



Sunset Hills

M E S S E N G E R

August 2022

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Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church

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A Message from Pastor Laura

The book of Acts depicts life in the disrupting presence of the Spirit of God.

- Willie James Jennings



Jody Colby, Ryan Gracey, Karin Daniels, and I spent a weekend together in September 2019 at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. It was my second weekend as your pastor, and it was their third meeting at the seminary with the Church Revitalization program. This year-long program required our church members to think in new ways about how to encounter God’s Spirit at work within

the congregation, the neighborhood, and the world. It also required that participants read four books. Willie James Jennings commentary on Acts is one of those books.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Hagley assigned Jennings’ Acts commentary to Jody, Ryan, and Karin because Jennings reads the Bible, ‘against the grain.’ He, to quote John Carroll, “inspires readers who seek to listen with care to what Acts has to say to the theological and ethical challenges of contemporary life.” Jennings approaches Acts with an understanding of the book having been written in the 80s or 90s AD, a time of radical beginning for the church. This radical beginning takes place in the everyday and in the disciples’ mundane course of living. He relates this action of the Spirit then to the action of the Spirit now.

Acts is our text for the coming months because of Jennings’ text. I will be preaching each week, beginning August, using the headings and breakdown used in this particular Acts commentary. I am doing this, first, to bring to the congregation what was learned by our team during the Church Revitalization program. Second, I am doing this because Jennings’ commentary is all the more relevant in a post-pandemic world whose changes rival the changes faced by the early church.

You are encouraged to follow along in Acts with us. Come and worship with us each Sunday so that you can keep track of the narrative of the Holy Spirit’s movement in the church. Be in conversation with your church family about what you hear, as well as what you read. Dig deep with us as we dig deep into this Spirit-breathed, Spirit-saturated book of our Bible!

In Christ’s Love,
Pastor Laura

Music Notes

By Shelby Gracey

By the time you read this, we'll be in the last month of summer already . . . which means that it will be time to start preparing for our Chancel & Bell Choir seasons for the Fall!

Our first rehearsal for the Chancel Choir will be held on **Tuesday, September 6 at 7:30 p.m.**, with the plan to sing in worship on Sunday, September 11. For the first time in two years, we'll get back to holding our rehearsals in the Choir Room! We always have room for MORE choir members, and we'd love to have you join us! Reading music is not a necessity – just a love for music and a desire to have fun and

fellowship with some great people while we learn songs to praise God in worship! You can sit in the congregation during worship and come forward when it's time to sing the anthem. Let me know if you're interested, so I'll have enough music for our first rehearsal.

The Campanile Bells will also resume in September (the date is still undetermined, but probably by mid-September). If anyone might be wondering what it's like to ring in the bell choir, it's fun and challenging, and the ability to read music is extremely helpful. We play for worship about three or

four times throughout the Fall and Spring seasons and would be happy to have you join us! The number of ringers we have determines the number of octaves we're able to ring – which determines the music I can pick for the season. Please talk to me if you're interested in joining this great group of ringers!

Feel free to talk to me on a Sunday morning, call me at home at 412-928-0891, or send me an email at sgracey@verizon.net to let me know of your interest in joining either group!

Notes from Christian Education

By Taylor Strang

Briefcase and Backpack Blessing!



Bring your briefcases and backpacks and join us on August 28th at 10:15 am to bless students and educators before their first day of school.

Fellowship to follow directly after worship.

*Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church
900 Country Club Drive, Pgh, Pa, 15228*



Educators, please bring your work bags, laptop bags and briefcases to be blessed and parents bring your child with their backpacks to the church to be blessed by Pastor Laura for their upcoming school semester.

VBS 2022*By Taylor Strang*

Through my cohort I learned that the first day of VBS makes the mood for the entire week and that became true. The volunteers, the children and the parents made our first vacation bible school in two years and my first vacation bible school as the Director of CE a dream. We ended the week with over 45 children signed up and over 30 people volunteering.

We held a canned food drive for our mission for the week and the grocery cart quickly became full. The children enjoyed watching Sparky the puppet played by Lucy Tang, and our very own Pastor Laura playing the very British Armorer Strauss. Both characters helped the children through their journey. We created knightly crafts that included breastplates, helmets and shields. Bible Study was always full of curious questions and laughs. We watched fun biblical skits. We got to color along with our delicious snacks and go outside to play. Water day included water balloons and a lot of running through the sprinklers.

The children learned to walk with faith and that the true armor they

sought for throughout the week was with them all along. That armor is our faith in God and if you did not attend vacation bible school you still have that armor with you.

I want to thank all of you who donated, decorated and volunteered at the event in any capacity. As I grew up, I was told that it takes a village to raise a child, but I learned quickly that it also takes a village (or an entire congregation) to plan vacation bible school.

Thank you to everyone in the congregation for your kind words, your motivational speeches and answering all the questions I have had for the past year. A huge thank you to my CE committee is needed for everything you all have done for VBS this past year and helping me out whenever I needed it.

I want to send a shout out to my volunteers for their feedback, dedication, kindness, and flexibility throughout the week. You all were the rock that kept this event running and I am so grateful to all of you. Thank you to John Ellis IV for donating pizza for our last day, it was a great surprise, and we are

grateful for it. We had volunteers that grew up in this church and had led VBS many times and we had volunteers that had never entered this church before. You are all welcome back anytime and I am so blessed that you wanted to help us lead these children of faith.

To those that decorated with us on Sunday the 17th and donated decorations or supplies, thank you from the bottom of my heart. You transformed the sanctuary, the classrooms, and Findley Hall into North Castle and I could not have done it without you.

And finally, I want to thank all of you who donated toward the price of VBS for the children, especially Jeff and Roberta Allison. You allowed families who otherwise would not have been able to attend VBS come and learn about Jesus and the word of God. I cannot thank you enough.

This experience has truly solidified that my calling is to focus on Christian Education for SHUP. I am excited to be working on other projects and events for the coming year!

VBS Volunteers 2022

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Mary Abbott | ▪ Pat Ellis | ▪ Charles Kicinski | ▪ Beth Romig |
| ▪ Lissa Bensus | ▪ Carol Enterline | ▪ Ella Kicinski | ▪ Cecilia Rowland |
| ▪ Savannah Bensus | ▪ Jill Fako | ▪ Lewis Kicinski | ▪ Travis Strang |
| ▪ Ginny Bowman | ▪ Darlene Farabaugh | ▪ Bev Knasko | ▪ Rev. Laura Strauss |
| ▪ Jody Colby | ▪ Riley Farabaugh | ▪ Carole McCullough | ▪ Lucy Tang |
| ▪ Mike Duffner | ▪ Madison Hamilton | ▪ Dave Petty | ▪ Robert Tang |
| ▪ Jacey Ellis | ▪ Karen Heim | ▪ Harriet Rickard | ▪ Keith Yanda |
| ▪ John Ellis III | ▪ Rylee Josack | ▪ Amy Riley | ▪ Jane Zebrouvis |
| ▪ John Ellis IV | | | ▪ Caleb |

Call to Action on Voting Rights

From the Pittsburgh Presbytery



901 Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233
Phone: (412) 323-1400

[The Pittsburgh Presbytery](http://ThePittsburghPresbytery.org)
(pghpresbytery.org)



The Pittsburgh Presbytery has adopted a call to legislators to act on behalf of preserving voter rights for all legal voters. The resolution notes that several states have begun enacting legislation that makes it more difficult for those with limited means to vote.

Providing for equal access to the ballot box for all eligible votes is a faith concern for people who believe that every human being is made equally in God's image.

Jesus rebukes his disciples for preventing "the little ones" from gaining access to him, thus teaching that everyone great and small is equally privileged in God's kingdom (Matthew 19:13-15). In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus equates the welcome we give to the poor and vulnerable with welcoming him personally.

Any legislation that makes it more difficult for people to vote if they are economically disadvantaged

runs contrary to biblical teaching. The church of Jesus has no option but to stand up for just treatment for every person.

If you would like to let legislators know how you feel about voting rights, please contact your state officials at www.legis.state.pa.us, your federal representatives at www.house.gov/representatives, and your U.S. Senators at www.senate.gov/senators.

Thank You

Dear SHUP friends,

Thank you so much for your outpouring of sympathy and support on my mother's passing. Your calls, notes, chancel flowers, and especially your prayers, were so much comfort to me at a difficult time.

This was the end of a long and difficult road for my family, and you all have provided support and companionship all along the way. In so many ways you have walked this path with me, and that has been a blessing for which I am grateful. Thank you so much for all you have done.

Debbie Edwards

Mission Updates

By Jody Colby

At the June 12 meeting of the Mission Commission the following business was accomplished:

- We agreed food insufficiency is still a great need. We allocated \$500 to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and \$500 to SHIM (South Hills Interfaith Movement).
- We remembered Matt Hale, Navigator and friend of the congregation. After contacting Nancy Hale, Jody discovered Matt had a “Go Fund Me” for financing a van replacement for his ministry in Detroit. We contributed \$1400 to help him reach his goal.
- We also learned that Matt would be visiting in town the week following July 4. We quickly made arrangements for a Meet & Greet on Thursday, July 7, where 18 members caught up on Matt’s activities. It is awe inspiring to discover the loving, sharing community that Matt and his family have created and supported for almost two decades in the depressed inner city of Detroit.
- We continue with our support of Café Justo on the Mexican border by selling their free trade coffee at a reduced price of \$10 a pound. See Jody Colby or Beth Romig for purchases of regular or decaf, ground or whole bean.
- We continue to sponsor our World Vision daughter Pabatso Makhalanyane, in S. Africa.

Information about the refugees from Afghanistan comes to us through our connection with Hello neighbor. They have settled over 250 families and individuals in the Pittsburgh area since January. Recently, they were able to meet emergency food shortages for the refugee families. There are opportunities for individuals or communities to support these refugees and new refugees of other ethnic groups. See Jody (412 656-7801) for more information if you are interested in volunteering with Hello Neighbor.



[Home - Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank \(pittsburghfoodbank.org\)](http://pittsburghfoodbank.org)



shim
SOUTH HILLS INTERFAITH MOVEMENT

[Home - SHIM \(shimcares.org\)](http://shimcares.org)



[Hello Neighbor - Hello Neighbor](#)



[The Navigators — Life-to-Life Discipleship](#)



[Café Justo – Frontera de Cristo](#)



[Homepage | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](http://wvi.org)

Sibling Saints

Pilgrims Traveling With Pilgrims
Writing and Reflecting Together
In the Holy Sites of Authors in the Faith

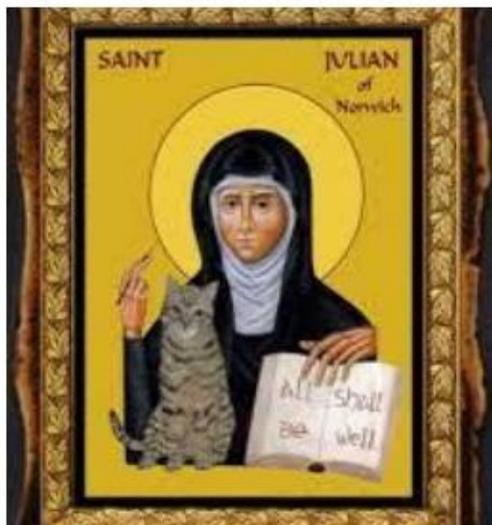


An English Pilgrimage

April 17 - 26, 2023

Nestle into Your Walk with God

Open the journal that's too beautiful to write in and encounter Jesus. Our ten days in England will include introductions to Christian authors from the Middle Ages and 20th Century. We will walk with these saints as we discover new prayer practices and take on the practice of spiritual, reflective writing.



Find Your Community

There are eight spots on this trip, enabling us to form an intentional community of prayer, support, and encouragement of one another.

We will journal and pray together daily. All writings will be private, and only shared with the author's permission. The goal is vulnerability before Jesus, and judgment before no one.

Discover Sacred Spaces

Julians' Norwich, and the Divinity School of Oxford University are included in our pilgrimage. We will have three orientations before our trip, including reading assignments to prepare ourselves for the sites visited. These orientations and readings are an essential part of building our pilgrimage community, connecting with the saints who've gone before, and growing in faith.

Itinerary, Deadlines, and Cost

Monday:	Depart from U.S. for London
Tuesday:	Morning Arrival in London; Train to Oxford Welcome Dinner, Introduction to the Prayer Practices
Wednesday:	C.S. Lewis Tour of Oxford
Thursday:	Day Trip to Bath
Friday:	Free Morning in Oxford Afternoon Canal Cruise in Oxford
Saturday:	Day Trip to Cotswolds, site of theologian Catherine Parr
Sunday:	Free Morning in Oxford Afternoon Train to Norwich via London
Monday:	Morning Sites of Julian of Norwich Free Afternoon and Evening in Norwich
Tuesday:	Farewell Brunch in Norwich Aboard LifeBoat used at Battle of Dunkirk Evening Train to and Overnight in London near Airport
Wednesday:	Depart for Home
COST:	\$2800

The above includes required books, daily breakfast, accommodations, train tickets, public transportation/car transportation to local sites, admission costs, and dinner on the first and last night of our time together. Cost **does not** include airfare, tax, gratuities, or meals not otherwise mentioned. A deposit of \$350 is due by September 16, 2022 to reserve a spot for this trip. Spaces are first-come, first served. Contact Rebecca DePoe or Laura Strauss with questions.

August Information

Adult Sunday School

8:30 am

The Adult Sunday School class will begin meeting again on August 7th. They will continue to meet via Zoom for the month of August.

On September 4th, the class will begin meeting in person.

Sunday Worship

10:15 am

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

11:15 am - Findley Hall

Everyone is invited to join us for fellowship in Findley Hall on August 7th & 28th.

Volunteers Needed

If you would like to sign-up to host a fellowship hour, please contact the church office at (412)561-5251 or sign up on the sheet outside of Findley Hall.

Tai Chi

Wednesday's - 7:00 pm

Gurney Bolster, certified Tai Chi instructor, will start the second summer session of beginner Tai Chi classes on August 3rd and continue through September 21st. If you are interested in learning more about these classes, please contact Gurney at: gurneybolster@gmail.com.

Sunday, August 28th



live music, food trucks, advocacy & more!

3 - 5 PM

Sunset Hills

Presbyterian Church

900 Country Club Drive

Mt. Lebanon

sponsoring communities:

Sunset Hills United Presbyterian

Temple Emanuel of South Hills

St. Paul's Episcopal

Bower Hill Presbyterian

Sunnyhill Unitarian Universalist

Westminster Presbyterian

August Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---------------------------------|
| 3 | Jeannine Stimmel
Cal Wilson | 13 | Sarajane Obarsky
Judy Stacey |
| 4 | Alice Bonim
Bill Oknefski | 14 | Rowan Zeglin |
| 6 | Paul Bruschi
Joanne Enterline
Kim Stuart | 15 | Robert Tang |
| 8 | Lee Cepits
Jacey Ellis
Jill Fako | 17 | Michael Bensur |
| 10 | Dottie Fleming
Kailey Hepburn | 19 | Carla Robinson |
| | | 20 | Sarah Ernst
Christa Tang |
| | | 21 | Pat Ellis |
| | | 24 | Ethan Stuart |
| | | 25 | Chip McCoy |
| | | 28 | Kay Walker |
| | | 31 | Betty Coffey |

Prayer List

Dee Borman



Prayer Circle

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>
Aug 7 th	Michelle Yanda The Zeglin family, Amanda, Garth, Tristan, Rowan, and Violet
Aug 14 th	Mary Abbott Lyssa & Clayton Allison
Aug 21 st	David Arnold The Bensur family, Lissa, Savannah & Michael
Aug 28 th	Bernie & Carol Berklich Lynne Blanning,

SHIM Food Donations

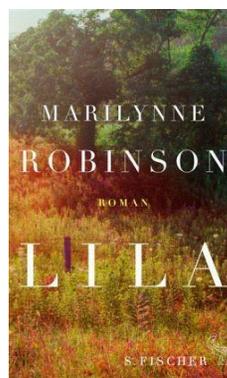
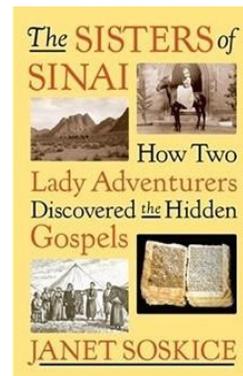
August 2022

For the month of August, we will be collecting **Cereal**.

We appreciate your continued support of this ministry.

Sunset Hills Book Club MEETING IN PERSON August Book of the Month *The Sisters of Sinai* By Janice Soskice Aug. 31st - 7:30 pm

Janet Soskice takes us, via the lives of Agnes and Margaret Smith, on a quintessentially Victorian adventure. It is partly a physical journey: when Westerners generally feared to tread in the region, the sisters Smith traversed the Middle East, sleeping in tents, enduring temperamental camels and unscrupulous dragomen, and facing uncertain welcome from monks deceived by earlier travelers. It is also a journey of the mind: in an era when religious faith was under attack, when new discoveries in science and archaeology were rewriting the accepted understanding of the Bible's origins as well as those of humankind, a great contribution to knowledge was made by two whose only natural advantage was an astonishing gift for languages, modern as well as classical. Finally, and most movingly, it is a progress of the human spirit. Unwilling to let their lack of formal training or the disdain and jealousy of male scholars stand in their way, Agnes and Margaret became renowned scriptural authorities, in joyful pursuit of their lifelong passions for adventure and learning. Here, rousingly recounted, is the story of two unlikely and unsung heroines of the continuing effort to discover the Bible as originally written. (Amazon Book Description)



September 2022 Book of the Month

Lila

By

Marilynne Robinson

Meeting on September 28th

October 2022 Book of the Month *The Delight of Being Ordinary*

By

Roland Merullo

Meeting on October 26th

