



Sunset Hills

M E S S E N G E R

JUNE 2020

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Congratulations to Pastor Laura for receiving HONORS on a paper she wrote during her January Continuing Ed Classes!!! We know you will make us proud when you continue your classes this month (6/8-6/20). Good Luck!

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A Message from Pastor Laura



As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

- Proverbs 27:17

There’s nothing like summer reading! And books are one thing that social distancing has not taken away from us; thanks be to God.

In celebration of reading, and the conversations that a good book generates, I am starting a Sunset Hills Summer Book

Club. We will meet via zoom on the last Thursday of the month to discuss the month’s book. This club is open to everyone in Sunset Hills U.P. Church, as well as to our greater Sunset Hills neighborhood. The hope is that we will have dynamic, uplifting, energetic, and inspiring conversations amongst friends of various perspectives and denominations.

Our June pick is *The Book of Longings* by Sue Monk Kidd. Kidd imagines a world in which Jesus, long before his earthly ministry, is married. She tells the story from the perspective of Jesus’ fictional wife, Ana. The story is far more about Ana than it is about Jesus, though it shows us a human Jesus who inspires the reader to live with kindness. This book will surely create INTERESTING discussion on Thursday, June 25 at 7:00 p.m.

Our book for July is Anthony Ray Hinton’s book *The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row*. Hinton writes about spending thirty years on death row for a crime he did not commit, and his release because of the tireless work of his lawyer, Bryan Stevenson. The memoir addresses prison reform, but also the power of faith and forgiveness. We will discuss this book on Thursday, July 30 at 7:00 p.m.

The August book club pick is Jen Hatmaker’s latest book, *Fierce, Free, and Full of Fire*. This Brene Brown recommendation is broken down into five self-reflective categories. This book explores owning your space, being strong in your relationships, speaking without guilt, and welcoming spiritual curiosity. Hatmaker is a Christian author and hosts the *For the Love! With Jen Hatmaker* podcast. This book will be discussed on August 27 at 7:00 p.m.

I hope that you’ll invite a friend and join us for some summer reading adventures!

In Christ’s Service,
Pastor Laura



Music Notes

By Shelby Gracey

April 16, 2007 . . . I doubt that many of you remember what happened on that date. I had to actually look up the date myself. That was the day of the mass shooting at Virginia Tech where 32 people were mortally wounded, and 17 others were injured. At the time, it was the largest mass shooting by a lone gunman in the United States. Sadly, that milestone has been surpassed a few times over in the last 13 years.

What stands out for me with this event was that we were wrapping up our year of Youth Club at SHUP. We were working on a combined anthem that all the young people sang together with the Chancel Choir, and it was already scheduled to be sung on the Sunday following the shooting. That anthem took on a special significance that weekend, as we remembered the tragic events of the previous week. That anthem was titled “Lighthouse in the Night,” by Chris Machen and the words are as follows:

We are all the children, children of the Light, Lighting up the darkness, like a candle in the night.

Jesus loves the children, every boy and girl, so let us take His love and light into all the world.

We will be the lighthouse, a beacon burning bright. To a world in darkness, we will shine the Light

Until all the world sees Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Life.

We will be the lighthouse in the night.

In a world of darkness, hope is lost at sea, Waves of hurt and heartache, rise in everyone in need.

So shine the light of Jesus, hold your torches high.

There’s hope and peace beyond the storm, help is just in sight.

Before us lies a mission, we must pass the faith along

So every generation can sing the Savior’s song.

We will be the lighthouse, a beacon burning bright. To a world in darkness, we will shine the Light

Until all the world sees Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Life.

We will be the lighthouse in the night. Shine the light!

(You can hear this anthem and watch the slideshow on our SHUP Music YouTube channel, which was part of our Sunday worship service on May 24th).

During all the dark seasons of life – whether it be acts of violence, natural disasters, pandemics, or economic downfalls – as the church of Jesus Christ, our mission is to always shine the light of Jesus – the One who is the Way, the Truth, the Life. **He** is our way out of the darkness.

Shine the Light!

SHUP Music Channel

To see all of the videos and listen to the music that Shelby and Ryan have recorded, please visit our SHUP Music Channel. Just go to YouTube and search “SHUP Music” or you can copy and paste this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/darknight19>

The Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church building is closed through the month of June 2020. Please locate all events and worship services via the church web site, shupchurch.org.

Update from Session

When Can We Come Back? The Session of Sunset Hills U.P. Church has created a Re-Entry Team. The purpose of this team is to make recommendations to the Session, based on denominational, county, state, and CDC guidelines, on how to move forward in returning to worship. The philosophy on which the team has agreed is that we will not return to worship in the church building until we can safely gather together as a whole. **This means we will not be gathering for worship in the building until it is safe for groups of 50 or more to be in the same space.** In preparation for that day, the Re-Entry Team is studying and creating policies to keep individuals safe when they return for worship. They are exploring how to practice social distancing, include music in our service, celebrate the Lord's Supper, etc. This team is being led by Pastor Laura, and includes Elder Keith Yanda, Elder Mary Abbott, Elder Beth Romig, and Music Director, Shelby Gracey. All policies and procedures are brought before and approved by the session.

Children's Footprints... By Barb Clark



Everyone I ask, “how are you doing,” answers by saying, “we are renovating.” Many of us are sitting in our homes looking around and thinking, “what color should we paint?” We appreciate the creaks and groans of the walls a little more. We have been so busy with our lives, that many of us have taken our homes for granted and now realize they may need some TLC. Inside we are painting over the walls with memories of days gone by and replacing them with new colors that will be ready for new memories. We find ourselves opening closet doors realizing, “when was the last time we have *really* looked inside?” We are uncluttering the places we live in to make room for the new.

But, what about our hearts? Have we uncluttered the stuff in them? Pastor Laura has shown us different types of prayer these last few weeks that we can use to help us on this journey. The three that stand out to me are Contemplative, Word, and Breathe Prayers. Jesus said “Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light.” What a great source of comfort that passage gives to us. What words catch you?

God is waiting for you; He is hopeful that you will come to him during this time. Sometimes, I find it easier to stay distracted than to stay focused on my relationship with God. Why? Because the unknown is scary, and the reports out in the world are less than favorable. I want you to know this: our God is bigger than all of that. So, while you are unpacking those closets, or putting on a new coat of paint, my hope for you is that you are unpacking your heart and renewing it with His Spirit. I hope you are realizing and that you know – our God is a God of love and hope and sits ready for us to come to Him.

So, take heart! And as the story of Moses comes to an end in our studies and worship time together, move forward remembering God's sovereignty. Wonder what God has in store for us amidst this time of uncertainty.

Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow,
Barb



Mission News

When Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church was established, the people did not have a church “building” to call their own. Services were held in the gymnasium of the Julia Ward Howe school. The first worship service was held on September 10, 1939 with 32 people in attendance. On January 21, 1940, forty-six people from the Sunset Hills neighborhood officially became members of SHUP. They began their first mission immediately. This mission was important to them as a church family. The congregation needed to share with family, friends and neighbors what the Lord meant to them in the hopes that those they talked to would see the importance of having the Lord in their lives as well. They needed to bring in more members so they could build a

church. Not just a building, but a self-sustaining congregation. Their mission goal was to be able to exist without the help provided by the Board of the American Missions of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. On September 17, 1944 with a membership of 365 people, Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church was officially a self-sustaining church. The building would come many years later. Sunset Hills continues the original mission of sharing the Lord with family, friends and neighbors to this day. Over the years, the members of SHUP have participated in many more missions, reaching out to the local community, the nation, and the world. The Mission Commission of Sunset Hills would like to share with you just a few of the missions

we are currently trying to help through monetary donations made to their cause.

If you would like to learn more about any of these organizations, please visit their websites. To give a donation to one or more of these causes, you can do so by sending in a check or by visiting our online giving site get.tithe.ly. *Be sure to write on the memo portion of your check how you would like your money to be used.*

Although we do not have a church “building” at the moment, thanks to our founding members, we are a church. As a church, mission is important. Even though we cannot be as hands-on as we like right now, these are a few missions we can support until we can all be together again. Your support is greatly appreciated.



Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (pittsburghfoodbank.org)

The food bank began 40 years ago in the Hill District neighborhood of Pittsburgh to help families who were struggling, due to the decline in the steel industry. Today, they have a 95,000 square foot facility located in Duquesne. They receive, inspect and repackage food donations. From there, they are able to prepare orders that they send to other food banks, homeless shelters, senior centers and other distribution centers in 11 different counties.



Light of Life (lightoflife.org)

This organization helps homeless men and women. Most of these individuals are suffering from past traumas, abuse and addictions. Light of Life has many different programs to help those people by providing, shelter, food, work skills, counseling and ministry. The men and women who move on from their programs, like SHUP did years ago, become self-sustaining with a love for the Lord.

The Navigators (navigators.org)

The Navigators is an organization that strives to share the gospel with as many people as they can. To achieve this goal, their volunteers share their knowledge of Christ with others on a one-to-one basis. They create disciples one person at a time by sharing where they work, live, worship, play and attend school. Their mission is “To know Christ, make Him known, and help others do the same.”



Angel's Place (angelsplacegh.org)

Angel's Place offers early childhood education, childcare and family support to families in need. The cost for these services is often free of charge or offered at significantly reduced rates than a parent would have to pay other child/daycare centers. Once parents meet the criteria, the staff at Angel's place not only provides care and education to their children while they work or continue their education, they provide the parents with the support they need to become self-sufficient.



Pentecost Special Offering (pcusa.org/Pentecost)

During the Pentecost Season, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) asks for monetary donations to help the youth and young adults in the church establish and maintain a strong relationship with Christ. The monies received go to support programs in our own communities, as well as around the world, ministries specifically geared toward children and to provide education and safe havens for at-risk youth.

More Mission News

Donations for May

The Mission Commission wanted to offer lunch to the COVID 19 unit at St. Clair Hospital in May. However, when we contacted them, they were in the process of transferring their staff to units in other hospitals because they had no patients.

So instead, we made a donation of \$750 to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We felt they were deserving of a little extra support due to the fact that they have gone above and beyond with their efforts to feed the needy during this pandemic



SHUP Food Pantry

The food pantry that SHUP has put in front of the Memorial Garden continues to be used by our friends and neighbors in the Sunset Hills community.

The staff and the Mission Commission have been making sure to keep it stocked with all of your generous donations. We would like to continue the Food Pantry during the month of June, so please keep those donations coming. (Personal hygiene products seem to be the most popular items). Thank you for your support!



Financial Statement Update as of 04/30/20

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	Variance Fav. (Unfav.)
INCOME:			
Pledges, loose offering	67,555	64,899	(2,656)
Designated mission giving	736	353	(383)
Flowers	928	485	(443)
Per capita	1,415	1,531	116
Interest / Nursery school / misc.	168	203	35
Transfer - Endowments	41,982	44,348	2,366
Total income	112,784	111,819	(965)
EXPENSE:			
Adm. & personnel	(70,519)	(68,008)	2,511
Christian Education	(2,077)	(2,994)	(917)
Communications	(869)	(1,544)	(675)
Cong. Care & Community Outreach	(175)	(48)	127
Facilities	(19,917)	(18,011)	1,906
Mission *	(4,114)	(3,597)	517
Stewardship	(4,272)	(3,654)	618
Worship & music	(1,664)	(1,340)	324
Total expense	(103,607)	(99,196)	4,411
Surplus (deficit)	9,177	12,623	3,446

* - includes 5% mission accrual.

June Activities

All of our June 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.

Adult Sunday School

9:00 am

Pastor Laura will finish the study of *Moses* by Adam Hamilton on June 7th. Beginning June 21st, the class will begin the study Amy Jill-Levine's book *Short Stories by Jesus*. Pastor Laura will be teaching this class using Zoom. (Barb will be teaching the class on June 14th). Books are available for \$3.99. If you would like to purchase a copy, please contact Barb.

Sunday Worship Service

10:15 am

Pastor Laura will continue to post the weekly service to our YouTube Channel.

Children's Sunday School

11:00 am

All children K-5th grade are invited to join Barb Clark for this Zoom class to learn about the love of Jesus.

Youth Group Live

Barb Clark will lead this class using Zoom. The dates/time for June are as follows:

Thursday, June 11th at 3:00 pm

Sunday, June 28th at 4:00 pm

Findley Hall Bible Study

Mondays - 1:00 pm

The Findley Hall Bible Study will continue to be held online using Zoom. A new study by Andy Stanley on the Gospel of John entitled *Bystander* will begin on June 1st.

If you would like to watch the video for this class, you can copy and paste this link:

<https://subsplash.com/northpointministries/media/ms/+bpp65wc>

or you can do a google search for "Anthology Bystander Subsplash."

If you would like to join this class, please contact Evelyn Lape at (412)531-9856.

Wilson Hall Bible Study

Tuesdays - 1:00 pm

Carole McCullough will be leading this class using Zoom.

Adult Bible Study

Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

Barb Clark will lead this class using Zoom. The class will begin a new 4-week study of *Before Amen* by Max Lucado on June 10th.

New!

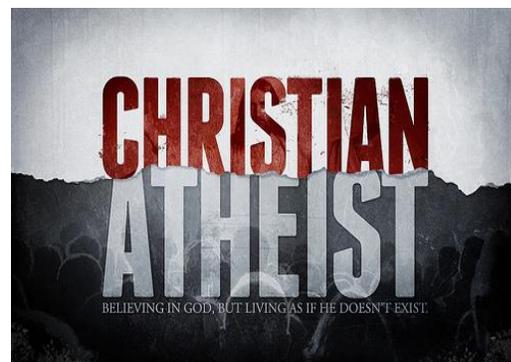
Men's Bible Study

Beginning Tuesday, June 9th

7:00 pm via Zoom

Join Dave Petty and Jonathan Fako for a six-week Men's Bible Study starting this month. We will be studying *The Christian Atheist* by Craig Groeschel. This video series will help us explore how God's love for us prompts a re-evaluation of what is important in our lives. How can we be sure that we know God and to know that he loves us in return? What do we do if we value money or our present happiness more than following God's will for us?

If you would like to join us for this enlivening study, please contact Dave Petty at davepetty8@gmail.com.



Christian Education News

Mehaffey Scholarships

We are proud to announce the recipients of the 2020 Mehaffey Scholarship. These students have shown Christian behavior through their actions at Sunset Hills and the surrounding communities. Their grade point averages are very impressive and the letters of recommendation that we received expressed many reasons why they are deserving of this award. We are so proud of them! They each will receive \$1,000 from the Mehaffey Scholarship Fund. We wish them the best as they pursue their dreams in the coming years.

◆ Andrew Kennedy

◆ Ryan Pocheck

◆ Colby Sembrat

◆ Ethan Stuart

We would like to send a special “thank you” to the Mehaffey family who make this ongoing scholarship possible.

Flamingos Are Back!

Do you know someone who has a special celebration coming up soon? Why don't you consider flocking their yard with the SHUP flamingos? It only costs \$25 and all proceeds will go toward funding the 2021 Youth Mission Trips.

If you would like to send a flock to someone's house, please contact Barb or visit the Youth Mission Page on our website to submit a request.

Become a Pen Pal

Have you been cooped up for too long? Do you wish you could talk to someone other than yourself? Are you someone who likes to write letters? If so, please consider becoming a pen pal with a youth right here at SHUP.

If this is something you would like to do, please contact Barb to get connected today!

Senior Celebration

Because this year is not the most ideal year to graduate, we would like to invite you to help lift the spirits of the SHUP 2020 Graduates. We have 2 different ways for you to help:



Adopt a Senior

Send a card, letter, gift, snack or anything you want to show them that you care.



Drive-by Congratulations - Sunday, June 7th - 12:30 pm

Meet in the church parking lot to go on a “Drive-By Congratulations” to the graduates. You can decorate your car, make a sign/poster and/or have a small token to hand out to the graduates as we pass.

Help us make this a year to remember for our graduates by surrounding them with love!

Bible Storytime

June 22nd - 26th / 7:00 pm

Put on your PJ's and go to the SHUP Facebook page for a nighttime story. Barb will post the video at 7:00 every night.



Confirmation Statements of Faith

Sunday, June 28th / 12:00 pm

The confirmands will be reading their Statements of Faith to Session during a special Session meeting.

Sarajane & Luke Are Getting Married!

June 14th, 2020

2:30 pm

Memorial Garden at Sunset Hills Church

Sarajane and Luke have decided to hold a small, family ceremony to begin their new life as husband and wife. Although the gathering size must be small, we would still like to celebrate this day with you, our church family . . . So, we have a New Plan!

You are invited to a “Drive-by Congratulations Parade.”

*Please arrive and park in the church lot by 3:00 pm.
(If possible, try to avoid driving on Country Club,
to limit the traffic noise during the ceremony)!*

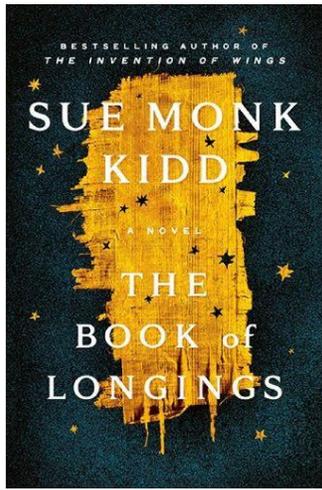
*When the service is completed,
you will be given a signal to start the procession.
Sarajane & Luke will be standing by the garden
to greet you as you go by.*

*We can't wait to see you there
to help us celebrate!*

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEND
CONGRATULATORY WISHES TO THE
COUPLE, THEIR NEW ADDRESS IS:**

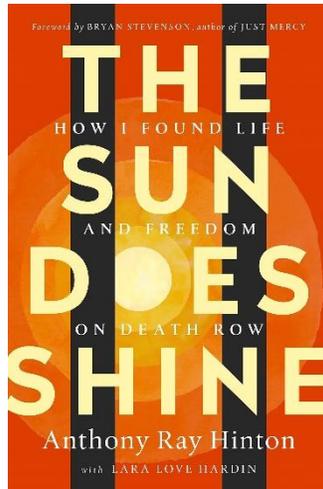
**LUKE & SARAJANE OBARSKY
124 CHERRYDELL DRIVE
PITTSBURGH, PA 15220**

Sunset Hills
Summer Book Club
with
Pastor Laura

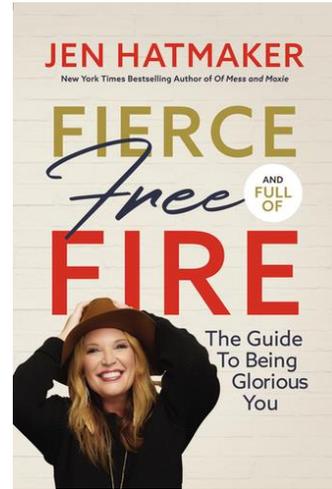


June

Start reading and get ready for the first meeting on June 26th!



July



August

Invite your family & friends to join us. Everyone is welcome!

June Birthdays & Holidays

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 Jack Misterka, Ava Weidensall | 14 Rev. Laura Strauss, Debbie Vernacchio |
| 5 Carrie Duffner | 17 Andrew Glantz, Linda MacDonald |
| 6 Karl Hetrick | 19 Jane Huston |
| 7 John Ellis III, Tiffani Fitzwilliam | 21 Happy Father's Day |
| 9 Cory Clark | 25 Ken Clark |
| 10 Debbie Edwards | 28 Ryan Gracey |
| 11 Carolyn Caldwell, John Fitzwilliam, John Knasko | 29 Jacob D'Amico |
| 12 Maya Williams | 30 Art Rupp |



Prayer List

- Carolyn Caldwell
- JoAnne Enterline
- Walter Jackson
- Phyllis and Dick Moore
- Patti Patterson