



Sunset Hills

M E S S E N G E R

April 2021

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A Message from Pastor Laura

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. - Romans 15:2



The Triune God lives and exists in relationship: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This divine community reaches out to humanity in Jesus Christ. Jesus chooses twelve disciples and expands his community. The twelve share that community with others, and we get the church. The church expands from Jerusalem to Ethiopia to Egypt to Rome to.....the Sunset Hills neighborhood. We are a part of God's always expanding relationship with God's world.

Not only are we a part of God's expanding relationship with God's world, but we participate in expanding that relationship by pursuing relationships with our neighbors. We pursue relationships with the people of Sunset Hills.

Note what I said there: we pursue relationships. We don't pursue potential converts, potential church goers, etc. We don't turn people into projects. We act like Jesus Christ, who comes to earth to love the earth, listen to its people, and love those people.

The ministry of listening and loving (pursuing relationships!) is the work of mission. It's what the session and I learned about at our Future Church Summit in February, learning how micro-church communities are flourishing in neighborhoods and can flourish in our own neighborhood. It's what I learned about in my Doctor of Ministry course in March, "Plunging Into the Neighborhood."

Pay attention for upcoming opportunities to plunge into our neighborhood, to build relationships with our neighbors! Your session and pastor are working hard to find ways to engage with the people in the place where God has planted us.

If you want to work ahead, take your dog for a walk and get to know some neighbors you haven't met. Learn who they are, what they love, and what they're excited about. Then let your church family know what you learned so we can all grow in relationship with this neighborhood together!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Laura

Holy Week



Maundy Thursday: A full service will be held in the sanctuary on April 1st at 7:00 pm. Communion will be served.

Good Friday: A service for Good Friday will take place via Zoom at 7:00 pm on April 2nd. The link to join is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85620246564?pwd=azBwWVpuUFpDfDfDY1bUxxVGN4emN6UT09>

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday: Our Easter Sunday service will be held in the sanctuary on April 4th at 10:15 am.

Communion Sunday

Communion Sunday: Communion Sunday will be held on April 11th.

Special Congregational Meeting - Sunday, April 11th at Noon via Zoom

We will hold a congregational meeting on Sunday, April 11th at noon using the Zoom app. The purpose of the meeting is to vote on the approval of Tim Fako as an Elder to SHUP. The link to join the meeting is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84942569283?pwd=RWZ2eTRlQk9UNkR4RVFSWTA5V1lyQT09>. This link can also be found on the calendar page of our website <https://www.shupchurch.org/calendar>.

The Year of the Bible

Daily Year of the Bible Readings

Apr. 1	Joshua 1-3/Psalm 37	Apr. 16	Judges 13, 14/Mark 4
Apr. 2	Joshua 4, 5/Romans 10	Apr. 17	Judges 15, 16/Mark 5
Apr. 3	Joshua 6, 7/Romans 11	Apr. 18	Judges 17, 18/Mark 6
Apr. 4	Joshua 8, 9/Romans 12	Apr. 19	Judges 19, 20/Psalm 44
Apr. 5	Joshua 10, 11/Psalm 38	Apr. 20	Judges 21/Mark 7
Apr. 6	Joshua 12-15/Romans 13	Apr. 21	Ruth 1, 2/Mark 8
Apr. 7	Joshua 16-19/Romans 14	Apr. 22	Ruth 3, 4/Psalm 45
Apr. 8	Joshua 20-22/Psalm 39	Apr. 23	1 Samuel 1-3/Mark 9
Apr. 9	Joshua 23, 24/Romans 15	Apr. 24	1 Samuel 4-6/Mark 10
Apr. 10	Judges 1, 2/Romans 16	Apr. 25	1 Samuel 7-9/Mark 11
Apr. 11	Judges 3, 4/Mark 1	Apr. 26	1 Samuel 10, 11/Psalms 46, 47
Apr. 12	Judges 5, 6/Psalms 40, 41	Apr. 27	1 Samuel 12, 13/Mark 12
Apr. 13	Judges 7, 8/Mark 2	Apr. 28	1 Samuel 14, 15/Mark 13
Apr. 14	Judges 9, 10/Mark 3	Apr. 29	1 Samuel 16, 17/Psalm 48
Apr. 15	Judges 11, 12/Psalms 42, 43	Apr. 30	1 Samuel 18, 19/Mark 14

Music Notes

By Shelby Gracey

We're so thankful that we can gather on Easter Sunday for in-person worship this year! While different, we certainly hope that the recorded music will help to lift your hearts in celebration of Christ's Resurrection! During this Easter season, I'd like to highlight the hymn, "*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*," written by John Bowring in 1825.

"When the World Trade Center collapsed following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, workers excavating the site found a cross-shaped beam that, standing upright amid the ruin and debris, became a makeshift center of worship. The picture of that cross was published around the world and served as a symbol of hope.



A similar story is associated with this hymn. On the island of Macao in the region of Hong Kong, a magnificent cathedral was destroyed. Only the front wall remained. Atop it was a great metal cross, blackened with age, silhouetted against the sky. It is said that hymnist John Bowring was so inspired by the story of this cathedral that he wrote the hymn, *In the cross of Christ I glory, tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time*.

The validity of that story is questionable, but we do have a verified story about Rathbun, the tune to which this hymn is set. It was composed by Ithamar Conkey, organist at Central Baptist Church in Norwich, Connecticut.

In 1849, Central's pastor had planned a series of sermons on the seven last words of Christ on the Cross. According to the *Norwich Bulletin*: "One Sunday during the series it was a very rainy day. Mr. Conkey was sorely disappointed that the members of the choir did not appear, as only one soprano came. Mr. Conkey was so discouraged and disheartened that after the prelude he closed the organ and locked it and left for his home. The pastor and choir gallery were at opposite ends of the church, and he could leave without attracting the attention of the congregation. That afternoon, as he sat down at the piano for practice, his mind was distracted with the thoughts of the sermons his pastor had prepared, as well as the words of the hymn, *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*.

That very day he composed the music that is now so universally familiar in churches of every denomination, known as RATHBUN. He admitted afterward the inspiration was a vivid contradiction of his feelings at the morning service.

By why did he name his tune RATHBUN? The one choir member who showed up on that rainy Sunday in 1849 . . . that one faithful soprano was named Mrs. Beriah S. Rathbun."

*In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;*

*All the light of sacred story gathers
round its head sublime.*

*When the woes of life o'er take me,
hopes deceive and fears annoy;*

*Never shall the cross forsake me, Lo!
It glows with peace and joy.*

*When the sun of bliss is beaming,
light and love upon my way;*

*From the cross the radiance
streaming, adds more luster to the
day.*

*Bane and blessing, pain and
pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;*

*Peace is there that knows no
measure, joys that thro' all time
abide.*

("Then Sings My Soul," Robert J. Morgan, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2003, p. 97.)

Mission Update

Lent was highlighted by Mission Nights in lieu of Lenten Suppers. Each Wednesday via Zoom the congregation was invited to participate in presentations by a variety of Mission leaders followed by a Q & A session.

On February 24, Mark Adams, our Presbyterian missionary with Frontera de Cristo Border Ministry, gave us a geographic understanding of the ministry in Agua Prieta across the border from Douglas, Arizona

Mark and his staff partner with many different groups and individual volunteers to create a flexible and multifaceted organization. Covid 19 has been active in the area, but Adam and his family find the hospitals adequate to their needs. The drug cartel has also been active. The Mission created a Children's Initiative to counteract the cartels' lure. The Women's Co-operative encourages a neighbor to school connection with sewing and gardening opportunities. The financial key to their operations is Café Justo, a cooperative with individual coffee growers and roasters. This business thrives on American and Mexican markets, including SHUP.



<http://fronteradecristo.org/>

On March 3, Zoom allowed us to meet Myra Mann who heads the Pittsburgh region for Bread for the World, a long-time lobbying organization which endeavors to feed the world's hungry. It is a totally volunteer organization using letter writing, emails, phone calls and office visits with government representatives and officials to lobby for funds to defeat hunger.

Recently, after 2 years of lobbying and 100,000 letters, Congress passed Bill #189 with significant funding. Some of the groups that receive this aid are WICO (Women, Infants and Children Org.), SNAP (Food Stamps), and EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit). Bread for the World appears under The Department of Agriculture. Bread for the World makes certain the hungry are not forgotten.



<https://bread.org/>

On March 10, we met with AJ Bisesi from Garfield Farm. Over the last decade Garfield Farm has turned three acres of abandoned land into one of the most successful urban farms in Pittsburgh. Their goal to bring fresh produce to the community is aided by volunteers from both inside and outside the neighborhood.

Every month they donate fresh produce to the Valley View Church food pantry. They also have a vegetable subscription program. This program allows members in the community to receive produce by either working the farm, paying market price or using a variety of food assistance programs.

Garfield Farm plans to go mobile this year with the hopes of being able to bring their produce to more members of the community.

<https://www.garfieldfarm.com/>

On April 17th, Rev. Charissa Howe, a world traveler with a particular interest in Christianity joined us to talk about her recent travels to the Celtic lands of Scotland and Ireland. She discovered a spirituality particular to the Celts that was possibly shaped by their geography. It is a harsh climate leading to an historically harsh existence. Hence, the tendency toward melancholy, singular contemplation.

Charissa's presentation was in the form of an evening vesper. She began with St. Patrick's Prayer including Celtic music to set the tone.

The modern church in Ireland and Scotland is experiencing the same losses that we are. The Methodists and Presbyterians there are finding ways to collaborate and like us, are studying "Fresh Expressions" to find new approaches for the modern era.

On March 24, Pastor Laura gave us a presentation on Christmas International House. This organization places international college students with American host families during their winter breaks. The program enables these students to explore new cities, learn what American families are like, and to develop friendships.

Pastor Laura shared her experience of serving with CIH and its ministry of giving "room at the inn" during the season of Jesus' birth.



<http://www.christmasih.org/>

Mission Opportunities

Garfield Farm - Saturday, April 10th - 10:00 am to Noon

As we learned at our Mission Wednesday meeting on March 10th, Garfield Farm is a three-acre farm located in the city of Pittsburgh. Urban farming, although not as common as farming in rural areas, is growing in popularity. Urban farms help to provide easier access to fresh produce to families living in cities at an affordable price. Garfield Farm goes one step further and provides fresh produce to members of their community at a greatly reduced price than can be found in grocery stores. Sometimes, members receive the produce for free.

To continue to thrive, Garfield Farm relies on donations. Yes, they accept monetary donations, but they also accept donations in the form of people who are willing to help them work the farm.

SHUP members have been visiting the farm on mission trips for the past few years. Before the pandemic, our Youth Group has spent time there, and our young adults make annual visits.

This year, we are asking all members of SHUP to join us for a morning of hard work and fun for this important mission.

On **Saturday, April 10th** we will be going to Garfield Farm. We will meet in the church parking lot at 9:15 am to carpool (we ask that you drive with your family or those you have been “podding” with over the pandemic). Remember to wear your mask, closed toed shoes and to bring your gardening gloves! We will be working from 10:00 am - Noon. We hope you will consider joining us for this rewarding opportunity!

To learn more about Garfield Farm, please visit their website at www.garfieldfarm.com.

Flowers for Food Drive - Sunday, April 18th - 11:30 am to 1:30 pm - at SHUP

Join us on Sunday, April 18th from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm to participate in a new kind of food drive. We will walk around the Sunset Hills neighborhood in teams of three to collect canned and non-perishable goods for SHIM. In return for food, we will give our neighbors a packet of flower seeds.

Each team will have a wagon and a basket full of seeds packets. A chase car will drive around the neighborhood to pick up goods from the full wagons.

The neighborhood will be notified ahead of time of this event so they may prepare accordingly. This will be a great opportunity for us to meet and chat with our neighbors. Everyone is invited to join in the fun!



Schedule

11:30 am - Noon	Brown Bag Lunch and Training in Findley Hall
Noon - 1:00 pm	Food Collection
1:00 pm - 1:30 pm	De-Brief in Findley Hall

Supplies Needed

- Wear a **RED** Shirt
- Wear Comfy walking Shoes

We need some extra wagons. If you are able to bring a wagon, please let Pastor Laura know.

What's the Catch?

This project is an assignment for Pastor Laura's Doctor of Ministry course "Plunging Into the Neighborhood." She will be writing a nine-page paper about this project. So, let's all support her and get out there for the sake of SHIM and our neighbors!

An RSVP is not necessary but is extraordinarily helpful. You can RSVP to Pastor Laura at revlaurastrauss@gmail.com or by calling the church office at (412)561-6261.



PENTECOST
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
CHILDREN AT RISK • YOUTH • YOUNG ADULTS

**The Pentecost Offering supports
our ministries with children and youth.**

Join us!

WHEN WE ALL DO A LITTLE,
IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!
April 5 – May 23, 2021



MATTHEW 25



With a foundation in faith built in the early years, our youth can teach us something about leading movements for change in their own communities and in the world. Gifts to the Pentecost Offering are helping to provide opportunities for young people to grow and share in their faith in Christ. The gifts we share will help young people learn important lessons about life and faith. And children, youth, and young adults can teach us new things and help us shape our faith, too.

We will be collecting for the Pentecost Special offering beginning April 5th. You can mail your donation to the church office, drop it in the collection baskets on Sunday or by using the tithe.ly app. Just be sure to write "Pentecost Offering" on the memo line. Donations will be accepted through May 23rd.

Please give generously...for if we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.



When you give to the Pentecost Offering, you are helping to provide opportunities for young people to grow and share in their faith in Christ.



Together,
we are building
the household
of God with
children, youth
and young adults.



40%

stays with the Congregation

to develop and support programs for young people in our own church and community.



25%

supports Young Adult Volunteers (YAV),
serving in communities around the world,
and growing as leaders through
transformative Christian service.



25%

supports Ministries with Youth
including the Presbyterian Youth Triennium.



10%

is devoted to children at-risk
to improve education and provide safe
havens.

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME



On March 14th, Lorissa (Lissa) Bensur became a member of SHUP and her children, Savannah and Michael were baptized.

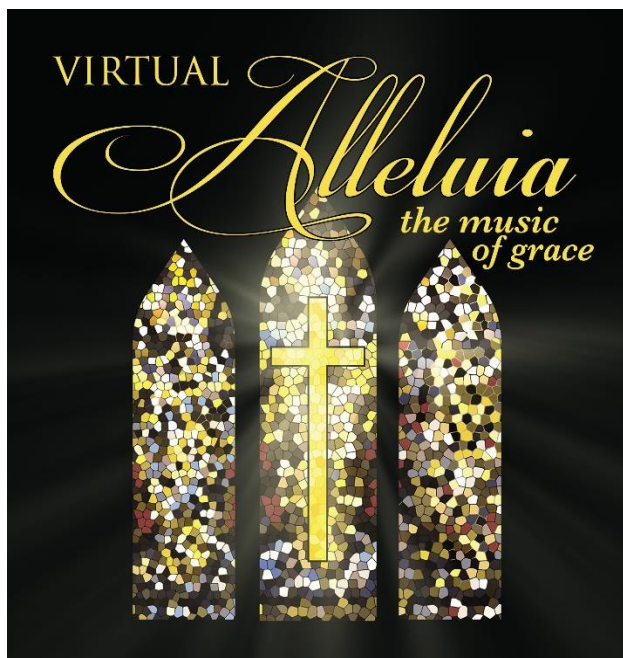


Please be sure to introduce yourselves and welcome the Bensur family and Amber St. James to the SHUP family when you see them!



On March 28th, Amber St. James was baptized and became a member of SHUP.

Virtual Alleluia Choir



Be sure to watch *The Virtual Alleluia: The Music of Grace* concert. The link to view this concert will be posted on our SHUP website, as well as our SHUP Facebook page as soon as it premieres. The link to access the whole service is:

<https://vimeo.com/528826492>

Although the whole service is beautiful and worth watching, if you prefer, you can click on the link below to watch the video of *Great Day! The Lord is Risen!*

[Great Day! The Lord Is Risen! on Vimeo](#)

Be on the lookout for Shelby & Sarajane Gracey, Dave Petty and Keith & Michelle!

Clean-Up Day at SHUP Saturday, April 24th 8:00 am - Noon

Please join us for our annual “Spring Clean-up” Mission day. Are you a fixer upper, do you like to make things spick & span, or do you prefer to work outside? If so, we can use you! There will be a variety of jobs to do no matter your desire or skill level. Everyone is welcome.



We will wrap up around noon. Be sure to remember to pack a bagged lunch so we can sit together (responsibly) and enjoy our handiwork!

April Events

Adult Sunday School

8:30 am

Adult Sunday School will continue their discussions on the daily *The Year of the Bible* readings.

This class will continue using Zoom.

Sunday Worship

10:15 am

Worship in the Sanctuary! If you are not able to join us in person, a video of the service will be posted to our YouTube channel on the Monday after the service:

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

You can get a copy of the bulletin by clicking on the link on the homepage of our website www.shupchurch.org.

Fellowship Hour

Because we will be in the Sanctuary for worship in April, there will be no Fellowship hour this month.

Youth Group

Sunday's - 6:30 pm

All youth are invited to join us for Youth Group. They will be meeting in Findley Hall.

The young adults will be leading youth group for the month of April. If you would like more information, you can contact Luke at l.obarsky@gmail.com or Sarajane at sgracey08@gmail.com.

Youth Group will meet on April 11th & April 25th.

Findley Hall Bible Study

Monday's - 1:00 pm

This class will continue meeting using Zoom. They will finish their study of *Why Easter Matters* on April 19th.

On April 26th, they will begin an 8-week study of *Think Like Jesus* by Randy Frazee.

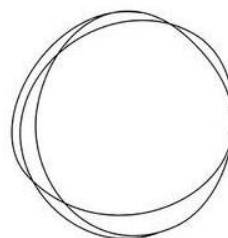
Please watch the videos on Study Gateway before class.

Contact Evelyn Lape at (412)531-9856 if you would like to join this class and/or to have the Zoom link sent to you.

Kid's Club

Wednesday's - 4:30 pm

All kids in K-5th are invited to join Pastor Laura for fun in learning about Jesus. *This month, the class will begin meeting in person in Findley Hall.* To learn more about Kid's Club, please contact Pastor Laura at revlaurastrauss@gmail.com.



Prayer Circle

We will be continuing our prayer circle in 2021. Every week we will pray for 2 members (be it family or individuals). We started at the beginning of the directory in September of last year and will continue until we reach the end and then repeat. This is a time of prayer for our friends and families. We ask that every week you take a moment and add these people to your daily prayers.

<u>Week of:</u>	<u>Praying for:</u>
April 4 th	Phyllis Moore The Leenerts Family; Tim Kristin & Alex
April 11 th	Nancy Newman The Ney Family; Bill, Leslie, Ian & Alecia
April 18 th	Carol Noonan Luke & Sarajane Obarsky
April 25 th	Bill & Laura Oknefski Pat Patterson

Life Line Screening

Friday, April 16th - Findley Hall

Life Line Screening will offer 5 screenings; Carotid Artery, Heart Rhythm, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, Peripheral Arterial Disease and Osteoporosis. You may sign up for all 5 or just the ones you are interested in. The cost for all 5 is \$149. Carotid, Affib, AAA are \$70 each and PAD and Osteoporosis are \$60 each. You must have an appointment. If you are interested, please call (888)753-1129 or visit: <https://ecom.lifelinescreening.com/Locations-short?zipcode=15228&sourcecd=WNAT001> to make an appointment. Please contact Harriet Rickard at (412)531-5164 with any questions.

April Birthdays

4	Mackenzie Barnes	12	Richard Hoffman
	Bailey Farabaugh	14	Matt Sembrat
10	Ali Daniels	19	Michael Duffner
	Sean Matson	20	Jan Paulsen
	Vince Vernacchio	22	John Ellis IV
11	Bill Gracey	29	Charles Mullen
	Judy Phillips		



Prayer List

JoAnne Enterline

Book Exchange

The bookshelf for the SHUP Book Exchange has been moved from inside Findley Hall to the entrance right outside of Findley.

Please feel free to make use of the Book Exchange by taking a book to read or leaving a book that you think others will enjoy.

Liturgists Needed

Now that we are back in the sanctuary, we need some members who are willing to serve as a Liturgist. If you are interested, please contact the church office at sunsethillschurch@gmail.com.

Male Adult Chaperone Needed!

After having to cancel their Mission Trip last summer, our youth are looking forward to returning to Benton Harbor, MI this year. The trip will take place between July 4th through July 9th.

However, **the trip cannot happen without a male chaperone.** We are asking that you look in your hearts to see if you can help us make this trip happen. If you are interested in helping, please contact the church office at sunsethillschurch@gmail.com or (412)561-6261 to get more information.

Sunset Hills Book Club

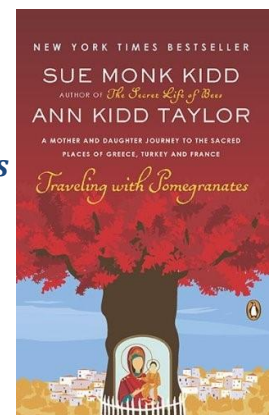
April Book of the Month

April 27th - 7:00 pm

Traveling with Pomegranates

By Sue Monk Kidd &
Anne Kidd Taylor

Sue Monk Kidd has touched the hearts of millions of readers with her beloved novels and acclaimed nonfiction. Now, in this wise and engrossing dual memoir, she and her daughter, Ann, chronicle their travels together through Greece and France at a time when each was on a quest to redefine herself and rediscover each other.



As Sue struggles to enlarge a vision of swarming bees into a novel, and Ann ponders the classic question of what to do with her life, this modern-day Demeter and Persephone explore an array of inspiring figures and sacred sites. They also give voice to that most protean of human connections: the bond of mothers and daughters.

An absorbing book about spiritual growth and finding one's destiny, Traveling with Pomegranates is both a revealing self-portrait by a beloved author and her daughter, and a momentous story that will resonate with women everywhere. (Amazon Book Description)

The Book Club will meet using Zoom. If you would like to join the discussion, contact Pastor Laura to have the link sent to you:

revlaurastrauss@gmail.com

Save the Date

May 25th

7:00 pm - via Zoom

Join Pastor Laura for the
May 2021 book of the
month:

World
of
Wonders

By
Aimee Nezhukumatathil

