



The First Presbyterian Church of Murrysville, PA Newsletter, March, April 2024

A note from our Pastor...

Resuming or Renewing?

Recently I was contacted by MLBTV to renew my subscription to stream any Major League baseball game in the country all season long. They offer me a very generous discount given the various professional affiliations I maintain. Perhaps it's a slightly guilty pleasure to subscribe to this service but given the entertainment options available for viewing these days, watching our good old American Past Time isn't too bad an idea. You could do worse.

I was a little confused, however, by the language of our agreement. I really don't know if this should be classified as renewal. A better descriptive term to characterize our relationship might be to "resume" my subscription. Since the terms and conditions of the contract remained virtually the same and nothing has really changed other than adding another year onto the arrangement, I would hardly call this a renewal. Renewal implies something more dynamic than merely replicating what has gone before. While the dictionary is content to define renewal as simply replacing or repairing something that is worn out, I prefer to believe that it has a far more noble and extensive meaning.

When Jesus says, "**Behold I make all things new,**" he is not just talking about replacement and repair. The Apostle Paul offers these words of encouragement: "**If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away and a new person is born.**" Jesus offers, "**the Cup of the New Covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of sins.**" Through Christ, we don't just "resume" our old life, with a few adjustments here and there. When we receive the gift of salvation, through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, **we are a "new" creation.** Redeemed and forgiven by the blood of the Lamb, we are no longer "renewing our subscription" – signing up for another year under the same conditions and circumstances. It is no longer business as usual. We drink from the Cup that truly makes all things new.

I cannot get excited about resumption. But renewal? Renewal is amazing! It is creating something that has never been before. The signs of renewal surround us, particularly here at the First Presbyterian Church of Murrysville. Renewal is the Cantata Choir, now launching into its 7th season. Prior to 2017, this wonderful ministry wasn't even a consideration. Now it's a staple in our community. This isn't a resumption of an existing program, but a new endeavor. Renewal is also the Friend's Kitchen. Not a repair of a former project, but a fresh, new, and creative response to the needs of our community. The same can be said for the Pine Springs Day Camp here at First Presbyterian. By no means are we resuming something that has happened before, but a true act of renewal and hope.



Renewal is taking place throughout our church and the individuals that call it home. In January of 2024, we ordained three new Ruling Elders and one new Deacon. All four of our Elders were installed to serve on our Session for the first time. And our Session continues the process of expanding our leadership base as we added another member to this incoming class in anticipation of achieving a full complement of twelve by 2025. Few, if any, congregations in the United States have been able to expand their Sessions in the past generation. Our Elders

and Deacons continue to grow in faith as well as in number as over twenty of them participated in our Church Officer Retreat in February. We have also been blessed to welcome a new chairperson to our Preschool program and add several new staff members who are committed to this ministry.

Lent is a season of renewal. Not resumption – but renewal. The Lamb of God has made Himself a sacrifice so that our sins might be forgiven and we can enjoy a new life. A life of abundance. His death on the cross did more than extend our subscription. It enabled us to be a new creation. One that receives this precious gift and boldly steps into the world to bear fruit in His name. Let us experience redemption. Let us experience renewal. And let us proclaim His glorious Name. Both now and forever.

Blessings to you all
In His Name,
Rev. Ed

🎵 NOTES FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC 🎵

We are looking forward with anticipation to Holy Week as we recount and remember the journey of our Lord from triumphal entry on Palm Sunday to humiliation and death on Good Friday and then His glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday. Be present on Palm Sunday as we wave our palms in joy and sing "The Palms" to celebrate the day. Return on Maundy Thursday for the descent into darkness as we observe the Tenebrae service with Scripture readings and music that tell the story of the events from the Last Supper to the Crucifixion. Meditate and pray in the interim days until we arrive on Easter Sunday and unveil the cross bedecked in beautiful flowers as we rejoice in our Lord's resurrection and the guarantee of our salvation now before us. The Chancel Choir and instrumentalists will lead us as once again we proclaim our worship and our joy.

In April we look forward to the Easter cantata that will be presented by the Murrysville Cantata Choir on Sunday, April 14 at 4 pm. "No Greater Love: Remembering the Death and Resurrection of Jesus," a choral work by Lloyd Larson, will take us through the events of Holy Week, beginning with the triumphal entry of Jesus highlighted by the anthem "Sing Hosanna to the King!" and progressing through the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus. Familiar hymn tunes are woven into the composition of this traditional church choral style cantata. At the conclusion of the concert the audience will be invited to join in singing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" along with the choir, accompanied by organ and handbells from Community Bronze. Be sure to attend!

--Ruth Poscich



Murrysville Presbyterian
Preschool (MPP)....



Your Murrysville Presbyterian Preschool is humming along at nearly full capacity! Registration for next year is well underway. Our wonderful registrar, Stacie Curry, reports that we are full and have a waiting list! It is a testament to our staff and committee that the school remains a popular quality choice in our community.

Three of our staff members, Stacie, Tiffany, and Jeri, our PreK teachers, attended a round table event at Franklin Regional to learn about what children need to be prepared for kindergarten. They came away with suggestions with tools to help our students be successful. Staff are regularly in touch with Kindergarten teachers from local districts to stay on top of trends and needs.

Friday, March 1, preschool families, staff, committee members and some church members enjoyed Movie Night in Laird Hall. The movie was "Trolls 3," Trolls Band Together. Thank you to our staff, committee, and family members who helped to make the evening a success. Special thanks to Carl Staab for technical assistance.

Looking Ahead

Maundy Thursday service is at 7:30 p.m. on March 28.

Easter Sunday is March 31! The worship services will both be held in the Sanctuary at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.



The Easter Breakfast will be held at 9:30 a.m. in Laird Hall.

Cantata Choir Worship Concert, "No Greater Love" will be held in the Sanctuary, April 14, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Preschool Sunday and Sandwich Sunday (CE/MPP), April 21, 2024, 11:00 a.m. worship service.

Primary Election in Laird Hall, April 23, 2024

Tag Sale in Laird Hall, May 3 and 4, 2024

March and April Birthdays & Anniversaries



Anniversaries

Denise & Justin Rose	March 19
Hazel and Rick Braun	April 26



Birthdays

Jim Stange	3/2	Gail Harrison	4/2
Larry Senor	3/6	Martha Gangloff	4/3
Ken Nutter	3/12	Rachel Ramaley	4/7
Rick Pry	3/14	Mary Kay Krause	4/11
Carolyn Warych	3/14	Debra Little	4/13
Sharon Beatty	3/16	Janet Rearick	4/14
Chuck Hall	3/19	Keith Langston	4/14
Lane Neff	3/22	Rand Hudson, Jr	4/17
Ruth Blattner	3/24	Wayne Pottmeyer	4/19
Misty Show	3/24	Hazel Braun	4/21
Denise Rose	3/25	Alex Flores-Martinez	4/21
Brian Nutter	3/27	Victoria Duff	4/29
Carol Ramaley	3/30	Jennifer Plowman	4/29
Bob Brooks	3/30	Laurie Bellavia	4/30

Tag Sale

The Tag Sale has been scheduled for May 3 and 4 in Laird Hall. The sale set-up begins at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24. Assistance will be needed for the 10 days of set-up and for the sale. When details regarding collection times as well as workday requests become available, they will be listed in the bulletin and sent out in emails.



From the Deacons

The thank-you note below was sent to the Deacons for the kindness they extended to one of our family:



Thank you from the Medical Team



To the Deacons of First Presby:

09Feb24

Thanks to you and the church family for your wonderful support during a relatively historic deployment for CVN 69. Your thoughts, prayers, and supplies have gone a long way in keeping not only me, but some of the finest corpsmen in the Navy, happy and fed during our long days at sea.

I'm humbled and thankful for your outreach, another reminder that I'm blessed to have grown up in Murrysville and in First Presbyterian Church. So again, thank you from the Medical Department on "The Best Damn (app:... God forgive me) Ship In The Navy."

Thank you
-MAC

My Best

Thank you
Very Much!
Mac Strickell

Thank you!
I'm appreciated!
-HMS Thompson
-THANK YOU SO MUCH!
-HMS Gentry

Chris

Chris Grange, MD
LCDR, MC (USMC), USN
USS DWIGHT D EISENHOWER (CVN 69)

Thank you for thinking
of us! We appreciated it!!
-HMS Adams

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
TO TEAM AMON/COX/AA!
-K. HANCS LUNA
-RAH/SF!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!!
-AMC PRATER

Thank you all so
much for the
wonderful
treats!
-LT Rowland

Thank you all
for thinking of
us + all the
treats!
-OPK MEAG

THANK YOU FOR THINKING
OF US!
-HMS WRIGTER

Thanks for making
deployment sweeter.
-HD Hershkopf

Thank you for
the tasty treats
-HMS