's second studio album *Songs From Yesterday*. Tickets go on sale on September 1 and can be purchased online at www.firstfranklin.org/spireseries.

GARDEN BED CLEAN-UP DAY

On Monday, September 4 (Labor Day) from 8:00am-Noon, come help us clean up the garden beds around First & Franklin, on Park Avenue and Madison Street. We'd love to have the beds looking weeded and trimmed in advance of our Homecoming Sunday on September 10. If you are able to help, bring your gloves, trowels, clippers, and any other garden tools you can. Please be sure to label them! We will have refuse bags for the weeds and trimmings. This will be the first step in sprucing up our beds, including replacing some less than alive plants. We'll also have some coffee and donuts. In case of rain, watch our Facebook page for update.



MESSAGE FROM RANDY VEALE

This past July 26th will mark my 14 anniversary as a member of First and Franklin Presbyterian Church and is now starting my 15th also being on the Sanctuary Choir in September of 2009. During the pandemic in 2020 we had church via Zoom in which the congregation were joining together to worship for the first time in this format, i was out of work then due to the pandemic for almost a year and a half after waiting for my then job at Days Inn hotel to either call or email me, but unfortunately it didn't happen, and on June 9th 2021 I was hired on the spot at Gertrude's @ the Baltimore Museum of Art based on my many years in the restaurant industry (38 years to be exact). Since that time I come to church on some Sundays, and they scheduled me on Sundays for Brunch which is fine by me and at least keeps me working, but I think about my church family every week, but not to fear, I do keep up with the services by watching them on their website or on their facebook page which is not the same as being their in person which reminds me of an old commercial for the telephone company with the phrase "Long Distance it's the next best thing to being there" are far as watching the services on Zoom. But the upside to this since being a Deacon in 2021 I have since day 1 in June of 2020 as one of the original volunteers of the Food Pantry originated from the Reid Chapel, now in the Backus House, as far as talking and getting to know the people in the Mt. Vernon Community my neighborhood of 35 years. That is the story in a nutshell.

Randolph P. Veale Jr.
Member and Deacon

FROM BALTIMORE TO SOUTH DAKOTA

July 22-29 a team from Baltimore Presbytery, in partnership with Dakota Presbytery, travelled to Sisseton, South Dakota to lead a “learning camp” for children. Becca and Steve Hollaway, Marla Holt, and J Hyph joined five other volunteers from Baltimore-area churches. We worked every day with pastors and lay leaders from Native Presbyterian Churches.

This was the first time a learning camp had been attempted in Sisseton in several years, and we were aware of some difficulties in the past. We were well-prepared with stories, art projects, science experiments, and games. I’d say the local churches were not as well-prepared to turn out their own children.

The first day of the camp we had zero children show up, but we had three Native teenage girls who initially came as helpers for the camp. We decided to go ahead with our plan for the day, but to treat the three teenagers as our “children.” They were game to participate, enjoying science experiments, story time, outdoor recreation (too hot, though), Uno—and especially art. All three girls were really gifted in art. During the rotation and meal times, we were able to talk with local church folk about why the turnout was so low.

On the second day, three young girls attended, and stayed through the rest of the week. They were delightful and entered right into all activities. One of them was only four, though, and art couldn’t really follow games involving written words or numerals; that’s something we’ll take into account for next year. By this time, we had decided to carry on with the learning camp just as if we had a larger group and treat it as a “dress rehearsal” for the camp next summer. We had great fun with the six girls who attended, teens as well as children. [Continued]



The most enriching aspect of the week for us adults, though, was our deep interaction with adults from local Presbyterian churches who came to talk with us. We were moved by presentations by one woman who started a healing ministry for victims of sexual violence, and another by a woman who serves in the South Dakota legislature as a representative and advocates for Native concerns. A member of the Presbytery staff taught Dakota art and demonstrated traditional hoop dances. Some of the people who chatted with us long after meals had ended were Ph.D.'s, some were seminary grads or trained lay pastors, and some were there in the role of grandmother or volunteer cook. We learned an incredible amount about the culture and our not-always-sensitive response to it. We learned that the interaction between Native congregations is as complicated as any such relationships in Baltimore.

One of the highlights of the week was a huge potluck including Indian tacos, which doubled as a birthday party for a pastor's son turning one. All of us visitors from Baltimore were warmly welcomed and engaged in conversations.

We decided that one of the problems with attendance at the camp is a lack of transportation. The five participating churches are spread pretty far apart, and many people don't have cars available. There is essentially no public transportation. Our first option is to hire school bus drivers to pick up children; a second option is to recruit Native volunteers to drive vans that a Mennonite group leaves parked at the church where we had learning camp. I hope we can find ways to cultivate interest within the Native churches during the spring, and reassure them that although we are borrowing the building of a majority-White nondenominational church, this is a camp for Native children.

Every team member said at the end of the week that they were glad to be part of the experience. All agreed that we learned a lot which will help us carry out a camp in 2024.

A SUCCESSFUL GUN BUY-BACK



On Saturday, August 6, First & Franklin joined with the Archdiocese of Baltimore to hold a Gun Buy-Back event at the Edmondson Village Shopping Center. The cooperation between our two groups was energizing and helped to make this event a great success. The Archdiocese was able to provide staff, who were knowledgeable in media and community outreach, plus Father Murphy, who is a skilled fundraiser and who held a vision of sponsoring a community service fair simultaneously. We were able to offer our experience, connection with the police department, organization for the buyback, supplies, food for the police, and volunteers for the buyback. Hunting Ridge Presbyterian also joined the effort helping publicize to the neighborhood, garner support from local communities, and offer creative ideas.

By the time we opened, cars had circled around the parking lot and down Edmondson Avenue for blocks. A total of 356 guns were collected using all our funds- a total of \$60,500! The police will take all the guns to a foundry in Pennsylvania to be melted down. A special thank you to Corena and Bill Bridges, Judy Dadds, Allie Payne, Muddassar Iqbal, Jim Schroll, and Aaron Redsicker for volunteering on Saturday; to Ann Silberman, Steve Holloway, and Paula Crews for helping to plan the event; and to all who helped to finance the buyback.



MEDICINES NEEDED FOR CUBA

Several people from Baltimore Presbytery are traveling to Cuba for a business meeting with the El Centro Presbytery. We will be collecting donations of much needed medicines for them to bring and share with our partner churches. Requested medicines include ibuprofen, acetaminophen, multivitamins, anti-allergy meds, antacids, antibiotic ointments, and more. For a complete list of requested items, please contact the church office or Betty Schroll. Donations should be brought to the church no later than September 17.

FOOD PANTRY REPORT

The Food Pantry only was at Backus House for 2 Saturdays of the month. There was no Food Pantry on August 5th due to the Gun Buy Back, and we continue to close on the last Saturday of each month. For the month of August, a total of 39 Grocery Bags and 81 Produce Bags were distributed to the neighbors within the Mt. Vernon Community. We had some new volunteers to help those who had been there from Day 1 in June of 2020. We have our regulars and also a couple of new people who had been spreading the word week after week that we are here for 2 hours on most Saturdays.



COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to provide coffee hour refreshments on Sundays from October 1st through December 17th. Members with the last name A-D are encouraged to sign up. It only costs about \$10-15- enough to provide snacks for 20-25 people. A cake, pie, or pastry, a box of crackers, some bite size fruit, bread and jam, cheese, cookies - two or three of these items are a perfect choice! Any questions? Contact information@firstfranklin.org or call the church office at (410) 728-5545.

NEW OFFICE HOURS

Starting Monday, August 28th, the church office hours will be as follows. The office will be open Monday 9:00am-2:30pm, Tuesday 9:00am-2:30pm, Wednesday 9:00am-1:30pm, and Sunday 12:00pm-4:00pm. The office will be closed on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Office Administrator Anna Pollitt will be available by phone and email Monday through Thursday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and Sunday, 12:00pm-4:00pm.



ADULT ED GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

On Sunday September 10, Adult Ed will resume in Backus House at 9:00am with The Bible & Sexuality, Part II. In June, we worked to lay the groundwork for how we ought to approach our sacred story and began to delve through the "seven deadly texts" that have been used to set the church's sexual ethic and condemn LGBTQ individuals. In September, we will resume where we left off, continuing our journey through the Bible before wrapping up our guided discussion with questions about the role of the church and the nature of sexual ethics for First & Franklin. Anyone and everyone is welcome and encouraged to join and participate, regardless of where you find yourself on this issue of sexuality. You do not need to have been part of the June discussion to attend. Please contact either the church office or Kris Stinson for the study packet that class is using. As always, there will be donuts and coffee to fuel our discussion!



RETURN OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

Come One! Come All! Youngsters between pre-kindergarten and grade 5 are invited to join us as the Multi-Age Sunday School Class resumes on September 10, 2023. Our Director of Christian Education Deborah McCrimmon looks forward to seeing young Christians at 9:15am on the third floor of Backus House!

DOORS OPEN BALTIMORE

Saturday October 7th is our annual day of public tours in cooperation with Doors Open Baltimore. We need at least two more tour guides, and if you would like to help decorate or just hang out sometime that day, please contact Mike Johnson or the office. A short training is all that is necessary. A fun time every year.



FIRST & FRANKLIN SANCTUARY CHOIR

Rehearsals of the First & Franklin Sanctuary Choir resume on Thursday, September 7 at 7:00 p.m. New singers are always welcome! Please contact Jason Kissel for more information on this ministry. jkissel@firstfranklin.org