

Kindness of Strangers

BY AMY DENSK (TENNESSEE)

published July 1, 2022 on *The Upper Room Daily Devotional Blog*

Several years ago, I was in a car accident. The other driver and I suffered only minor injuries, but our vehicles were badly damaged. I had never been in a car accident before, and I was terrified and overwhelmed. A woman who was several cars ahead of the accident heard the crash and stopped to make sure everyone was okay. When she saw my distress, she told me that she had been in a similar accident before, so she understood my situation and how I was feeling.

The woman and I talked while we waited for the police and a tow truck to arrive. Although it made her late to her mother-in-law's birthday party, the woman remained with me for over an hour to support and guide me through the necessary steps following the accident. She told me what to expect at each stage of the process, gave me advice, and told me about her own experiences. She was a calming and comforting presence.

Before she joined me, I had felt totally alone. Knowing that I had a kind and supportive companion helped me immensely. The fact that she shifted her plans to help a stranger makes her actions even more remarkable. And she was not the only stranger who helped me. It was a sweltering July day, and as we stood waiting in the sun, several people reached out to us. A homeless man who was sitting several yards down the road brought over bottles of water. Two people who were leaving a nearby store gave us granola bars. One driver called out to us from his car to see if everyone was okay and to let us know that he was praying for us. And several people stopped to make sure we were alright and ask if we needed anything.



As I recall the kindness of these strangers, I think of the many examples in scripture of people who cared for others and the ways their care enriched the lives of those around them. Tabitha (Dorcas) helped other widows and people in need in her community. She was so loved by her community that when she died they requested that Peter raise her from the dead, and her life and death brought many to the faith (see Acts 9:36-43). I think also of Rahab, who assisted the two Israelite spies and hid them from soldiers who sought to kill them. As a result of her actions, she and her family were spared when Jericho was raided (see Josh. 2 and 6:22-25). And I recall the wealthy woman who offered Elisha food, made a room for him in her home, and allowed him to stay there. Because of her care for him, Elisha promised that she would have a son and later revived her son following his death (see 2 Kings 4:8-37).

Having heard these stories my whole life, I have always known that I should strive to be kind and caring toward others, including strangers. But until the day of my car accident, I didn't know how it felt to be on the other side — the one receiving care and kindness. The care shown to me after my accident has changed the way I interact with strangers in need. It often seems easier to turn a blind eye and continue on my way or simply to say, "I'm sorry, I'm not able to help." But I am beyond grateful for the people who decided not to turn away from me when I needed help. And when I remember the difference their actions made for me, I feel a tug to stop and do what I can.

The woman who helped me probably doesn't know what an impact she had on me. She may not even recall stopping that day. But this highlights the importance of always treating others with kindness and love. Our simplest actions can change a person's situation or mindset. We never know how much someone may need us and the effect our action might have on her life. Even when it doesn't seem easy or convenient to stop and offer help, it is worth it.

10:00 AM
@
summer
SUNDAYS

AUGUST 2022

Summer Worship @ 10AM
Guest Pastor Schedule

August 7: Rebecca Abbott

August 14: Hunter Steinitz

August 21: Rev. Jane Duffield

August 28: Heather Henkel

September 4: Rev. Chris Taylor,
communion, last 10AM worship



120 East Swissvale Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15218
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*Believing we are
called together
by God's love
through Jesus Christ,
our mission as the
First Presbyterian Church
of Edgewood
is to love God,
to love each other,
and to love our neighbors.*

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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LOVE GOD
EACH OTHER
OUR NEIGHBORS



Thanks to all who helped with set-up, cooking, serving, teardown, and donation of desserts. We didn't beat the rain in July, but still had about 45-50 in attendance in the Social Room. Our very wet volunteers are to be commended for their efforts in bringing the whole set-up inside and getting the food ready in just under a half hour! We even managed to get the tables and chairs all back in before the meal ended.



Save the Dates: The First Wednesdays of August and September from 6:00-8:00PM we'll be firing up the grill on the side lawn with your favorites, plus some new, soon-to-be-favorites. And, as usual, they're FREE! So bring your family, friends and neighbors for good food and fellowship!!!

August 3: BBQ (Ribs, Brisket, Chicken, Pulled Pork)
September 7: Burgers and Dogs or Something Yummy



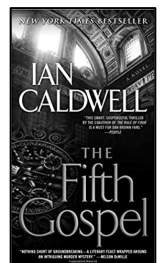
We're asking for folks interested in volunteering as set-up, servers, or clean-up crew, or those donating side dishes or desserts to sign up using the SignUp Genius link on the website, in the weekly email sent out, or the QR code to the left, so that we can better plan each meal.

Session Notes

Session did not meet formally in July. They approved, via email, to change communion from August 7, 2022, to July 31, 2022 due to the availability of ordained pastors able to preside over the sacrament. The next Session meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 9.

Tuesday Morning Book Club

The Tuesday morning Book Group continues to meet each week at 10:00AM at the Apossos home (361 Maple Ave), generally outdoors, weather dependent. We are currently reading "The Fifth Gospel" by Ian Caldwell. All are welcome. Snacks and coffee provided.



Youth Sunday School

We continue to offer weekly Youth Sunday School during worship as needed and will continue throughout the summer. Our classes generally follow the lectionary as well as provide basic Bible Study. If interested, please stop by the nursery.

Thank you, FPCE, for Supporting WCM!

The Wilkinsburg Community Ministry (WCM) wants to thank the congregation of FPCE for their continuing support, both financial and as volunteers. With your support, we are providing food for residents for Wilkinsburg and the surrounding communities from our office at 702 Wood St. in Wilkinsburg, which is open 5 days a week and serves about 50 families per day.



WCM distributes over 15,000 pounds of food each month and demand increases. Often these are families with children who struggle to stretch a paycheck to the end of the month. We serve a population of about 25,000 and at least 45% rely on SNAP benefits. The general income of our neighbors is less than \$30,000 per year and there are many single parent homes, senior households with a grandchild, and senior households with one resident. Importantly, we encourage our clientele to take advantage of a healthy food selection and preparation and try to offer food that is fresh, nutritious, and tasty. Over 40% of the food we distribute is fresh.



With the support of the Pittsburgh Food Bank, WCM is starting a mobile pantry service to reach neighbors who cannot make the trip to the Wood St. pantry. With the truck we will be able to bring food to the additional neighborhoods that are presently not served. Distribution of food is complicated in our neighborhoods: streets and sidewalks are crumbling, there are a lot of hills, and the public transport infrastructure is poor. The buses run on the main roads, but our neighbors live on side roads, and it is difficult for a young mother to wrangle a toddler, an infant in a carriage, and 25 pounds of groceries on a street or sidewalk beset with holes, crumbling concrete, and pushing this all up a hill! This is a project that stretches our personnel and financial capabilities, but we believe it is a very needed service. We will keep you apprised of our progress.

If you are not receiving the WCM newsletter and would like to be added to the distribution list, send an email to Ruth Kittner at ruthk@wcm15221.org or you can sign up on our website at <https://wcm15221.org/newsletter/>. We have converted our newsletter to online and email, to conserve funds that can be redirected toward program needs.

Please feel free to stop by the WCM office for a visit (9-1 M-F) and be sure to see the Urban Garden behind the office where we grow fresh vegetables for distribution. Thank you again for your help.

Ruth Kittner, WCM Executive Director



FPCE Financial News

June 30, 2022 was the end of the second quarter and is a good time to look at finances for 2022 year to date. The end of a quarter is when Trust income and Investment income is received, so the report is a more complete picture of finances.

As of June 30, 2022 the income and expense for FPCE are as follows:

Total Income -	\$72,087.79 Actual	YTD Budget -	\$70,252.98
Total Expense -	\$78,441.26 Actual	YTD Budget -	\$84,300.81

Actual income is over budget by \$1,834.81 and actual expense is below budget by \$5,859.55, so FPCE total net income is positive by \$7,694.36.

Account 4010-Donations has been declining in previous years and was decreased to \$60,000 for 2022. The actual YTD 2022 Donations is \$27,389.35 and the YTD 2022 budget for Donations is \$30,000.00, which is below budget by \$2,610.65. For other income items, Trust income was increased by about 22% by the bank for 2022.

All expenses are below budget as of the end of the second quarter. Of course, the major expense for the church is the Pastor's salary, benefits and expenses which have been zero for so far this year. The budget has been adjusted to reflect that there is no Pastor's pay for the first 6 months. Any questions may be sent to fpce.treasurer@gmail.com

Tom Ochs, Treasurer

PNC Update

Summer vacations and travel have slowed the committee down a little during July, as scheduling a meeting day/time that worked for all 5 proved to be fairly difficult! That doesn't mean, however, that work wasn't still occurring. Reference checks and Presbytery Commission on Ministry clearance interviews took place over the past few weeks with candidates we have deemed worthy of more consideration as we move closer to discerning the call of the person God is bringing to FPCE. Among those who were also away was Brian Wallace from Presbytery, who returns to the office August 1. After we are able to meet with him, we can determine what happens next. If all goes the way we would like it to, we may have some very good news to share in the coming weeks! We hesitate to say "we're almost there" as we know as soon as we put that out there something will prevent it from being a true statement, so we will just say at this point that the members of the PNC are very encouraged!



PASTOR SEARCH



Vocal Confluence Shows August 20 & 21

Come see Pittsburgh's mixed barbershop chorus in their annual summer show, titled "Together Again." There are 2 chances to hear them: Saturday, August 20 at 7:30PM and Sunday, August 21 at 3:00PM, both in the FPCE Sanctuary. Vocal Confluence rehearses weekly at FPCE on Monday evenings.

Welcome to 120 East Swissvale Avenue!

WH Foundation Takes the Heritage Room

You read in the Session Notes last month that FPCE has offered the Heritage Room in the church basement to the Woodland Hills Foundation/H.U.G.S. (Helping Unconditionally & Giving Support) for storage. They put out a plea online stating that the space they had would no longer be available to them and that the majority of the supplies they use to hold events that support Woodland Hills students and teachers are kept in their board members' homes. Upon Session's approval of this request, WH Foundation moved their supplies into their space on Thursday, July 21. Session agreed that it would be a way to continue our goal of being the community church by offering our space for a community organization.

ESO Now Officially an Edgewood Resident Upstairs

Also last month, we noted that Session formalized an agreement with the Edgewood Symphony Orchestra that has been many years in the making to move their offices into our building. They officially moved into their new Suite on July 29, which is upstairs across from the Daycare in the former Edgewood Psychological Services office and the Duff Room. They will use the office for music library, files, and other materials; and hold board meetings in the Duff Room in addition to their regular rehearsals in the Sanctuary on Tuesdays. Dates of rehearsals and concerts are also being added to the Fall/Winter calendar.

Munhall Community Band Concert Recap

FPCE played host to the rescheduled Munhall Community Band concert on Sunday, July 10, 2022. Around 100 or so audience members enjoyed an afternoon of great band music and got to bid on a number of raffle baskets. Thanks to Jim & Mandy (who are also members of the band!), Lisa, Judy, and Shaun for their help in getting everything set for the day. Check out their Facebook page to see a link to photos taken by the professional photographer they hired, Philip Hensler. He got not only some great photos of the band playing in the space, but also amazing pics of our beautiful church!

VILLAGE: WE ASKED FOR YOUR HELP!
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF EDGEWOOD ANSWERED!

On June 8, we made a plea on social media for a storage unit or room for the Woodland Hills Foundation, which has no physical office. And today, we picked up the keys for our new storage room at The First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood!





Edgewood Community Day: August 27

Mark your calendars for Edgewood Community Day, happening Saturday, August 27 at Koenig Field! Start your day with our second annual Community Day Yard Sale from 8am-2pm. Then head to the field for the main festivities, including live entertainment, food, artist vendors, games, and more, starting at 2pm. As always, we'll end the day with music from the Edgewood Symphony Orchestra and a fantastic fireworks display! Please check our website, edgewood.pgh.pa.us and Facebook page, 'Edgewood Borough Community Events' for additional information as we get closer to the event.

We were approached by the Borough Manager recently about running the basketball game as the person who has run it for years has bowed out this year. They plan to run it from 2-6pm and we would likely need a total of 8 people willing to run it – 2 for each hour. ***Would you be willing to help the church participate by volunteering an hour?*** Contact the church office ASAP and let us know your preferred time: 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, or 5-6pm. Thanks!

School for the Deaf Construction Continues

Posted on the WPSD Facebook page on July 6, 2022:

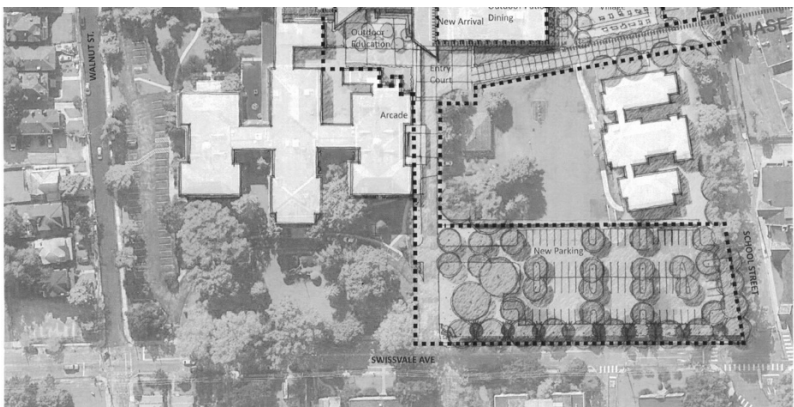
Big things are happening on the WPSD campus. Over the summer, construction crews are working to transform part of campus. These renovations are designed to improve the movement of vehicles and students on campus and reduce bus traffic on the streets around the school.



Through work sessions and focus groups, student safety was identified as the top priority for the new campus master plan. Discussions involved multiple conceptual studies looking at student arrival and drop-off, vehicle staging on and of campus, and pedestrian circulation. The best way to achieve this goal was to establish an avenue for buses to travel through campus and create a single consolidated parking lot along Swissvale Avenue for teachers, staff, and visitors. This new amenity alleviates parking pressure in the surrounding neighborhoods.

To create 'curb appeal,' the project will include large rain gardens, canopy trees, and native plants. This plan helped to protect the largest number of historically significant trees on campus to ensure that we captured the benefits and beauty of their existing canopy. In addition, the existing landscape is being replaced, in this first phase alone, with 86 new trees, almost 500 new shrubs and over 2,700 new ornamental grasses and perennials. In an effort to be a responsible partner in the local watershed, an underground stormwater structure will be installed under the new parking area to manage the release of rainwater from campus.

The goal is to have all work completed prior to our students' return to school in August. We are excited about the positive impact this project will make, not only for our students, but for the surrounding community as well. WPSD understands, and takes seriously, its responsibility to invest in Edgewood and beyond.



225th General Assembly Action Highlights

A Letter to Pittsburgh Presbytery from Rev. Dr. Sheldon W. Sorge, General Minister
Thursday, July 14, 2022



This year's General Assembly convened over the period of June 17 through July 9. Committees met in person in Louisville, then the entire assembly met in plenary online to discuss and act on committee recommendations. My colleague in presbytery leadership, Rev. Ruth Santana-Grace of Philadelphia Presbytery, was elected as co-moderator, together with Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis of Charlotte NC. They did an outstanding job leading the Assembly.

Our own Stated Clerk, Elder Carla Campbell, was elected co-moderator of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which provides counsel to the General Assembly on the constitutionality and advisability of measures being considered by the Assembly.

I offer below a summary of actions that may be of special interest to members of our presbytery. The full digest of General Assembly actions is available for review [here](#).

1. [Pittsburgh Presbytery's overture](#) on removing guns from domestic abusers was passed by the Assembly, with an additional statement encouraging the church to minister to the incarcerated and their families, and directing the denomination to develop resources for such ministry that are compatible with our faith tradition.
2. Adopted [a plan for the next General Assembly](#) that will have online committees and in-person plenary. The in-person plenary will take place June 29 – July 3, 2024, in Salt Lake City.
3. In what may be its most significant action for the denomination's future, GA approved [creation of a Commission](#) to unify the [Office of the General Assembly](#) and the [Presbyterian Mission Agency](#).
4. [Re-affirmed the denomination's position](#) that reproductive and child-bearing care decisions, including the termination of pregnancy, should be made by those receiving such care, rather than by legislation, with special concern for people in poverty being able to make such decisions for themselves.
5. Approved a [General Assembly per capita](#) rate of \$9.85 per member, up from \$8.98 the past two years.
6. Adopted a declaration that the laws, policies, and practices of the government of Israel regarding [the Palestinian people](#) "fulfill the international legal definition of apartheid."
7. Adopted a declaration that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a "[Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church](#)" that supports and encourages its congregations, mid councils, and members to support immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their children, and to resist efforts by the government to separate families.
8. Adopted an [apology](#) on behalf of the whole denomination to African Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy.
9. Adopted an extended resolution on [race, reparative justice, and the PCUSA](#).
10. Adopted a resolution identifying and responding to [racism as a public health crisis](#).
11. Directed the PCUSA to [divest from five energy companies](#) that have not been sufficiently responsive to concerns we have raised about climate change – Chevron, ExxonMobil, Marathon, Phillips 66, and Valero – "until their actions comply with the General Assembly's established criteria."
12. Directed [MRTI](#) (Mission Responsibility Through Investment) to engage companies in which the denomination is currently invested that [sell guns](#) about discontinuing or limiting their sales. We already have divested from companies that sell "assault type" automatic or semi-automatic guns.
13. Directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create educational resources that identify and interrupt practices and policies that perpetuate the adultification of Black girls and criminalization of adolescent behavior, and to engage in the work of eradicating systemic violence against [Black women and girls](#).
14. Directed that a Special Committee be formed to write [a new confession for the PCUSA](#) to be considered for inclusion in the Book of Confessions.
15. Established a task force to explore the [theology and practice of ordination](#), especially for new worshiping communities – an overture with which Pittsburgh Presbytery concurred.
16. Recommended the following changes to the *Book of Order*, for circulation to presbyteries to affirm or reject. Any item that receives more than 50% of presbytery votes will be added to the next edition of the *Book of Order*.

1. Require that all installed and temporary ministers have included in their terms of call 12 weeks of [paid family medical leave](#).
2. Require presbyteries to provide policies for [pastoral dissolution severance](#) agreements, for installed and temporary pastors and for Certified Christian Educators.
3. Change references to "[Honorably Retired](#)" to simply "Retired."
4. Add language that permits [sessions to meet electronically](#).
5. Require all sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the general assembly to [adopt an antiracism policy](#).
6. Replace the current "Rules of Discipline" (Part Four of the *Book of Order*) with a new "[Church Discipline](#)" section.

We all owe great thanks to our Commissioners to this Assembly for their diligent, faithful work for the sake of our Lord and his beloved church:

Rev. Rebecca DePoe (Fox Chapel)
 Rev. Jodi Flack (Rennerdale)
 Elder Clifford Huff (Glenshaw Valley)
 Elder Louise Schoppe (Ken Mawr)
 Elder Nancy Stanny (Valley)
 Rev. Dr. John Welch (Validated, Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist)

Yours in serving our Lord in the PCUSA,



Sheldon Sorge

August 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 JULY 10:00 Worship (S) Communion	1	2 10:00 Book Club (AH)	3	4	5	6
	Mysels Family Vacation					
			6:00 Community Dinner (SL)	7:00 Milepost6 (B)	8:30 AA (SR)	8:30 AA (SR)
7 10:00 Worship (S)	8 7:00 Vocal Confluence (S)	9 10:00 Book Club (AH) 7:00 Session Meeting (GP)	10	11 4:30 Flute (O) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	12 9:15 Daycare Graduation (GP) 10:00 Flute (S) 8:30 AA (SR)	13 8:30 AA (SR)
14 10:00 Worship (S)	15 7:00 Vocal Confluence (S)	16 10:00 Book Club (AH) 7:00 ESO (S)	17	18 6:00 Flute (O) 7:00 Milepost6 (B) 7:30 VC Dress Rehearsal (S)	19 9:15 Flute 8:30 AA (SR)	20 9:45 ESO Auditions (S) 7:30 VC Show (S) 8:30 AA (SR)
21 10:00 Worship (S) 3:00 VC Show (S)	22	23 10:00 Book Club (AH) 7:00 ESO (S)	24	25 3:15 Flute (O) 7:00 Milepost6 (B)	26 8:30 AA (SR)	27 EDGEWOOD COMMUNITY DAY 8:30 (SR)
28 10:00 Worship (S)	29	30 10:00 Book Club (AH)	31	Meeting Locations: AH = Apessos House O = Office B = Basement Band Room S = Sanctuary C = Choir Room Sc = Scout Room GP = Gathering Place SL = Side Lawn L = Lounge SR = Social Room		



First Presbyterian Church of

EDGEWOOD

The Community Church

120 East Swissvale Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15218

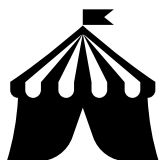


Monthly Community Dinner

BBQ (Ribs, Brisket, Chicken, Pulled Pork)

August 3

Vocal Confluence
Barbershop Harmony Show
August 20 & 21



Edgewood Community Day

All Day at Koenig Field!

August 27



fpcedgewood.org



@fpcedgewood