



Sunset Hills

M E S S E N G E R

AUGUST 2020

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The church building will remain closed through the month of August.

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A Message from Pastor Laura

Our very problems are our best teachers.

– Jack Kornfield



I love those moments when life is easy. I love those moments when my husband and I are on the same page, when my son isn’t going through a phase, when my cats aren’t hacking up fur balls on the carpet, when my budget is balanced, when my car isn’t making any noises, when my household appliances are all functioning, when my extended family is healthy, when I know what I’m making for dinner tonight, and when I also know that I have all the ingredients thawed and on hand for said dinner.

But, life is rarely that easy. Especially in a pandemic.

The challenges of this pandemic are seemingly endless. However, there are two particular challenges that I’d invite us to give focus on in this moment.

First, this pandemic challenges us to appreciate the things that are easy. Now is an ideal time to begin a gratitude journal, using our tablets or a notebook. We can write in the morning, or at night, all the little things that we have to be thankful for: a working dishwasher, a car that passes inspection, a grace-filled interaction with the masked grocery clerk.

Second, this pandemic challenges us to learn. Barb and I often talk about all the things we have learned in this season. We are practically technology superstars now! (But, please, don’t test us on that!!!) What have you learned? You may have learned how to use TelaDoc, what birds live in your yard, and the name of your mail carrier. You may also have learned about your character. You may have learned that you’re more resilient than you thought, more in need of patience than you thought, or, well, you get the idea. It’s important to take stock of how we’ve been challenged and how we’ve grown in these days.

My prayer for all of us is that life may get a little easier – that we all may receive a Sabbath rest from these difficult days. In the meantime, we go forward in the strength and in the power of Jesus Christ through his unfailing, unchanging Holy Spirit.

In Christ’s Service,

Pastor Laura

Drive-In Worship

Drive-In worship has been such a wonderful way to stay connected as a church family while following social distancing protocols. We hope you have been enjoying seeing everyone, listening to the service and being able to participate from the comfort of your air-conditioned vehicles.

If you are not able to join us for our drive-in worship, a video of the service will continue to be posted to our YouTube channel every Monday.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeEpiQYSD_9My9tb5GEhVRA

The Re-entry team has given their recommendations for the month of



August to Session. Based upon this information, Session has voted to continue to hold worship services in the parking lot.

The church building will also be closed through August. All groups/events will meet using the Zoom app.

As we move forward into the fall, the Re-entry team will help Session make decisions that will be best to keep everyone safe.

In the meantime, we look forward to seeing you every Sunday. Remember to “Honk if you love SHUP”!!!



Mission News

We hope you will continue to support Frontera de Cristo and Rev. Mark and Miriam Adams, our PCUSA mission partners at the border by buying Café Justo. The coffee is 100% organic roasted coffee. FDC buys coffee beans from the local farmers, helping them earn an income and the proceeds from the sales of the coffee are used for COVID-19 relief and to create food baskets for the families who have been negatively impacted by the

pandemic. If you would like to buy some coffee or make a monetary donation to help Rev. Mark & Miriam continue their missions in Mexico, please [Click here](#). To learn more about Frontera de Cristo please visit their website at <http://fronteradecristo.org/>. You can sign up to receive their monthly newsletter and/or request to receive an invitation to one of their upcoming virtual events.



Order Café Justo in August, and part of your shipping cost will be donated to COVID-19 relief efforts in Chiapas and Agua Pieta.

Music Notes

By Shelby Gracey

Many years ago, when I first started in my position as Director of Music at SHUP, I had the privilege of attending several “Music in the Mountains” Choral Workshops, where several Christian composers led 200 music directors from around the state in singing their new compositions. One of my favorite composers was always Joseph Martin (who wrote many of the anthems that the choir enjoys singing!) Recently, he wrote an article that I would like to quote portions from (it also ties in nicely with Tori Vernacchio’s sermon on July 12

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6mqlqigLUk&t=237s>)!

Joe starts out by talking about his love of golf and his dream of one day attending The Masters tournament. He sat down at his TV to watch the final round, and this is what transpired . . .



“As usual there was much excitement as the final quartet of players began their reverential processional around ‘Amen Corner.’ The players arrived at one of the venerated greens, thoughtfully took their places, and waited for their moment of truth.

It was there in that Eden-like chapel, surrounded by the hushed gallery of the faithful, in the pristine silence of the players’ pre-putt ceremony, that he began to sing.

With precious purity and secret poetry, a wee Carolina Wren hidden somewhere in the foliage began to pierce the green sanctuary with sparkling music. Full throated, the call echoed across the gathered congregation in a chattering of joy that was a symphony of loveliness.

It occurred to me in that moment that millions around the world were listening to this tiny troubadour share his music. Unaware of his audience, the wren was simply doing what he was designed to do, faithfully fulfilling God’s creative mandate and reminding any who would hear that there was still beauty in the world. Such a charming Sunday hymn he sang and with such passion and conviction!

This simple blessing of the wren washed over me in waves of thanksgiving and peace. How astonishing that God uses the small and fragile to be instruments of goodness in the world! How surprising that something so delicate could have such an impact!

Few of us ever get to stand on the great podiums of the music world or serenade the powerful with our gifts, yet God can bless our songs and use them in ways that we could only imagine.

Never believe you are too small, or not talented enough to be an important instrument of hope in this broken world. Sing and live your alleluias so that God’s beauty can be known wherever you are blessed to serve. Be faithful to your calling and let God’s Spirit use your life-song to touch the world with healing grace.”

(Joseph M. Martin, Director of Church Music Publications, Hal Leonard & Shawnee Press; Fall 2018)

That’s My Favorite!

Sermon & Hymn Series



We want your suggestions! Submissions are requested for an autumn sermon and hymn series following the favorite scriptures and hymns of the SHUP church family.

Pastor Laura and Shelby Gracey will contact church members to let them know when their scripture of choice will be preached or when their hymn will be sung. Their name will be featured in the bulletin for having chosen that scripture or hymn.

You may submit your scripture and/or hymn request to Pastor Laura at revlaurastrauss@gmail.com or by calling the church office. **We ask that all submissions be made by Sunday, August 9th** so that Pastor Laura and Shelby have time to prepare for the fall!

Children's Footprints...

By Barb Clark



In this season, my prayer for you is that you are finding peace in your soul. We have been given a gift in this unfortunate time; we can be still. In Exodus 14:14 in the NIV translation it says, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I Am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth." In Mark 4:39 Jesus got up, rebukes the wind, and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. The power in these words from the Bible are what will help us get through this. This is an especially important instruction for us, if we are never still, we cannot possibly hear the voice of the One who cares and loves you. I know you are saying I have a house FULL of people little and big and where can I find this stillness, or my mind will NOT stop reeling? It is hard to see that now, with the pandemic and all that it affects, but take heart His instruction for us is to BE still and know that He is God. As tired as this time has made us, ask the Holy Spirit to give you time – maybe it will be walking in your neighborhood, go for a drive go to bed a little earlier and be still and be with God. As the sun rises, and you are stirred awake, take a few moments and be still in the presence of God. Lean into him, the Creator of all, Alpha and Omega the one who breathed breath into you. As you breathe think on these things. In and out, meditate on the one who thinks you are awesome, because he created you for that! Each one of us,

he created for a purpose. "Do not conform to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2 NIV. Another way to meditate on God may be that you recite Psalm 121:

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
 where does my help come from?
² My help comes from the LORD,
 the Maker of heaven and earth.
³ He will not let your foot slip—
 he who watches over you will not slumber;
⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The LORD watches over you—
 the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
 nor the moon by night.
⁷ The LORD will keep you from all harm—
 he will watch over your life;
⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going
 both now and forevermore.

This Psalm was sung by the people, as they walked to worship in Jerusalem, as they walked up Mt. Zion and possibly as they walked up the stairs to enter the temple. It is of great comfort. May the Holy Spirit guide you as you enter his presence and may you find peace and restoration in this most difficult of times.

Peace,

Barb

Graduation Sunday

At our worship service on July 26th, we celebrated the 2020 SHUP graduates:

High School

Jessica Brumfield - Kent State Honors College/Psychology & Neuroscience

Eliza Duffner - Flagler College, St. Augustine FL/History & Archaeology

Andrew Kennedy - Penn State Main, Honors College/Data Analytics

Ryan Pochek - Ohio State University, Honors College/Integrated Business-Engineering Program

Colby Sembrat - Allegheny College

Abbey Strang - Community College of Allegheny County/Fashion Design

Ethan Stuart - Slippery Rock University

Maya Williams - Coastal Carolina University/Marine Biology with a Minor in English

College

Nathan Enterline - Westminster College/BA Business

Pamela Enterline - California University of PA/Master of Education in School Counseling. Pam has accepted a job as a school counselor and will be moving to Orleans County, Vermont in the fall.

Congratulations to all our graduates!

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
 the Lord make his face shine on you
 and be gracious to you; the Lord lift
 up his countenance upon you and
 give you peace.*

- Numbers 6:24-26

Stewardship Commission Update

Debbie Edwards & Mary Abbott/Co-Chairs

First, a thank you to all who have supported Sunset Hills UP Church financially through these strange pandemic times. Your steadfast devotion to this church is a blessing for which we are grateful.

Here is an update from the Stewardship Commission about what has been going on behind the scenes since Session wrote to the congregation in December 2018 about our financial situation.

Last summer, at the same time as we were seeking a new pastor, a financial sustainability workgroup was meeting to create recommendations to Session about

how SHUP could achieve better financial balance between income and expenses. That group reported to session last fall, after Pastor Laura came to SHUP.

In January, Session began reviewing the group's recommendations and acting on specific items. The overall goal is to reduce the gap you see below between income and expenses:

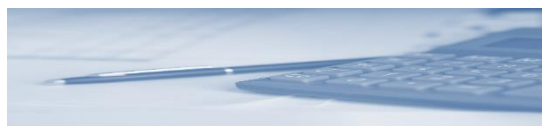
SHUP Finances at-a-glance

Income YTD	Expenses YTD	Gap
\$98,805	\$148,077	\$49,272

So far, Session has been considering both

ways to increase our income and ways to reduce our expenses. For example, we applied for and received a \$1,000 grant from the Mt. Lebanon Community Foundation that helped us replace the door at the Crystal Drive entrance. We have already reduced some expenses and will continue to look for ways to both increase income and reduce expenses.

Over the next few months, we will be giving you updates on actions Session has taken to reduce that gap. You will also see this "At-a-glance" chart in the *Messenger*, updated monthly, so you can see for yourself how SHUP is doing.



Financial Statement Update as of 06/30/20

INCOME:

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	Variance Fav. (Unfav.)
Pledges, loose offering	92,331	95,702	3,371
Designated mission giving	1,086	848	(238)
Flowers	1,387	485	(902)
Per capita	1,448	1,566	118
Interest / Nursery school / misc.	2,254	704	(1,550)
Transfer - Endowments	67,004	69,822	2,818
Total income	165,510	169,127	3,617

EXPENSE:

Adm. & personnel	(105,476)	(102,366)	3,110
Christian Education	(9,103)	(6,910)	2,193
Communications	(981)	(1,484)	(503)
Cong. Care & Community Outreach	(350)	(48)	302
Facilities	(29,539)	(24,816)	4,723
Mission *	(5,703)	(5,632)	71
Stewardship	(6,798)	(5,465)	1,333
Worship & music	(2,724)	(1,356)	1,368
Total expense	(160,674)	(148,077)	12,597
Surplus (deficit)	4,836	21,050	16,214

* - includes 5% mission accrual.

August Activities

Other than our worship service, our July activities will continue to be online using Zoom, YouTube or Facebook. Links for the YouTube and Facebook activities can be found on our website shupchurch.org. If you are interested in joining a Zoom event, please contact the person listed with that activity (e-mail addresses are listed on page 1 of the Messenger) and a link will be emailed to you. The information will also continue to be included in the weekly e-mails that are sent every Friday.

Weekly

Adult Sunday School

8:15 am

This class will continue via Zoom. Pastor Laura will begin a new study of *Bonhoeffer: The Life & Work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* on August 9th.

Children's Church

Wednesday's - 4:00 pm

All children K-5th grade are invited to join Barb Clark for this Zoom class to learn about the love of Jesus. (No class on August 5th).

Sunday Worship Service

10:15 am

Drive-In Worship! Pastor Laura will continue to post a video of the service to our YouTube channel the Monday after the service.

Adult Bible Study

Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

Barb Clark will lead this class using Zoom.

Other Events

Stephen Ministers Meeting

Sunday, August 9th - 1:00 pm

All Stephen Ministers are asked to join Evelyn Lape for this meeting using Zoom. Please contact Evelyn Lape at (412)531-9856 to have the Zoom link sent to you.

Findley Hall Bible Study Check-In

Monday, August 17th - 1:00 pm

Please join Evelyn Lape to touch base and discuss plans for the Fall session. Please contact Evelyn Lape at (412)531-9856 to have the Zoom link sent to you.

Youth Group Live

Barb Clark will lead this class using Zoom. Youth Group will be meeting on:

- Monday, August 10th @ 3:00 pm
- Sunday, August 23rd @ 12:00 pm

Bible Storytime

Monday, August 17th - Thursday, August 20th

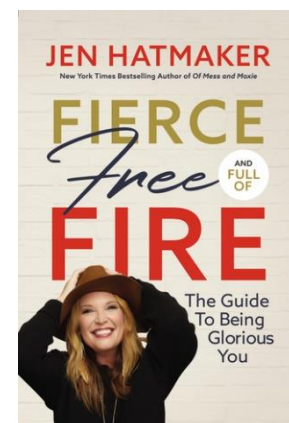
Barb Clark will post a video to our Facebook page. Everyone put on your PJ's and listen to bible stories as you get ready for bed.

Sunset Hills

Summer Book Club

Thursday, August 27th - 7:00 pm

Quirky. Confident. Encouraging. These words describe Jen Hatmaker, Christian author and founder of the For the Love podcast. They also describe her approach to her latest book: *Fierce, Free, and Full of Fire: The Guide to Being Glorious You*. This book is a how-to guide on being brave, living without fear, and thriving as the women God created us to be. 'With wry humor, earnest passion, and been-there insight, Jen leads us toward freedom and fierceness as we lean into the identity, convictions, and community we've been given.' This is a book to underline as you go! Let Pastor Laura know if you'd like to borrow her copy. Join us for Book Club at 7:00 p.m. on August 27 via zoom.



August Birthdays

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 3 Jeannine Stimmel, Cal Wilson | 15 Robert Tang |
| 4 Alice Bonim, Bill Oknefski | 18 Christine Huber |
| 6 Joanne Enterline, Kim Stuart | 19 Carla Robinson |
| 8 Lee Cepits, Jacey Ellis, Jill Fako | 20 Sarah Ernst, Christa Tang |
| 10 Dottie Fleming, Kailey Hepburn-Stacey,
Dorothy Wolfe | 21 Pat Ellis |
| 13 Sarajane Obarsky, Judy Stacey | 24 Ethan Stuart |
| 14 Rowan Zeglin | 28 Kay Walker |
| | 31 Betty Coffey |



Prayer List

- Carolyn Caldwell
JoAnne Enterline
Walter Jackson
Phyllis and Dick Moore

SHUP Directory

The Congregational Care Commission is working on creating an updated directory for SHUP. If your address/home phone/cell phone/email address has been changed recently, please contact the church office at sunsethillschurch@gmail.com or (412)561-6261 to let us know.



Online Giving

Don't forget...SHUP now offers online giving! You can donate to SHUP, your favorite mission or pay for your flamingo flocking from your computer or smartphone. Just go to our website and click on "Donate" or go to <https://get.tithe.ly/> or download the Tithe.ly app to create an account today!

Our prayers and sympathies are with...

The family of Patti Patterson. Patti passed away on June 4, 2020. She and her late husband, Andrew, joined SHUP in December 1948. She was very active in the Women's Guild, a large organization for SHUP women in the 1950s and 60s. A special gift from Patti, a needlepoint of the church building, currently hangs in the Library. It was created from a photo, painted on canvas by a professional designer, and stitched by Patti, it was three years in the making. Condolences to the family can be sent to: c/o Pat Patterson, 300 Queensbury Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15234.

The family of Bill Newman. Bill passed away on May 25, 2020. Bill and his wife, Nancy moved away from our area several years ago, but still kept in touch. Their children grew up at SHUP and were all confirmed here. He and Nancy hosted special gatherings at Christmastime for SHUP members. Condolences to the family can be sent to: c/o Nancy Newman, 230 Roscommon Place, McMurray, PA 15317.

The family of Ileana Wyerman. Ileana passed away on July 9, 2020. Ileana grew up on the South Side of Pittsburgh and was the beloved daughter of Myrtle and Dr. Robert L. Hutchinson, a Presbyterian minister. She was a member of SHUP for fifty-five years. She and her late husband, Robert, lived in the neighborhood and participated fully in all SHUP activities, expressing a strong commitment to their faith in God and Christ Jesus. Condolences to the family can be sent to: c/o Kathleen Stockdale, 1600 Bar Harbor Drive, Flower Mound, TX 75028 or c/o Marilyn Wagner, 114 Farmingdale Road, Wexford, PA 15090.

Thank you for your prayers.