

This week's news...



February 18, 2021

On Reflection – 2020 Annual Report

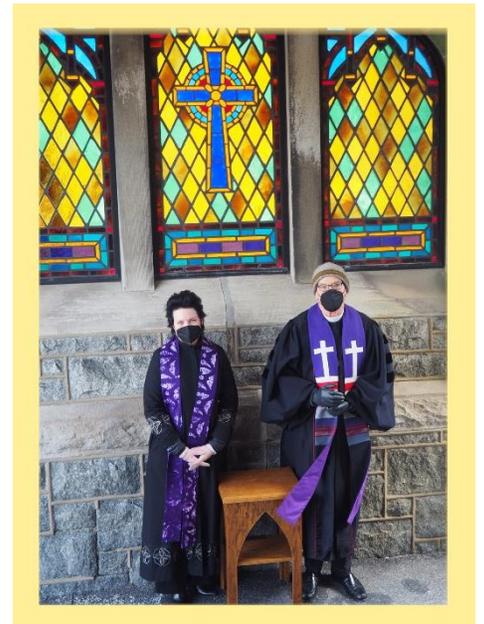
Dear Friend,

Remember when we thought we'd be out of the church for a few weeks, maybe a month? Surely, you'd be back in time for Bill's farewell service and celebratory luncheon!

In my first sermon, I mentioned, slightly tongue-in-cheek, that in the first year of my contract we may never worship in-person. Surely, we thought, that was hyperbole—yet here we are—on the cusp of an entire year of exile from standing on “holy ground.”

Despite all of the unwanted and, at times, painful intrusions and accommodations, we're getting good at “Pandemic Living.” (*As I write this, I'm very mindful of friends and family who are struggling with the virus—some in ICU on vents—and so none of what I'm writing should be taken to minimize or gloss-over the unspeakable tragedy so many are experiencing.*) Of course, it's something we never wanted to be good at and likely/hopefully a skill set we'll never employ again.

More and more conversations trend toward musing over what new habits and practices we'll keep once we're back to some semblance of normal. For instance, it's quite nice that electronic (Zoom) meetings are inclusive of folks who normally couldn't attend in-person due to work commitments, travel restrictions, distance, or ability. This goes for book and Bible studies, meetings, discussion groups, and social gatherings. As an example, I plan to keep the Tuesday Mornings Bible Study on Zoom regardless of gathering restrictions being lifted. There's a core group of about a dozen folks, and at least half would not be able to attend if we were physically together. My guess is that the next step will be to figure out hybrid ways of hosting in-person gatherings that also offer a streaming option—not unlike the Sunday service pre-pandemic.



Even with the difficulties and hindrances, good things are happening, and progress is being made on many fronts. You'll read about those in the reports that follow as well a full explanation of the church's financial health, which remains robust.

Progress is being made in the call process for a new Senior Pastor. A brief overview has been in the weekly email, and Session has appointed a Mission Study Team to update and re-work the document prepared during the search for Nikki and submit it for approval by the presbytery. Additionally, the Nominating Committee will have a full complement of members in preparation for prayerfully identifying members of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) when that time comes. We're still months away from that process, however.

In the meantime, worship and service, fellowship and prayer, the quest for justice and compassion for all of God's good creation continue, perhaps altered, but unabated. We remain a vibrant and vital witness on Kings Highway, and by God's grace, will remain so until "we've been here ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun!"

With deep gratitude for your gracious hospitality, zeal for serving God, and seemingly endless forgiveness, I remain your fellow servant of Christ,



ANNUAL MEETING, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21 @ 11 a.m.

The Annual Meeting of the corporation will take place on Sunday, February 21 on [Zoom](#) immediately following worship. Get your [Annual Report 2020](#) here.

"But no one reads the Annual Report!" say staff members every year. First of all, that's not true. You know who you are, faithful readers. Thank you! But second, even if you have never before read the Annual Report, this might be the year to start. Learn how departments and committees within the church have pivoted in 2020 to keep our programs vital. Take in this snapshot of who we are in a year full of changes. And, if you read Doug's letter above, you're already one page down.

CONVERSATIONS ON RACE

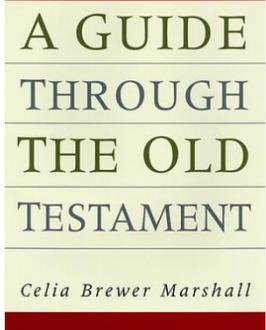
This week (2/21) for our Conversation on Race we will have a guest speaker: **Dianne R. Browne**, PhD, CFLE, CSE, Project Director, Camden Healthy Start. She will be discussing the intersection between structural racism and maternal/child health. In preparation please read these articles, [What's Killing America's Black Infants?](#) And [America is Failing its Black Mothers](#).

Conversations on Race continue on Sundays from 9-9:45 a.m. on Zoom at [this link](#). Each week's resources are linked in the weekly email newsletter and on the [Adult Ed](#) page of the website. Questions? Email Becky Bryan, rebeccabryan@me.com.

NEW Bible Study — For Anyone New to Bible Study

Doug is starting a new Bible study for anyone who has hesitated to join a Bible study or wants to try something new. The class will use a book called *A Guide through the Old Testament* and meet on 12 consecutive Mondays beginning on **February 22 at 11:30 a.m.** (If that schedule is terrible for folks who want to participate, we'll re-examine during our first session!) The books are \$15 and will be available soon! If you know you're interested and want to reserve one, just click [here](#) to send Doug an email. Take a chance and let the world of the Bible open up!

Another option: the book is designed to also be used as a self-study workbook, so you can buy it and work through at your own pace at whatever time is available to you. Doug will be very glad to talk or meet with you if there are things that need a little explanation or seem confusing — in short — he's available for one-on-one tutoring on your schedule! Feel free to order a book for that purpose as well!



A GUIDE
THROUGH
THE OLD
TESTAMENT

Celia Brewer Marshall

THE FPCH LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

With contributions from staff and congregation members, this year's devotional follows the Revised Common Lectionary and offers personal reflection, meditation, and prayer. Please find and [print your own copy here](#). There are a limited number of print copies available—check with the church office.



IHOc MALL WALK!!! The 2021 Annual Mall Walk has gone hybrid!

Join IHOc on Sunday, February 28, 2021 starting at 12:00 Noon **In-person** at Voorhees Town Center OR **Virtually** at the location of Your Choice. [Click here](#) for full details or to donate. Contact Ed Hess with questions: (856) 428-8598 The goal is to raise \$50,000 to support IHOc's programs for the homeless of South Jersey. Needs are great this year and programs are ongoing.

MUSICAL MEDITATION FROM MARK

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, arr. Mary McDonald



[Listen Here](#)

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Mary McDonald is a well-known composer in sacred music. With a career that spans over thirty-five years, her compositions appear in the catalogs of every major publisher of church music. More than 800 anthems, seasonal musicals, and keyboard collections testify to her significant contribution to sacred literature.

ASH WEDNESDAY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

The beginning of Lent was marked by a reflective service and the first ever drive-through imposition of ashes. About 85 people came through the east portico to receive the traditional ashes or a blessing. Our observance of Ash Wednesday was a featured part of [a news report on 6ABC's Action News](#). Thank you, Bob Timms for making the 6ABC connection. The report gave a boost to the work of the new Marketing Committee. Committee members Margot Dark, Paul Urian, Trish Adkins, and Lisa Hurd will seek ways to raise the church's profile in the community and beyond. Additional thanks to Travis Bogetti, Paul Urian, and Mark Hall for "crowd control" during the drive-through!



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

We covered lots of ground this week in Sunday School and challenged you to learn TWO stories. The first one involves a teacher and his student and has a big dramatic ending. The second involves Jesus (a teacher) and some of his disciples (students) and has a big dramatic ending. And the teacher from the first story ends up in the second story! I bet we have all been lucky to have a really good teacher, coach, leader in our lives. Remember that God puts leaders in our lives to help us learn how to be like Jesus. We hope what you learn at church helps you grow to be a good leader.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS!

After a few weeks off we are meeting up this Sunday for some Virtual Uno, and we are hoping you can join us for some Draw 4 and Reverse fun. Be on the lookout for the Zoom info coming soon! Contact [Gab Heimerling](#) to receive Youth Group emails.



A BIG FAT GREEK MOVIE NIGHT!

Here's something that's just for fun — no work, no study, no reading — just taking a couple of hours and watching a really great movie that's guaranteed to leave you feeling happy. It's simple:

1. Sometime in the next few weeks, watch "[My Big Fat Greek Wedding](#)" on whatever device or streaming service you prefer.
2. Block off Tuesday, March 9, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. for a Zoom conversation.

That's it. If something that folks enjoy, we'll do it every month!



ONGOING...

Doug's Bible Study: Tuesdays at 8:00 a.m. on Zoom, Doug hosts an informal conversation about the scripture that will be the text for the following Sunday's sermon. The texts for **Tuesday, February 23** are Gen 17: 1-7, 15-16 and Mark 8:31-38 Here's the [Zoom link](#).

Speaking Truth in Love: Nikki's class "Speaking Truth in Love: How to Be an Assertive Christian" continues on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Find the syllabus [here](#) and the Zoom link [here](#).

Nikki's Bible Study: Join Nikki on Thursday evenings at 6:30 for an in-depth study of **Revelation**. Here is the [Zoom link](#), and here is the [Syllabus](#).

Porch Bible Study, studying the Book of Ephesians, meets next on March 2 at 7 p.m. Deb Nussbaum and Jill and Tony Mascena host this Zoom study. We end every session with prayer concerns. All are welcome. If you would like the Zoom link, please contact the church office to be put on the Porch Study mailing list.

ST. WILFRID'S OPEN DOOR CLINIC

Needs: As long as it's cold, we give out jackets and we still need sizes Large, Extra Large, and Extra Extra Large! Hats and mittens and socks. Peanut butter, tuna, diapers (kids and adult sizes), and wipes. These may be dropped off at the bin behind Grace Church any day during the week or at the drive-through after church on Sundays. Any questions, please contact Jill Mascena at 428-7342 or Check the website opendoorclinnccamden.org

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

We celebrate the lives and resurrection of

Barbara Solly
Anne Bertram
Skip Bean

A funeral for Skip Bean will be held via Zoom on Friday, February 19 at 2 p.m. Use [this link](#). Memorial donations can be made online to the Rebecca Bean College Fund using [this link](#) or by check made out to the church with College Fund in the memo line.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Feb. 18 – 6:30 p.m. Nikki's Bible Study
Feb. 19 – Bean Funeral
Feb. 21 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race
Feb. 21 – 10 a.m. Worship
Feb. 21 – Donation drive-through, church driveway
Feb. 21 – 5 p.m. Youth Group
Feb. 21 – 11 a.m. Annual Meeting on Zoom
Feb. 22 – 11:30 a.m. OT Bible Study
Feb. 23 – 8 a.m. Doug's Bible Study
Feb. 24 – 7:30 p.m. "Speaking the Truth in Love"
Feb. 25 – 6:30 p.m. Nikki's Bible Study
Feb. 28 – 9 a.m. Conversation on Race
Feb. 28 – 10 a.m. Worship

