



First Parish Federated Church
United Church of Christ ~ United Methodist Church
The Reverend Donna Lee Muise — Pastor
Mr David Deardorff — Minister of Music



2009

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Pastor's Message

A return to normalcy—that's what many of us look forward to after the holidays have passed. We like it when life "calms" down again and most days go according to plan; yet, the beginning of the year has a special engagement about it. I wonder if you feel it, too.

It's time to start a new calendar—the one on the wall, the one in your briefcase, the electronic one in your pocket, the one on your desk. Blank spaces, fresh paper, endless opportunities. It's a new slate, a new date, and no more waiting to "Begin Anew."

There are not many folks who are immune to the excitement of beginning anew. The issue is, some folks do not believe it is possible to do so. We Christians have to look ourselves in the mirror of faith and confront this issue. Christianity is all about beginning anew. Simply put, Christ came to wash our souls clean—the proverbial clean slate—that we can begin anew with God. We are forgiven.

Those who know they are forgiven live and lead different lives. Knowing we are forgiven, releases so much "stuff" that we feel new all over. Ever had a bad cold and your head feels like an anvil on your neck? When you find the right medicine that clears your nostrils and you can breathe again, the relief is amazing. That's something what it is like to realize you're forgiven. It's like being born anew—a clear head and a clean heart...awesome!

Awesome opportunity awaits our church. Have you noticed that God is sending us new families with small children? An abundance of toddlers is in our care; how shall we arise to this ministry? There's excitement brewing among folks to give the nursery a new look and a new focus, one that appeals to toddlers and their needs.

More than outstanding: David Deardorff and our choir, along with four of David's students from Coe-Brown Academy, ministered to our spirits, as well as our ears, with the fabulous Cantata, "An Evening in December." The music, the audio-visuals, the cooperation between technology and art revealed that we have so much talent in our congregation. A new "band of brothers" has come together to take on the challenge of improving and enhancing our worship experiences through sound and sight. We are daring to dream at FPFC!

Hands-on outreach and mission are visible: Harl Goodwin and David Stansfield leave on January 24 with other church members of the York Association to travel to New Orleans for recovery work in that area of devastation. Sharon Beckwith leaves on February 14 for Honduras and her work with children in that area. A giving tree is in our Narthex, covered with red and white hearts. The hearts contain the donations Sharon plans to bring with her on her trip. Items include Flintstone's vitamins, adult and children's Tylenol and lice shampoo. Let's fill those two 50-pound duffel bags!

Church suppers continue to be successful and provide great opportunities for fellowship. We have gained quite a following in the wider community. A few of our guests have even made the transition to working on the supper team. (Yes!)

Our young people have great potential in the church. I see a vibrancy, a generosity, a growing seriousness about faith among them. We will do well to pay attention to what they tell us about life as they know it, what their needs and desires are, and how we can not only help them but also learn from them as well. The Spirit works in them, and their leaders are nurturing their faith development.

I list all these areas, not as a way of summing up 2008, but as instigation for action in 2009. How will you allow Jesus to be present in your life this new year? How will you be present in someone else's life to model an emerging faith this new year? Give these opportunities consideration, but do not count on being prepared for new opportunities that God may place in your path.

The new kind of "normal" I envision at FPFC surrounds the quality of immediate willingness to serve. We usually do not get two weeks' notice when God calls us to action. How we respond to God's call to serve reveals much about one's faith journey and spiritual maturity.

I have been testing this theory of a new "normalcy" by asking people during prep time before worship to participate in the service with part of the liturgy or sermon. Some may feel that this is an unfair approach, but in fact, it is part of the practice of being ready—the theme we learned so much about in our Advent worship and studies. I am so pleased to say that people I've asked "at the last minute" have risen to the occasion in fine fashion. No one has said "No." They might turn a little green at first, but they do not say no.

God will call upon each of us in the newness of the year to serve the Lord and each other with humble and glad hearts. Faith is meant to be lived and not observed. Listen for the words God speaks to you about the new level of normal you are called by God to live and then do it! Write it down, live it up! Place your mission on the wall, in your pocket, on your desk, and in your briefcase. Find the one new normal that will lift you up: let your light shine in 2009!

Blessings, Rev Donna

THE BISHOP IS COMING!

January 25 at morning worship we will welcome the Rev Dr Peter D Weaver, the Bishop for the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church. More than a year ago, the invitation went out to all Methodist churches to schedule a visit from the Bishop to their churches for worship, a special service, an anniversary—any occasion.

Rev Donna responded to the opportunity and a few months ago was notified that the Bishop is available to visit us on January 25. The Deacons are preparing for Bishop Weaver's presence, and we hope that you also will be eager to meet him and hear his message for us.

Rev Donna has heard Bishop Weaver speak on several occasions and he did visit us for conversation a few years ago, along with our District Superintendents Mike and Jan Davis. The turnout was modest, but it may have been due to the time of the day (4 pm) that we met. Let's have a great turnout for Peter Weaver's visit with us on January 25! His message is important to hear, no matter what denomination of affiliation we use as labels. Let's fill our sanctuary that day, hear what he has to say, and rejoice that we are part of the larger body of Christ.

Background Information
Peter D Weaver - Bishop, The New England Conference
The United Methodist Church

Birth and Education

Peter David Weaver was born into the parsonage family of Adolph and Dorothy Weaver, January 15, 1945, in Greenville, PA. He received the degrees of B.A. from West Virginia Wesleyan College (1966), M.Div. from Drew University (1969), and Doctor of Theology from Boston University (1975). He has also received honorary Doctorates from Lebanon Valley College (1999), Albright College (2000), and West Virginia Wesleyan college (2007).

Pastorates

Ordained a Deacon (1967) and Elder (1969) in the Western Pennsylvania Conference, Bishop Weaver served the Whitaker United Methodist Church from 1971-1977, developing outreach ministries to community youth and industrial workers.

From 1977-1988, Bishop Weaver served as Senior Pastor of the historic Smithfield United Church (UCC and UMC) in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh. The congregation launched ministries with young adults, older adults, urban children and youth, corporate leaders, the homeless and poor, and the arts. During this time, he was co-founder of the Bethlehem Haven Shelter for Homeless Women, based on Christian hospitality principles.

In 1988, Bishop Weaver was appointed Senior Pastor of the First United Methodist Church of Pittsburgh, where spiritual emphasis was given to ministries with the neighboring universities, young adult singles, persons with AIDS, the poor, and the development of an inclusive church. He helped start the interfaith "One Voice Against Racism" movement.

While these congregations grew in service and numbers, the foundation of all ministry was spiritual growth through worship and small groups, leading to a relationship with Jesus Christ, and for hands-on-ministry in the community and world.

Other Ministries

While serving congregations, Bishop Weaver also wrote for various publications and taught for Drew Theological Seminary and Pittsburgh Theological School. For over ten years, he had weekly programs specifically produced for radio.

His community involvement included "Leadership Pittsburgh," the "Mayor's Task Force on the Homeless," and many boards which included Goodwill Industries, YMCA, United Campus Ministries, and West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Some of his many other church responsibilities included chairing the Mission Division of the General Council on Ministries of the United Methodist Church and serving as a delegate to four General Conferences. In the Western Pennsylvania Conference, he chaired the "Together" Stewardship and Funding Program and the committee that led to a new vision and strategic plan for the Conference.

Service as a Bishop

Philadelphia Area

Elected in 1966, Bishop Weaver served the Philadelphia Area of the United Methodist Church (Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula Delaware Conferences) until 2004. As the Conferences developed new strategic plans, missional partnerships among congregations were initiated, congregation revitalization process instituted, youth ministry was significantly expanded, a Bishop's Community Leaders Forum was held in dozens of communities, programs addressing racism and cultivating unity grew, and creative approaches to evangelism were encouraged. Over thirty new congregations, including Multicultural, Latino, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese ones were started. Major new partnerships with Nigeria and Congo Conferences were established. He also served on the Boards of Drew University, Albright College, and Wesley College along with being a part of the Leaders Forum of Philadelphia and a founding member of "Good Schools Pennsylvania," which focused on public education reform.

The Boston Area

In 2004, Bishop Weaver was assigned to the New England Conference, which includes 550 congregations in five states, committed to a vision of being "Transformed by the Holy Spirit...as we boldly proclaim Christ to the world." In support of this, the Conference has reorganized itself in a more flexible, collaborative way for resourcing congregations and empowering District ministries. Over 15 million dollars has been committed in support of new congregations, the vitality of existing congregations, the four camping and retreat centers, care for retired clergy, and our international partnerships with West Angola and Nicaragua. Along with a number of boards and committees, Bishop Weaver serves on the Board of Trustees of Boston University.

General Church

From 2004-2006, Bishop Weaver served as President of the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church serving churches worldwide. He continues to serve on the Executive Officers team. During this time, a major reorganization and refocusing of the work of the Council occurred taking Bishop Weaver to many countries of the world to work with United Methodist, ecumenical, and political leaders. He has particular interest in the "END POVERTY" movement and is a part of the National Council on Foreign Relations work to relate faith and foreign policy matters. He has served on the denomination's General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st century, and chaired the Northeast Jurisdiction Strategic Visioning/Planning process.

Family

Bishop Weaver is married to Linda Sells Weaver. They have eight daughters and four grandchildren. His hobbies include music (trombone), water sports, and woodworking.

His "life verse" is: "If anyone is in Christ there is a new creation..." II Cor. 5:17

From the Board of Deacons

We, as Deacons, had a joyous Advent Season and each of us feels blessed to have had the opportunity to help make the many Worship services meaningful for all those in attendance. Beginning with The Lighting of the First Advent Candle the Sunday after Thanksgiving, continuing with the somber Tuesday evening Blue Christmas Service and during the two Christmas Eve Services, I think we've all felt God's presence in this time of waiting for Jesus' birth. The Candlelight Services were especially moving, highlighted by the ringing of the bell at midnight.

We weathered an ice storm, then three snowstorms along the way, one of which postponed the Christmas Cantata to the Sunday after Christmas during Worship. Although we again had to wait, the performance electrified the congregation. We Deacons were blessed to help prepare and participate. Our collective thanks go to David Deardorff and to all the choir members, guest singers, behind the scenes electronic wizards, and the slide show preparer. They made this a Sunday morning to remember.

The beginning of the year is off to an exciting start. May this wonderful spirit continue to fill our hearts.

Dave Stansfield,
Head Deacon

January 2009 Letter from your PPRT

Happy New Year to everyone! May 2009 be a more spiritual year for us all, bringing us closer together. We continue to meet monthly with Rev. Donna and have assisted her in formulating goals as a result of the evaluation process. We certainly welcome anyone's thoughts, suggestions and ideas regarding our Church and invite you to communicate with any one of us.

We welcomed Clayton Estabrooke to the Pastor Parish Relations Team at our last meeting and thank him for the commitment to our Church and his service in this way. We also want to thank Lucy Putnam for many years of service on the Team. Her sound judgment and clear insight have helped us in many ways in challenging times. We are fortunate to have so many willing and talented people in our Church family. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 5th at 6:30 PM.

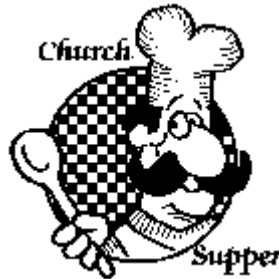
Your PPRT,
Dewitt Carmer, Dottie Bennett, Diane Money,
Mike Weber, Clayton Estabrooke

Trustees Work Day

The Trustees have scheduled an indoor work day for Saturday, January 10, 2009 from 9 AM - 12 noon. We'd like to work on some indoor projects including replacing doors over electrical panels in the kitchen hall, repairs to pews, moving Christmas items into deep storage, assessing/clearing/reassigning storage areas for outside group use. Committees, please be thinking about reorganizing storage areas so all like items are stored together, etc. Thank you.

Hospice of York

Hospice of York is offering a Bereavement Support Group this winter. The "Living With Loss Group" will be held on **Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 8 PM beginning January 7, 2009** and will last for 10 weeks. The meetings are held in the M.O.B. (Medical Office Building in back of York Hospital), #1 Conference Room. Space is limited and **pre-registration is required**. For more information, please call Dee at 207-363-7000.



This month's supper is a Traditional Turkey Dinner with all the fixins' from 4:30 - 6 PM in the Vestry on Sat, January 10, 2009. Please join us for a great meal. (*The Yankee Thrift Shop will be open from 4 PM - 6:30 PM for anyone who would like to take advantage of this opportunity to shop!*)



January 2009 Coffee Hour

The Coffee Hour Coordinators for the month of January are Marc & Pam Precourt.
The Coffee Hour Hosts/Hostesses for the month of January are as follows:

January 11	Rachel Stevens & Patti Johnson
January 18	Diane Money
January 25	Lois & Henry Miller

(6)

S.A.M. Celebrates First Parish Federated Church

The members of our Social Action and Missions Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank one and all for the support of the many missions undertaken in this time of great need. As we approach the new year we celebrate being able to contribute to both the local and global community at large. With the aid of many, we have been able to provide Thanksgiving baskets to two families; raise and deliver \$600 to My Friends' Place, a family shelter in Dover; feed the congregation during the power outage, and deliver Christmas to two families suffering from financial and life strains. We look forward to serving with you in the upcoming months of 2009. Our next meeting will be held on January 13th at 6:00 PM in the Shorey Room.

From the S.A.M. Committee

Celebrating the Birth of Daisy's Children

Greetings to all as you celebrate this holiday season with those you love. May you gather in peace and prosperity. As I reflect on the many blessings of 2008 and look ahead to the challenges of 2009, I recall with a mix of sadness and acknowledged blessing a purposeful meeting of three young children sitting on a bench outside their church in the village of Concepcion del Norte, Honduras.

Joyeis, Carla, and Roberto lost their mother to starvation in May. As I sat across from them, I had no idea how far we would travel together in such a short span of time. From that brief meeting, to the development of a non-profit, to the joy of our first Christmas. Because of the generosity of many others and the power of our direction, we have been able to feed 28 individuals for five months, provide a Christmas fiesta complete with a feast, a pinata and gifts, as well as purchase school uniforms and needed supplies for 11 children, which include backpacks embroidered with their own names.

Two of these children will go to school for the first time this coming February, one is 5, the other 11.

Among our many blessings we also count the birth of our own Christmas baby, a girl, born in less than a stable.

Daisy's Children (www.daisyschildren.com) was able to purchase a bed for mom and child, as well as formula to supplement feedings from an otherwise anemic and dehydrated mother.

Our goal is to raise an additional \$1500 to put clean bottled water into the homes of our seven families when board member Amanda French and I return to the village on Valentine's Day. As I continue this journey forward I thank each of you for the love, support, and many treasures you have allowed me to be the conduit for. May the year 2009 bring you the joy of sharing your life and your gifts with those you meet along the journey.

Sharon Beckwith,
Founder of Daisy's Children

The Tree That Just Goes on Giving

The Christmas tree in the Narthex proved to be a wonderful way to allow many to support the needs of two families at holiday time. It served as an inspiration, a joy, and a simple way to accomplish a mission. Several of us have decided to keep it going for the upcoming year. As Valentine's Day approaches and Sharon Beckwith gets ready to return to Honduras, you will find hearts on the tree with those items that are most needed for the children in Concepcion del Norte. Though they may seem not so glamorous or gifty, they are what is needed and can be easily transported. Join us in meeting the very basic needs of sustenance, opportunity, hope, and love. Take a heart or two and give the gift that keeps on gifting. Sharon Beckwith

"Mug 'N Muffin" Women's Gathering

The "Mug 'N Muffin" Women's Group will resume meetings in the Shorey Room on *Saturday, January 10, 2009 from 9 - 10:30 AM*. Hope to see you there!

Church Sound Design Task Force

The Church Sound Design Task Force is now active. Thanks to all who agreed to serve: Dave Stansfield, Dana Stairs, Frank Thomas, Brett Hartenbach and Paul Klebaur. Thanks to Charlie Putnam for pulling the team together. The new pulpit microphone is already in position. Please let us know how it sounds.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW BROCHURE?

If a picture paints a thousand words, our new tri-fold Church brochure should be many pages in length! Thanks to Judi Connelly for her design and layout talents, Rev Donna for the words, and Valerie Renaud for donating the original print run. Judi and Valerie are two members of the Church Growth Task Force. Brochures are in the pew racks and will be a component of the visitors' welcome packets, which will be available very soon.

An Evening in December - An Experience to Remember!

Those of us who witnessed the December 28 Cantata are still walking on air. Our choir sounded as if there were at least 200 voices. David Deardorff gave 200% of his talents and professional gifts, and the congregation swelled with joy and pride, enthusiasm and appreciation.

Thank You

To all my friends in the FPFC Congregation:

I wish to thank one and all for your very generous gift at Christmas time. You all are so very kind and thoughtful! It was much appreciated. Thanks also to George Moore for the beautiful poinsettia he delivered to my home on Christmas Sunday. A healthy, Happy New Year to everyone! Joan Doherty

Thank you for the lovely red poinsettia. It was thoughtful of you to remember me again this year.

Ina Perkins

Pilgrim Lodge Update!

The 2009 PL **schedule is posted** online at
www.pilgrimlodge.org

The **2009 brochure** will be available in early February

Online registration begins February 14

NEW!

Children entering **3rd Grade** can attend the half week camp!
June 24 -27

A **second Women's Weekend** is added
June 5 - 7 and September 18 - 20

Men's Retreat: May 29 - 31

Young Adults moved to a weekend
June 12 - 14

GLBTI: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex,
Adult Weekend!
August 28 - 30

Youth Group Overnight
Free to those who work Jump Start Weekend. Nominal fee to others
April 25 - 26

Confirmation Week 7th - 9th Grades (with adult from church 1:5 ratio)
August 17 - 21

A New Year - A New "Dine with Nine"

The 2008 "Dine with Nine" groups are having a joint potluck lunch after church on Sunday, January 25. We hope everyone will join us and see how much fun we have and what good food we share. Sign ups for 2009 groups will begin. Please bring a potluck dish to share, main dish, salad, or dessert.

For those who are new to the idea of "Dine with Nine," it is a larger number of adults randomly divided into groups of nine with a host couple. The host arranges the first gathering and food responsibilities and then the group agrees to the next gathering, time and place, and host. The gatherings are not limited to potluck in the host home, but open to the creativity of the group - picnics, BBQ, restaurants, breakfast, lunch, etc. The only goal is to be together.

Please sign up January 25 in the Vestry. Any questions, contact Julia & Mike Ouellette (384-0084), Jim & Joanne Morgan (748-1175), or George & Barbara Moore (384-5856).