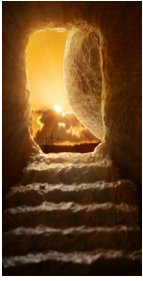


# *FBC CONNECTIONS*

## *March 2024*

### *Word from the Pastor.*



"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus....suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightening stood beside them and said, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!'" Luke 24:1-6

Easter Sunday or Resurrection Sunday, as it is known by some, is the biggest celebration for the church worldwide, because it is the foundation for our faith. God the Father has conquered the "last enemy which is death" (1 Cor. 15:26) by raising Jesus from the dead. He was crucified on the cross and we thought all was lost, but "he was raised up on the third day according to the scriptures and he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

The banners, the lilies and flowers, and special music will proclaim that there is hope because God is victorious over death, the last enemy. Let us rejoice!

What does Resurrection Sunday mean? It means that God "has launched his new creation project here among us" in the words of N.T Wright, the British Bible scholar. These new creation projects include the efforts of God's people to reach out to other people all over the earth through actions of mercy, education, justice and evangelism, as well as beautiful art and drama projects which communicate new life through the resurrection power of Jesus.

God has dealt with our sin on the cross and through faith in Jesus Christ there is eternal life. Jesus is Israel's Messiah and that means that he is King over all the world.

There is hope today when we see such misery being caused by wars in Israel, Ukraine, Burma and other parts of the world, because Jesus will ultimately defeat all evil when he comes again and completes his work.

Please consider the Lenten and Easter activities below and plan to join us!

Peace and grace,  
Pastor Chuck Fox

### *Walking towards Resurrection Sunday:*

March 6—Lenten Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (dinner at 6:30)  
March 8 & 9—Prayer vigil (on zoom) from 7 a.m. to 7 a.m.  
March 9 — Churchwide retreat from 10:00 a.m.—2 p.m. (includes lunch)  
March 13—Lenten Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (dinner at 6:30)  
March 20—Lenten Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (dinner at 6:30)  
March 24—Palm Sunday Service—11:00 a.m.  
March 27—Lenten Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (dinner at 6:30)  
March 28 — Maundy Thursday Seder Service  
March 29— Good Friday Tennebrae Service—6:30 p.m.  
March 31 — Easter Sunday Service and Brunch —11:00 a.m.

**First Baptist Church  
of Pittsburgh**  
159 N. Bellefield Ave-  
nue Pittsburgh, PA  
15213  
412-621-0500  
[www.fbcpg.org](http://www.fbcpg.org)



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**April 28, 2024**  
**Pastor Chuck's**  
**Retirement**  
**Celebration**



**March 9, 2024**  
**10 a.m.—2 p.m.**  
**Lunch is included!**



*He is Risen*



## Board of Deacons

### FBC Deacon Board

- Barbara Russell, Chair
- Petroula Zoll
- Casey Gnage
- Sean King
- Shirley Stanzione
- Steve Hernandez



### FBC PRAYER MEETING

every

Thursday in  
March

7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

You will receive an invitation each week to meet on Zoom!

#### Need Prayers?

Please send prayer requests to Deacon

Barbara Russell

Email: [blRussell2@verizon.net](mailto:blRussell2@verizon.net)

A CHURCH IN PRAYER  
IS A CHURCH  
CONNECTED TO GOD

“Our fight is the fight of faith: *Do we believe what God has promised?* I, for one, believe the promises of God. His Word is not just a comfort to me in times of trouble but a sword that I wield in times of spiritual war when I proclaim the reality of God’s love for my family, my church, my city and my nation! Consider His proclamation: “So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it” ... (Isaiah 55:11). No matter how the battle rages, God’s Word shall not return to Him void. Consider also His commitment: “I am watching over My word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:12). And consider His accessibility: “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”...that is, the word of faith which we are preaching” (Romans 10:8). Francis Frangipane, Pastor, Speaker, Writer; “This Day We Fight”. Chosen Books, Baker Publishing Group, 2005.

Grace and peace, FBC,

I encourage everyone to attend our semi-annual church retreat on March 9 and I hope that you will intercede on behalf of the church in the 24-hour prayer vigil that begins on March 8th. We have received clarity and move forward in the pastoral selection process. Meanwhile, we continue to uplift and celebrate Pastor Fox.

As we focus on the season ahead, let us pray. Prayer is a necessity. I candidly ask each of you to stand on the promises of God and battle in prayer. God has already proclaimed that His Word will not return to Him empty; He has committed to performing His Word; and He lets us know that the Word is close, it is in our mouths. So, declare and proclaim His Word in prayer over our church and church situations. Let us break the bondage of a passive spirit. Let us ask big things of God and pray boldly by faith for them to come to pass.

Please continue to wholeheartedly participate in fellowship and other churchwide activities/functions. The church needs your participation and support at every level. FBC, please make it a point to pray daily for our church. Intercede for all the trustees, deacons, leaders, and boards. Continue to pray against idle gossip and pointless rumors. Pray that the devil exits the details of our decision-making. Pray for churchwide unity.

Remember the vulnerable in our congregation. Pray for them. Contact them, if needed. Help them. God bless each of you!

Deacon Barbara Russell

## African-American Read-in

FBC has a long history of providing opportunities to express appreciation for the diversity found in our congregation. One of those ways is through special readings and music during the month of February, also known as Black History Month, as we acknowledge the accomplishments of black men and women throughout our history. Many thanks to all those who participated. Special recognition goes to Betty Batie, Leslie Smedley and Shirley Smith for their organization of this event, to all the readers, and Billy D. Scott for the wonderful music selections!



He is Risen





## Trustees Report

Construction is taking place at Schenley Place now through the end of April. As a result, a dumpster has temporarily been placed in the Schenley Place driveway. Unfortunately, this dumpster is blocking pickup access to the other dumpsters. Therefore, FBC congregants should plan to deposit their garbage in this large construction dumpster until it is eventually removed.

This is, however, easier said than done. The trash will need to be brought around the Schenley Place building since a closed fence is situated between the regular and construction dumpsters. To make this route less cumbersome, several members of the Fireflies Young Adults group placed a garbage bin with wheels next to our recycling bins. They also moved trash from the blocked dumpsters to the construction dumpster. We thank you for your humble and cheerful service!

Please pray for the trustees as we work to support worship and mission activities within and beyond the walls of FBC.

—Angeline Wong-Scott

## Lily Orders

If you would like to order a lily in honor or memory of a loved one, please fill out a lily form at church or contact the church office: [secretary@fbcpggh.com](mailto:secretary@fbcpggh.com) by March 24th. The cost is \$10 per lily. They will be used on Easter Sunday morning in our worship service and then are available to take home after the service or be given to our shut-ins. Thank you.

## Music Notes

Throughout February, the FBC music ministry worked to incorporate several congregants for traditional and contemporary hymn adaptations. The focus for February's music selections predominantly revolved around African American Spirituals in honor of Black History Month. We would like to thank the FBC vocal trio (Petroura Zoll, Ruth Fox, and Sarah Moyer) for delivering inspiring performances during these medley and congregational hymns. Moreover, our rhythm section—consisting of Emmanuel León (bass), Isaiah Brown (bongos), and Jason Lu (guitar)—continues to implement high quality accompaniment during contemporary praise songs.

In terms of special music, Ruth Fox (vocals) delivered a soulful rendition of the African American Spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child." Nancy Bernard (vocals) also sang an inspiring arrangement of "Blessed Assurance."

We had the privilege of welcoming music director Diane Rudolph and her choir from St. Richard's Church (based in Gibsonia, PA) during the second week of February. They sang inspiring performances of sacred choral pieces ranging from Bach ("Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"), Black sacred music ("Praise His Holy Name" by Keith Hampton), and contemporary Christian pop ("Your Grace is Enough," by Chris Tomlin).

Lastly, I want to thank our guest musicians Ethan Dunbar (alto saxophone), Zack Mester (percussion), and María Castellón (electric bass) for their contributions during the third week of February.

—Billy D. Scott

### FBC Trustee Board

- Angeline Wong-Scott, President
- Vincent Johnson
- Tex Severance
- Casey Gnage
- Steve Hernandez



He is Risen



## Catching Up With Stephen Blum



This month has been one of skill development and outreach. If anyone has a MIG welder and needs some work done, Cesar, Nara, and I can help with basic repairs (If Nara ever invites you to join an activity she is doing, I would recommend joining her)! I also learned how to use a lathe to make a rolling pin thanks to one of the doctors in the CMDA.



Besides those two skills, the ministry with the CMDA students is going extremely well, and the students are excited not only to lead and participate in Bible study each week, but they are also actively inviting other students and even their professors to join them. This past month, we had a gathering at the church and afterward, had a hymn singing that was amazing.

The last awesome activity we had was the Jubilee Conference. This included Jubilee Professionals for Masters Students and Working Professionals and Jubilee for the Undergraduate Students. While none of our undergraduates were able to attend this year, we had four medical/dental students attend Jubilee Professionals and Isaiah and Petroula volunteered for the entire conference (see their update for more information about the conference).



## Mission and Outreach

On March 24th, we will have a Moment in Mission with Rev. John Brennan, Director of Church Relations for Prison Fellowship. He is coming in response to our generous giving to the Angel Tree Project at Christmas time, one of their initiatives. Please welcome him!

In April, we have the opportunity for an in person visit from the Osterbrocks on Wednesday night, April 17th. This will be in place of our usual Bible study. Please come and enjoy a meal with them and hear about their work and ministry in Malaysia, as well as their future plans.

We will be collecting our America for Christ Offering in April. This is used to support Christian centers, race track ministries, Christian Education resources, seminary students, and other ministries started by American Baptist Churches USA across our country.  
—Ruth Fox

## Sunday Scenes



He is Risen





## Wednesday Night Bible Study Focus on Lent Continues

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this? John 11:25-26 (NASB 1995)*

Ash Wednesday was February 14, the same day as Valentine's Day. For those who adhere to catholicism, the two holidays on the same day made it challenging to abstain from meat and observe fasts when you want to take your loved one out to eat. In Baptist circles, we do not really emphasize Lent as much, though in our church we do encourage people to use the Lenten season as a time to prepare for Holy Week. Pastor Chuck has been leading us in this preparation using a combination of studies and reflections from a former Baptist pastor who is now learning the ways of the Anglicans, and a separate study from Jeremiah Johnston, entitled "Body of Proof: The 7 Best Reasons to Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus and Why it Matters Today."

Some topics we have discussed included the idea of fasting and how it can help us reset our devotional life to study Jesus and remember His words. We also reflected that this life is not our home in that from dust we came and to dust we will return and we need the salvation of God to be in communion with Him and have the hope of eternal life.

One other resurrection story we read this month during our Bible study was that of Lazarus. Jesus poses an interesting statement and questions in John 11:25-26 (see above). Jesus questioned, "Do you believe in Me?" Do you believe Jesus is with you in the darkest places (Psalm 23:4)? Do you ask God to help your unbelief (Mark 9:24)? During this season of Lent, come join us as we reflect on how to deepen our faith in Jesus, even in these challenging times as well as in good times.

Wednesday Night Bible Study will continue to meet at 7pm on Wednesday evenings both in person and on zoom. We continue to have a light meal and a time of fellowship prior to the study at 6:30pm.

—Chad Zoll

## Young at Heart

As we gathered once again in February for our Young at Heart meeting, we enjoyed a movie brought to us by Lulee called "Young at Heart". It was a touching documentary that highlighted the bonding and relationships that formed between a group of seniors who share a love of music and singing. As usual, we enjoyed our time of fellowship and eating together. Barbara Russell was quoted as saying, "I believe that after viewing the movie we felt uplifted and I sensed that there is still more required of me...that I still have more to do for the kingdom!"



Our next meeting is on Wednesday, March 6th at 11:30 a.m. We'll have a meal and Rev. Scott Boyd, Director of PRISM (Pittsburgh Regional International Student Ministry), will share God's calling in his life to serve in cross-cultural settings. He will use Matthew 5:14-16 and will relate this selection of scripture to us in that God calls each one of us to "be light in the world" in a unique way. Please come and enjoy this special time together. There is a recommended donation of \$5.00 to help cover the cost of the meal. Invite a friend!



# He is Risen



## **Men's Fellowship:** Connected in Growth, Connected in Word

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

*Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV):*

The Men's Fellowship met on Friday, February 23 for a Bible study on the growth in the body of Christ, as we studied Ephesians 4:11-16. We had a great discussion and a great turnout. We not only discussed growing the number of believers in our fellowship but also how each of us are to grow in relationship to Jesus and to each other and the maturing of our spiritual lives. One theme that came up was that being involved in a church is not a spectator sport. God calls us to grow in our personal relationship to Jesus through personal study of His word and grow in relationship with others to proclaim the gospel of Jesus to others. It is not a task that is just left to the paid staff. Really the paid staff is to help us develop our gifts to share in the work of the Kingdom of Christ. We all need to work together and not just leave the work to the paid staff. We are all to be joined and held together or, as the NASB translates that phrase, we are to be fitted and held together to work for the common purpose of the love of Christ.

In March, we will continue in our Bible Study Series, "Connected: My Life in the Church." We will look at Ephesians 4:25-28 with the topic of being connected through our words. We will meet on Friday, March 22 at 7pm at the church and will have pizza, drinks and other snacks. Bring a friend and encourage those who profess to be followers of Christ to be part of a local church body for fuller expression of our faith in God through Jesus Christ.

An additional event is being planned in March or April to honor Pastor Fox on his retirement. Please be alert to church announcements as well as Facebook for details.

The purpose of the Men's Fellowship is based on Proverb 27:17 (NASB): "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." The purpose of this group is to provide a time of fellowship and encouragement in pursuing the purposes of Christ . . . to become men after God's own heart.

—Chad Zoll

## **Marys and Marthas (Women's Fellowship)**

The February meeting was hosted by Roxanne Dillie and Ruth Fox. Ruth selected the theme "What a friend we have in Jesus" and she took us on a virtual journey to Thailand through a slide show of her recent trip there. It is a blessing to see what God has done in the areas where the Foxes served before serving at the First Baptist Church. We prayed for our friends who are battling sickness and lifted up our needs to the Lord. We wrote greetings for the church's shut-ins. The love offerings we collect in February and March will be for some Easter gifts for the Sojourner House residents. Speaking of gifts, Ruth gave each of us a lovely petite handcrafted coin purse from Thailand. At the conclusion of our meeting, we enjoyed the delicious Thai cuisine prepared by our friend, chef Somy Jackson, whose expertise covers two states, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Thank you, Somy, and thank you both, Roxanne and Ruth, for sponsoring the luncheon. Please let Dewi know if you would like to host our next monthly meeting, either at your home or at the church's library.



## **Remembering Joanne Malenock, a long time friend of the First Baptist Church**

Joanne went to be with the Lord on February 22. She retired from the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. Joanne was instrumental in opening a way for the First Baptist Church to reach out to the Family House on Neville Avenue. Our Day of Caring included serving breakfast, and hosting Ice Cream Socials to the patients' families there. The church also donated about 50 umbrellas two years in a row. The practical gift of umbrellas was suggested by Joanne. She attended the Marys & Marthas and we enjoyed her fellowship. We will remember her fondly.

—Dewi Wong





## Fireflies (Young Adults)—This Changes Everything!



If you weren't at this year's **CCO Jubilee Conference** at the David Lawrence Convention Center, you missed out! We had the opportunity to **volunteer** for part of the conference, and enjoy the rest of the weekend as attendees. **It was great!** Petroula helped students and staff decorate **customized journals** on Friday night, while Pastor Chuck, Stephen, Isaiah, and CMDA students attended **Jubilee Professional**. On Sunday morning,

Isaiah **delivered** Compassion International cards to every seat, and also **ushered** (a mail carrier's job is never done!). We really enjoyed spending the weekend together, and growing in our friendship while growing in our faith. Stephen was a **great host!** Both men taught Petroula how to use the PAT bus again!



Isaiah liked the "ballin' breakfast" at the Westin, and loved living away from home **independently** for the first time. He attended the **pastor workshop** out of his growing interest in a **postal church ministry** concept he's developing. Petroula enjoyed the praise and worship gatherings, and was delighted to be **counted as one of the college students**, when the Hearts and Minds bookstore owner asked her what her major was! (Hey!) So many books, so little money, just like a college student! Petroula bought: "40 Days of Decrease" (Chole); "Wounded Healer" (Nouwen); and "The Body Keeps the Score" (van der Kolk), and Isaiah bought "Welcome to the Revolution: A Field Guide for New Believers" (Tome). Stephen bought us Jubilee shirts!

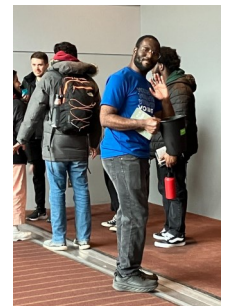
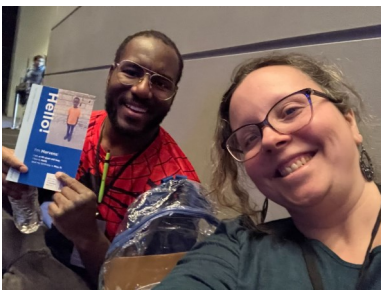
Out of the many **workshops based on our major/interest**, Isaiah and Petroula went to the packed-out workshop, **"How Not to Have a Mental Breakdown,"** (Earley) and put what we learned into practice by **turning off our phones** during lunch! (Gasp!) Petroula attended a workshop about **ministry in tough places**, while Isaiah attended one on **vocational ministry** as a pastor. We both went to **"After College: Finding Friends and Fighting Loneliness"** (Reitz) to help us understand our own feelings of loneliness while working with college students, as well as **"The Gospel and Shame"** (Thompson). There is so much to process in terms of what we learned! Feel free to talk to us at any time!



We just want to thank those of you who encouraged and supported the young adults to go to Jubilee. **Special thanks to those who sponsored our table at Jubilee Professional** (aka J Pro). We also want to thank **Memorial Park Church** who graciously provided dinner for us on Saturday night. We highly encourage any of you to go to J Pro, volunteer and/or attend the entire conference.

- Petroula Zoll & Isaiah Brown

**SAVE THE DATE: JUBILEE 2025— FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025**



## March Birthdays

March 6 Somy Jackson

March 14 Santiago Alcala Martinez

March 18 Michelle Juran

March 20 Sean King

March 20 Ainura Mamadzanova

March 23 Annette Martinez Orabona

March 31 Max Qureshi



He is Risen



## March Highlights



For a detailed view of all calendar events, go to [www.fbcpggh.org/calendar](http://www.fbcpggh.org/calendar).

- 3 Mar (Sun) Bible Study—10:00 a.m.  
Worship—11:00 am  
Deacon's Meeting 12:30 pm  
Hangout — 5 p.m.
- 5 Mar (Tue) Young Adults Group—7 :00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 6 Mar (Wed) Young at Heart Luncheon— 11:30 am  
Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 7 Mar (Thu) FBC Zoom Prayer Meeting—7:00 p.m
- 8 Mar (Fri) Prayer Vigil—7:00 am –7:00 am on Saturday, March 9th
- 9 Mar (Sat) FBC Spring Church Retreat—10:00 am
- 10 Mar (Sun) Bible Study—10:00 am  
Worship—11:00 am, Council Meeting—12:30 pm  
Hangout—5:00 pm
- 12 Mar (Tue) Young Adults Group—7 :00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)  
Trustee Meeting—7:00 p.m.
- 13 Mar (Wed) Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 14 Mar (Thu) FBC Zoom Prayer Meeting—7:00 p.m
- 16 Mar (Sat) Marys & Marthas—10:00 am
- 17 Mar (Sun) Bible Study—10:00 a.m.  
Worship—11:00 am
- 19 Mar (Tue) Young Adults Group—7 :00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 20 Mar (Wed) Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 21 Mar (Thu) FBC Zoom Prayer Meeting—7:00 p.m
- 22 Mar (Fri) Men's Fellowship—7:00 p.m.
- 24 Mar (Sun) Bible Study—10:00 a.m.  
Palm Sunday Worship—11:00 am - Mr. John Brennan/Prison Fellowship  
Hangout — 5 p.m.
- 26 Mar (Tue) Young Adults Group—7 :00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 27 Mar (Wed) Bible Study—7:00 p.m. (Zoom and in person) (6:30 dinner)
- 28 Mar (Thu) Maundy Thursday—6:00 pm  
FBC Zoom Prayer meeting—cancelled
- 29 Mar (Fri) Tenebrae Service –7:00 pm
- 31 Mar (Sun) **Easter Sunday**  
Bible Study—10:00 am  
Worship—11:00 am;  
Easter brunch—12:15  
Hangout—5:00 pm

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