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Love God.
Love Our Neighbors.

SPIRE
May 2023



Celebration Works- Strings and Pipes Sunday, May 21st, 2 pm

The final Celebration Works concert of the 2022-2023 season will be on Sunday, May 21st, at 2pm, and will feature Brenda Brenner and Christopher Young, both professors at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, in a lively and engaging concert of music for violin and organ.

Dr. Brenner specializes in string music education, teaching applied violin and courses in violin and string pedagogy. As director of the Fairview Project, a program in which every first and second grader in an underserved school is taught violin as part of the curriculum, she is researching the cognitive, academic, and social outcomes of early instrumental music instruction. Additionally, she is an active international clinician, with recent appearances at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, and American String Teachers Association National Conferences. Brenda is president of the American String Teachers Association.

Dr. Young has taught organ at IU since 1991 (and was one of FPC Music Director Greg Homza’s teachers). He has been a featured artist at national and regional conventions of the American Guild of Organists, and has been heard as a featured performer on American Public Media’s “Pipedreams.” In addition to concertizing, he presents master classes, workshops, and lectures. He has given classes and performances at several church music clinics, including the Montreat Conference on Music and Worship, and the St. Olaf Conference on Music and Theology. Chris serves as organist of First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, and also plays keyboards with Don’t Call Me Betty, an esteemed cover band whose repertoire spans more than four decades of rock ‘n’ roll tunes.

Their program will include works by J.S. Bach, Bartók, Harold Britton, Chris DeBlasio, Naji Hakim, Rachmaninoff, and Rheinberger. This concert is offered free of charge, as a gift to the community from FPC and CW’s generous donors. A festive reception will follow, and complimentary parking will be available in FPC’s garage. The concert will be livestreamed, but in-person attendance is encouraged!

Greetings, First Presbyterian Portland!

The rain has been relentless this spring, but thanks be to God there are signs of new life emerging. The fragrance of Daphne fills the air. Cherry and Dogwood blooms are beginning to burst, and birds are busily building new nests and sharing their song. What a gift.

While in the last several years the church has had to pare down its in-person ministry due to the pandemic, I am delighted to report that new life is emerging here at the church as well! For the first time in three years, we will be welcoming a new class of confirmands as members of the church. It has been a joy to meet with these 6 high school students and engage deeply in matters of faith and theology. Wonderful mentors, adult volunteers, and the pastors of our church have made this program a rich time of learning. I am grateful for the many gifts these young people will continue to share with our church.

As we continue to navigate the many challenges facing our world and our community, and as we navigate the challenges in our own lives of faith, may we rely on the power and strength of the Holy Spirit who continues to breathe new life into weary and parched souls. The words of Isaiah 43:19 come to mind: “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” May it be so!

In hope,
Pastor Carmen

Youth Mission Trip and Mom Prom!

We are excited to share that our First Presbyterian youth mission trip this year is to the Philippines! On July 17th, our group will fly to Tacloban on the island of Leyte. From there, we will travel down the coast to spend the week serving and learning with the Ingan Leyte Project, founded by our church member Marcie Hope. The Ingan Leyte Project’s mission goal is to “protect the rights of children, to develop their spiritual values.” They seek to do this by working with the local community to H.E.L.P (Healthy, Education, Livelihood, Peace). On our trip, we will be learning about village life and Filipino culture. We will be serving as an ambassador of our church, and by learning about the Ingan Leyte Project, we will become their ambassadors for this wonderful non-profit back home. We will also be getting our hands dirty serving in a number of ways. We will be helping in the building of the new community center that FPC helped fund. We will have the opportunity to help with the livelihood programs and educational program. We will also worship with the local church, learning about how Christians in another country experience God!

Thank you for your prayers and support as we are excited for the great adventure ahead of us. Please also mark your calendars for May 14th from 11:45am-2pm for the “Mom Prom” an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship as we fundraise for our trip. Get your tickets after church in Geneva Hall and don’t forget to bring your dancing shoes!

-The FPC Youth Mission Team,
Pastor Brenna, Vincent, Daniel, Kevin, Stefen, John, Walker, Zeke, Sophie, June, and Eloise

Easter Egg Hunt a Success!

Thanks to all who helped make Easter a marvelous celebration! The Easter egg hunt was a big hit, despite having to move it indoors. We had more than 30 children participate and there were a number of visitors. What a joy. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!



Rev. Morris Joins Our Denomination

At its April meeting, the Presbytery of the Cascades (the regional church of which our congregation is a part) voted to approve the transfer of ordination for Rev. Aaron Morris into our PC(USA) denomination. Aaron and his wife Kara have been active in our church for the past several years, and two of their children have been part of our recent confirmation process and have served as youth interns at the church. Aaron has recently begun a new role serving as a hospice chaplain. The church joins in celebrating Aaron’s joining the PC(USA) fold!

Mother’s Day Confirmation Celebration

In worship on Sunday, May 14, we are delighted that students who have been attending our confirmation class this year will be joining the church. Rev. Carmen Goetschius has led them in a process of exploring their faith and sharing with them the theology and traditions of the church, along with other pastoral staff. We’re grateful to Justin Forster, who has accompanied the students along with Carmen, and for the mentors who are encouraging them along the way. The students are: Anne Foley, Sophie June Morris, Walker Morris, John Hoder, Eloise Dick, and Lucas Coles. Please join in welcoming them as they are confirmed!

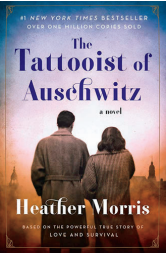
Menucha Update

In 2019, the congregation and Presbytery approved for Menucha, our Retreat and Conference Center in the Columbia Gorge, to become an entity separate from the church. Nearly all of the Retreat Centers around the country that were affiliated with churches or Presbyteries have become independent entities in recent years.

Since then, Menucha has been granted non-profit status, and a group from Menucha and the church has been preparing for the transition of staff and facilities to the new Menucha. The likely start date for the new Menucha is in July of this summer. The church will continue to hold retreats like the Women’s Retreat, the Labor Day Weekend, and the Session Retreat at Menucha, and Rev. Spencer Parks will continue on the pastoral staff at our church while he directs Menucha.

Women's Book Club

The Women’s Book Club will meet on Tuesday, May 2 at noon in the Heritage Room (#207) and on Zoom. Midge Birnie will lead the discussion on the book “The Tattooist of Auschwitz” by Heather Morris. This book is based on interviews with a Holocaust survivor and tattooist in Auschwitz who fell in love with a fellow prisoner. It is a story of selfless acts of love alongside shocking brutality.



A Workshop on Planning for Your Memorial

On Sunday, May 7 at 11:45 am after worship, Rev. Audrey Schindler will lead a workshop in the Heritage Room on planning for one’s memorial, and the hope that is ours in Christ. This will include some theological background on Christian memorial services, elements of music and Scripture, eulogies/remembrances, and receptions at the church. You’ll have a chance to take home a planning form, as leaving a record of your wishes can be a great help to family members in a time of loss. Come with your thoughts and questions!

Flowers to Home Bound Members and Retirement Communities – Flower Team

Sometimes, the sanctuary flowers are not taken home after Sunday service. Would you like to join the team that takes them to people and places after the service when they are available? The concept is pretty straightforward. On ‘your’ Sunday, just take them to someone who you think would like some flowers. Or take them to one of the retirement communities for their reception area. Easy to join the ‘Flower Team’ – just contact Bill Resley at (713) 256-6658 or kayak500@gmail.com Many hands make light work.

Plan to Participate in the Post-Pentecost Paella Party!



This special pan will be used by the wonderful Menucha kitchen staff to prepare a spectacular celebratory meal on June 4th. Plan to join this festive celebration, enjoying this traditional Spanish dish of rice, vegetables, seafood, spices, and more (a vegetarian option will be available as well). Look for signup opportunities in upcoming church communications. The prices are as follows: \$25 for adults and teens, \$15 for ages 7-12, and ages 0-6 are free. Perhaps you can pull out some red clothes and celebrate the Holy Spirit in this fun way!